PROJECT
REPORT

AN EVALUATION OF THE IMPACT OF PUBLIC EDUCATION REJUVENATION CAMPAIGN IN KERALA

DR. C S VENKITESWARAN
DR. V SIVADASAN

Project Report

An Evaluation of the Impact of Public Education Rejuvenation Campaign in Kerala

Dr. C S Venkiteswaran
&
Dr. V Sivadasan

Gulati Institute of Finance and Taxation
Thiruvananthapuram, Kerala

Submitted to

Kerala State Planning Board
Pattom Palace
Trivandrum- 695 004

Executive Summary

The Public Education Rejuvenation Campaign (*Pothu Vidhyabhyasa Samrakshana Yajnjam*) or Public Education Rejuvenation Mission is an action-oriented programme launched by the Government of Kerala in 2016. It is an integral part of the *Nava Kerala Karma Padhathi* (Mission for a New Kerala). The Public Education Rejuvenation Campaign aims to bring a comprehensive revival of the public education system in the State. It suggests the phased up-gradation of the physical and academic infrastructure and the revision of the prevailing curriculum and pedagogy. With this, the Public Education Rejuvenation Campaign intends to bring international standards to the State's education system by transforming public educational institutions into future centres of academic excellence.

The people-centric character is the hallmark of the Public Education Rejuvenation Campaign. Unlike other policy formulations that worked for the resuscitation of the public education system, the Public Education Rejuvenation Campaign is trying to make a direct link with the society, people, and the functionaries of the schools by taking recourse to the robust Local Self-Government Institutions in the State. In that sense, the Public Education Rejuvenation Campaign strives to propose a Kerala Model of Education through a collective effort. Besides, the Public Education Rejuvenation Campaign carries a genuine social commitment within itself; that is, everyone ought to get equal opportunity to avail of better quality education as long as education remains a Fundamental Right. The spirit and rationale of the

Public Education Rejuvenation Campaign rest in the history of social renaissance and democratic spirit of Kerala, for it upholds the principles of freedom, social justice, equal opportunity, participatory governance, and decentralised planning. That is to say, for the government, the Public Education Rejuvenation Campaign is a catalyst for the creation of a 'just society' by transforming human beings through education.

On the one side, the Public Education Rejuvenation Campaign views education as the vehicle of social change, and on the other side, it extols the 'public mindedness' of education. The Public Education Rejuvenation Campaign is an ongoing programme, and the present study intends to evaluate its impact so far on the ground.

The primary objectives of the study are:

- To analyse the impact of the Rejuvenation Campaign with regard to the improvements in physical infrastructural facilities in the State's public educational institutions over the last three years.

- To enquire about the impacts of the Rejuvenation Campaign with regard to improvements in the academic infrastructure in the State's public educational institutions over the last three years

- To assess the impacts of the Rejuvenation Campaign with regard to the curriculum, pedagogy, and the learning process in the State's public educational institutions over the last three years.

- To identify the limitations of the Rejuvenation Campaign and draw some suggestions for its improvement.

Structure of the Study

The present study is divided into seven chapters:

Chapter I: Introduction

This chapter presents the background, objectives, methodology, and data collection strategies of the present study.

Chapter II: Public Education Rejuvenation Campaign: Conceptual Framework and Organisational Structure

Chapter II focuses on the novel idea proposed by the Public Education Rejuvenation Campaign and the decentralised character of its organisational structures functioning at the ground level.

Chapter III: Impact of the Rejuvenation Campaign on General/Physical Infrastructure

This chapter tries to identify the impacts created by the Public Education Rejuvenation Campaign in the improvement of the general/physical infrastructural facilities of the public educational institutions in the State. Based on the fieldwork data, it traces the kind of improvements that have taken place in the domain of the general/physical infrastructure of the public educational institutions and explores the role of the Public Education Rejuvenation Campaign in it.

Chapter IV: Improvement in Academic Infrastructure

This chapter examines the role of the Public Education Rejuvenation Campaign in improving the academic infrastructure of the public educational institutions in the State. An attempt is also made to draw a connection between the academic infrastructure and the ongoing curriculum revision proposed by the Public Education Rejuvenation Campaign based on the directives of the Kerala Curriculum Framework, 2007. The chapter explores the effort of the Public Education

Rejuvenation Campaign in bringing the issue of the academic infrastructure to the centre stage of our discussion on public education system.

Chapter V: Curriculum, Pedagogy, and the Learning Process under Public Education Rejuvenation Campaign

This chapter is an exploratory one, covering a range of issues pertaining to the prevailing public education system in the State. It focuses on the changes brought by the Public Education Rejuvenation Campaign in the fields of curriculum and pedagogy and in the learning process. Efforts are also made to identify numerous issues falling in the areas of teaching and learning, and to evaluate the idea of education envisioned by the Rejuvenation Campaign from a critical point of view.

Chapter VI: The Impact of Public Education Rejuvenation Campaign Among Students in Public Educational Institutions

This chapter presents the response of the student community regarding the changes brought about by Rejuvenation Campaign in public educational institutions in the State. It discusses the changes brought by the Rejuvenation Campaign in certain domains such as learning environment, ICT-enabled education, confidence building, extra-curricular activities, environmental awareness, leadership skills, student-teacher relationship and so on.

Chapter VII: Conclusion

This is the last chapter of study that tries to map the pros and cons of the Public Education Rejuvenation Campaign at the ground-level, and puts forward some recommendations for improving the implementation of the Public Education Rejuvenation Campaign in the future.

Acknowledgement

List of Graphs

List of Figures

Abbreviations

ASAP   : Additional Skill Acquisition Programme
BRC   : Block Resource Centres
CBSE   : Central Board of Secondary Education
CRC   : Cluster Resource Centre
CSR   : Corporate Social Responsibility
DDE   : Deputy Director of Education
DEO   : District Educational Officer
DIET   : District Institute of Education and Training
DPEP   : District Primary Education Programme
DPI   : Director of Public Instruction
DPO   : District Programme Officer
FGD   : Focus Group Discussions
GPs   : Grama Panchaths
HM   : Headmaster/Headmistress
HS   : High School
HSS   : Higher Secondary School
ICT   : Information Communication Technology
IISER   : Indian Institute of Science Education and Research
IT   : Information Technology
KCF   : Kerala Curriculum Framework
KER   : Kerala Education Rules
KIIFB   : Kerala Infrastructure Investment Fund Board
KILA   : Kerala Institute of Local Administration
KITE   : Kerala Infrastructure and Technology for Education
KSTA   : Kerala State Teachers Association
LAP   : Language Acquisition Programmes
LEP   : Learning Enhancement Programmes
LMIS   : Learning Management Information System
LPS   : Lower Primary School
LSGIs   : Local Self Government Institutions
MLA   : Member of Legislative Assembly
MLL   : Minimum Level of Learning
MP   : Member of Parliament
NABARD   : National Bank for Agriculture and Rural Development
NAS   : National Achievement Survey
NCC   : National Cadet Corps
NCERT   : National Council of Educational Research and Training
NCF   : National Curriculum Framework
NGOs   : Non-Governmental Organisation
NICESS   : National Centre for Earth Science Studies
NIEPA   : National Institute of Educational Planning and Administration

NSS	:	Nair Service Society
NSS	:	National Service Scheme
OBC	:	Other Backward Class
PRIs	:	Panchayati Raj Institutions
PTA	:	Parent Teachers Association
PTR	:	Pupil-Teacher Ratio
RMSA	:	RashtriyaMadhyamic Shiksha Abhiyan
ROTs	:	Receive Only Terminals
RTE	:	Right To Education
SC	:	Scheduled Caste
SCERT	:	State Council of Educational Research and Training
SIEMAT	:	State Institute of Educational Management and Training
SIET	:	State Institute of Educational Technology
SJPS	:	Sadhu Jana ParipalanaSangham
SMC	:	School Management Committee
SNDP	:	Sree Narayana Dharma ParipalanaYogam
SPC	:	Student Police Cadet
SPSS	:	Statistical Package for the Social Sciences
SPV	:	Special Purpose Vehicle
SSK	:	Samagra Shiksha Kerala
ST	:	Scheduled Tribes
UPA	:	United Progressive Alliance
UPS	:	Upper Primary School
VHSE	:	Vocational Higher Secondary Education

Contents

Chapter **1**
Introduction

1.1 Introduction

Public Education Rejuvenation Campaign (hereafter called the Rejuvenation Campaign) is a landmark intervention in the history of modern school education in Kerala. The Rejuvenation Campaign was designed to support and advance public education system in Kerala by abandoning redundant ways of learning and teaching, and rejuvenating the public schools through multi-level interventions.

1.2. The Context of the Study

The State of Kerala is widely acclaimed for its achievements in the field of school education and literacy. Despite these achievements, the State faces several challenges in the field of public education. The State has already taken several steps to address these challenges and limitations. Apart from addressing these issues facing public education, the immediate context for launching the Rejuvenation Campaign was the announcement of the *Nava Kerala Karma Padhathi* (Mission for New Kerala).

Kerala is a model of emulation for other Indian states with regard to school education. The State has almost achieved near 'universalisation of school education'. Besides,

the rate of students' accessibility to school and retention is very impressive in Kerala. What this implies is that unlike other Indian states, Kerala has already addressed the first generation problems in the sphere of school education. Now it is high time for the State to focus on the second generation problems that are appearing in the field of school education like enhancing the quality of education in public schools. It is also important to lay stress on the improvement of the academic and infrastructural facilities of the public educational institutions, for it is a very crucial catalyst for transforming public educational institutions into future centres of excellence.

One of the significant challenges faced by the State has been the popular perception amongst the middle-class towards the prevailing public education system, which tends to project the private unaided schools in better light even when such schools do not offer better educational standards or have well-qualified teachers. Addressing this issue called for not only material resources but also a change in the mindset of the people at large. One of the significant steps proposed in this regard was the revitalisation of public education through phased upgradation. The Rejuvenation Campaign initiated in 2016 was the first initiative in this direction

1.3. Areas Covered under the Study

The areas covered by the study include the present scenario of public school educational institutions in Kerala, the efforts taken by the government to address issues in public education through the Rejuvenation Campaign and its impact on reinvigorating the public education sector.

1.4. Public Schools: A General Profile

There are 11,909 schools scattered across the State, of which 4693 are government-owned, and 7216 are government-aided. The enrolment rate is very high in the State, faring well and beyond other states in the nation, the details of which are given in the following three tables.These schools are maintained by various management types ranging from government-funded, government-aided to unaided schools. It is also to be noted that the dropout rate in the State's school system is very minimal.

Graph 1.1 indicates the total number of schools in Kerala under different types of management.

Graph 1.1 Schools in Kerala: Different Types
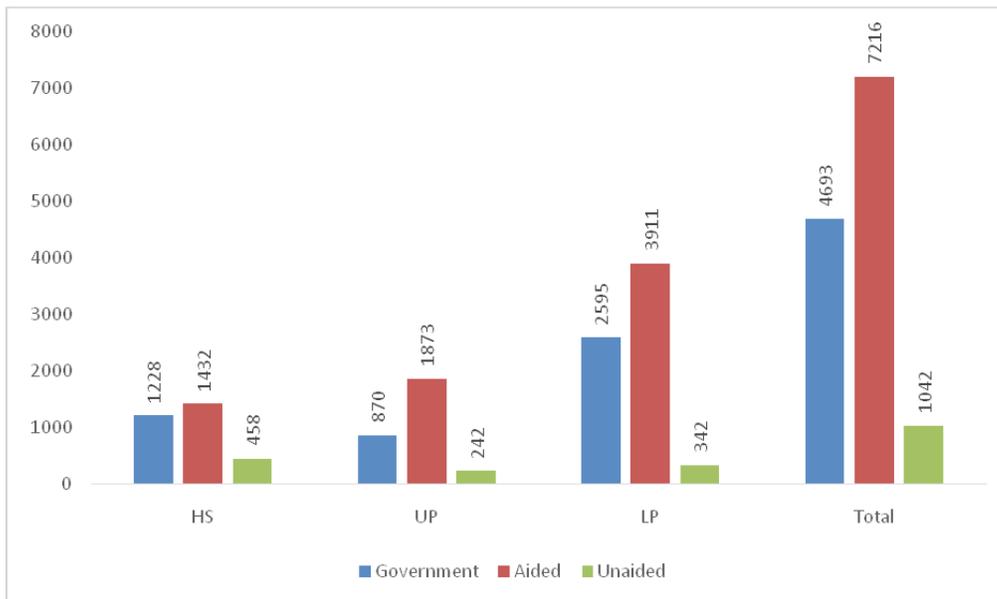
Source: Computed using the data collected from DPI

Graph 1.2 shows the increasing percentage of students in public schools in the State between 2016 and 2020. What is significant in this graph is that the only sector in the State registering a growing rate in the percentage of students is the government-owned schools.

Graph 1.2 Percentage of Students in Schools in Kerala: Different Types (2016-2020)
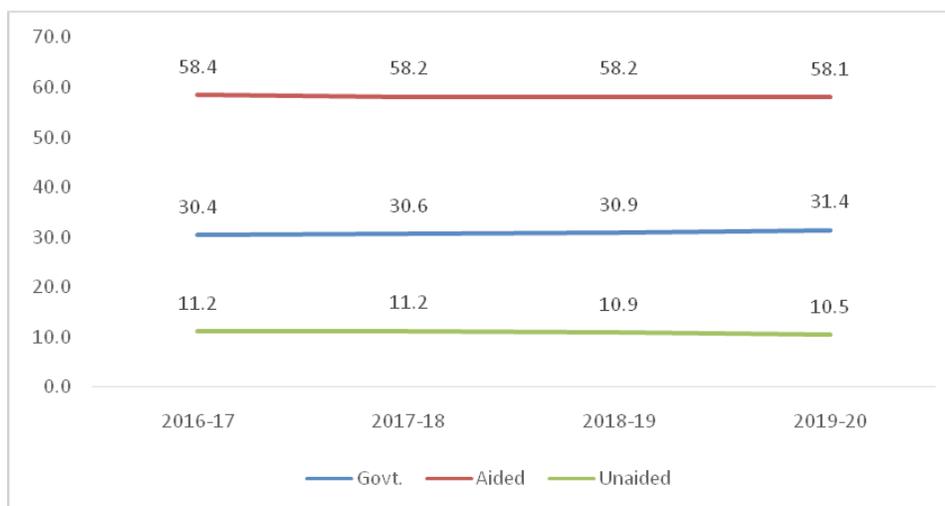
Source: Computed using the data collected from DPI

Graph 1.3 shows the number of students in public schools in the State during the period 1999-2000 to 2019-20. This graph indicates that from 2017, that is after the implementation of the Rejuvenation Campaign, there has been a steady increase in the strength of students in public schools.

Graph 1.3 Students' Strength in the Public Schools in Kerala, (1999-2020)
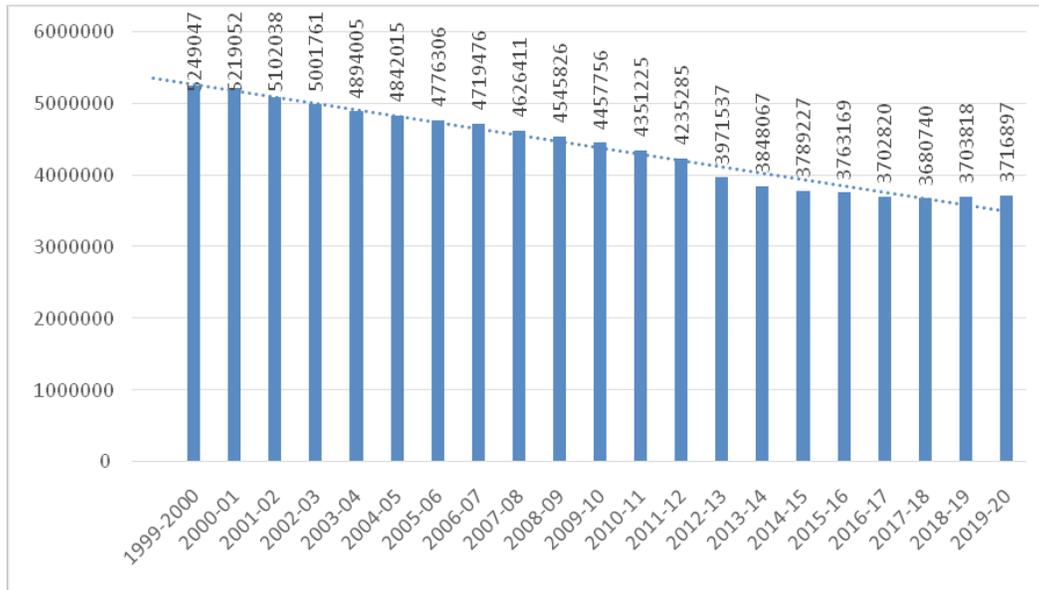
Source: Computed using the data collected from DPI

The connection between the population and enrolment in the schools is presented the graphs below (1.4, 1.5, 1.6, 1.7).

Graph 1.4 The Age-wise (0-4 and 5-14) Population in Kerala
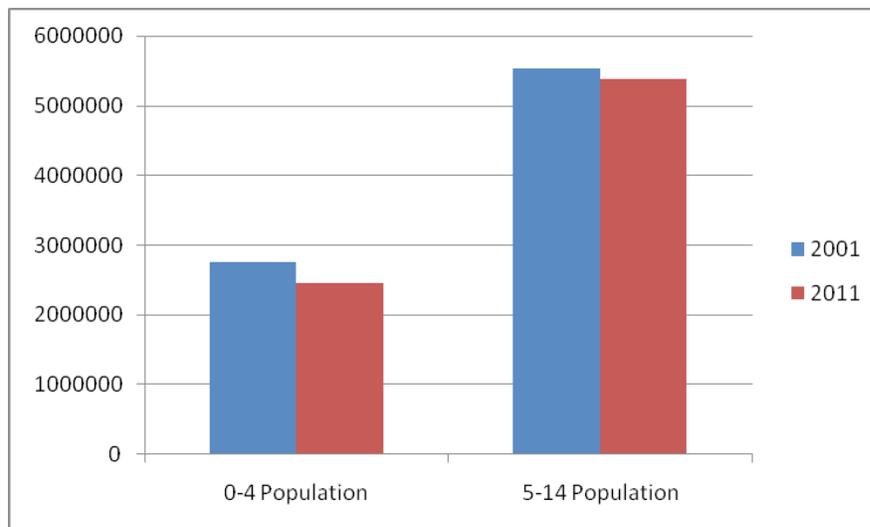
Source: Computed using the data collected from DPI

Graph 1.5 Number of Children Aged 1 Year in 2011 and School Enrolment
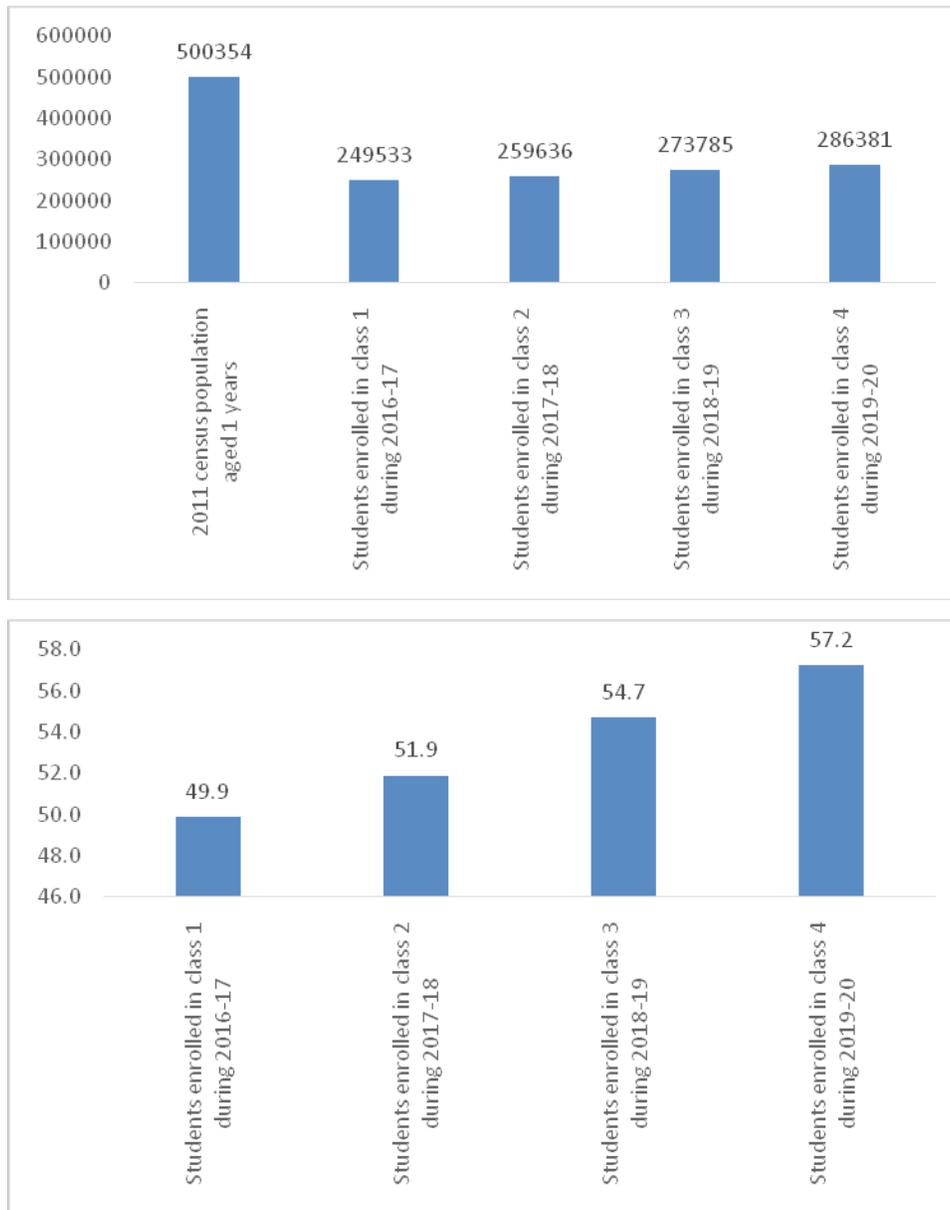
Source: Computed using the data collected from DPI

Graph 1.6 Number of Children Aged 2 in 2011 and School Enrolment
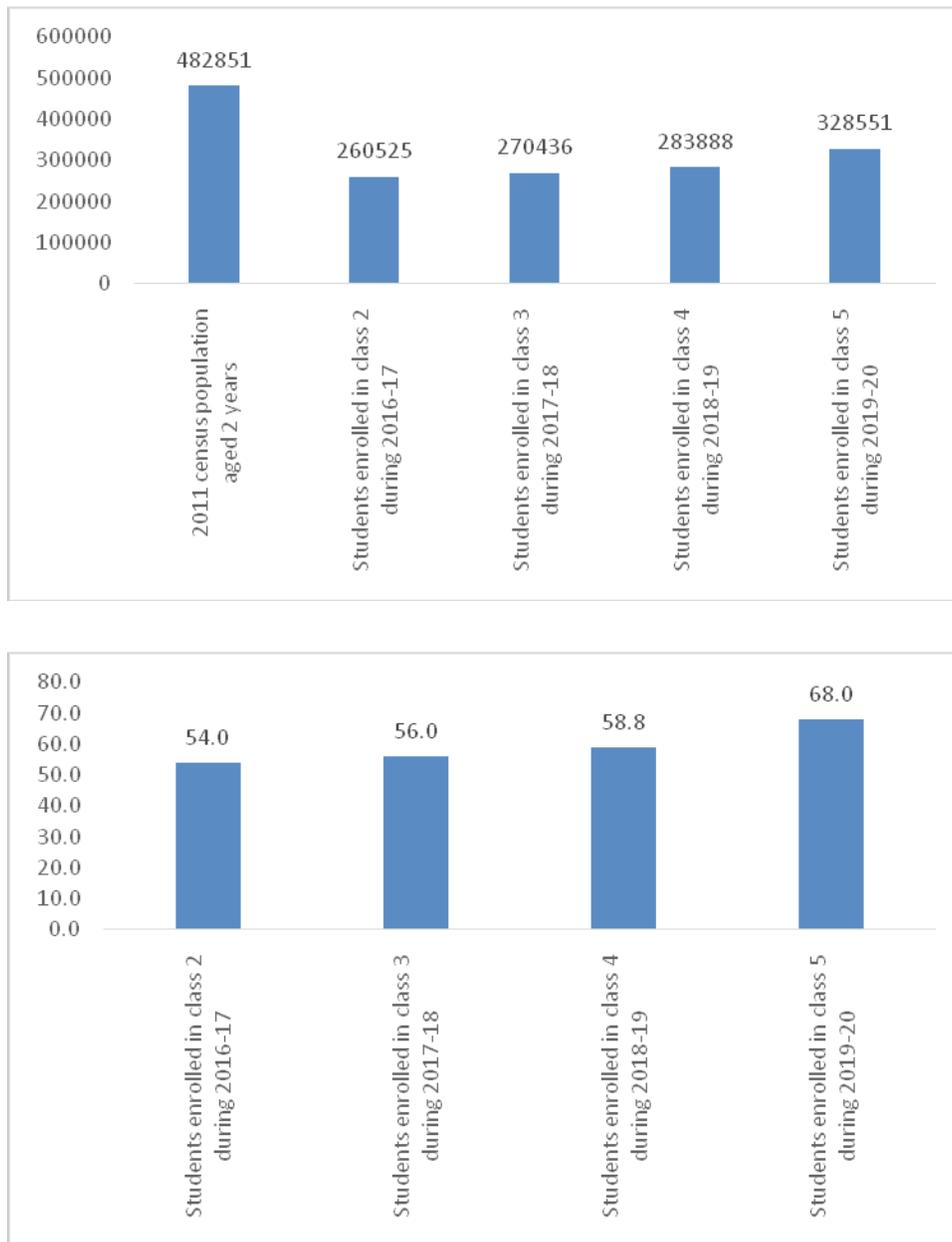
Source: Computed using the data collected from DPI

Graph 1.7 Number of Children Aged 3 in 2011 and School Enrolment
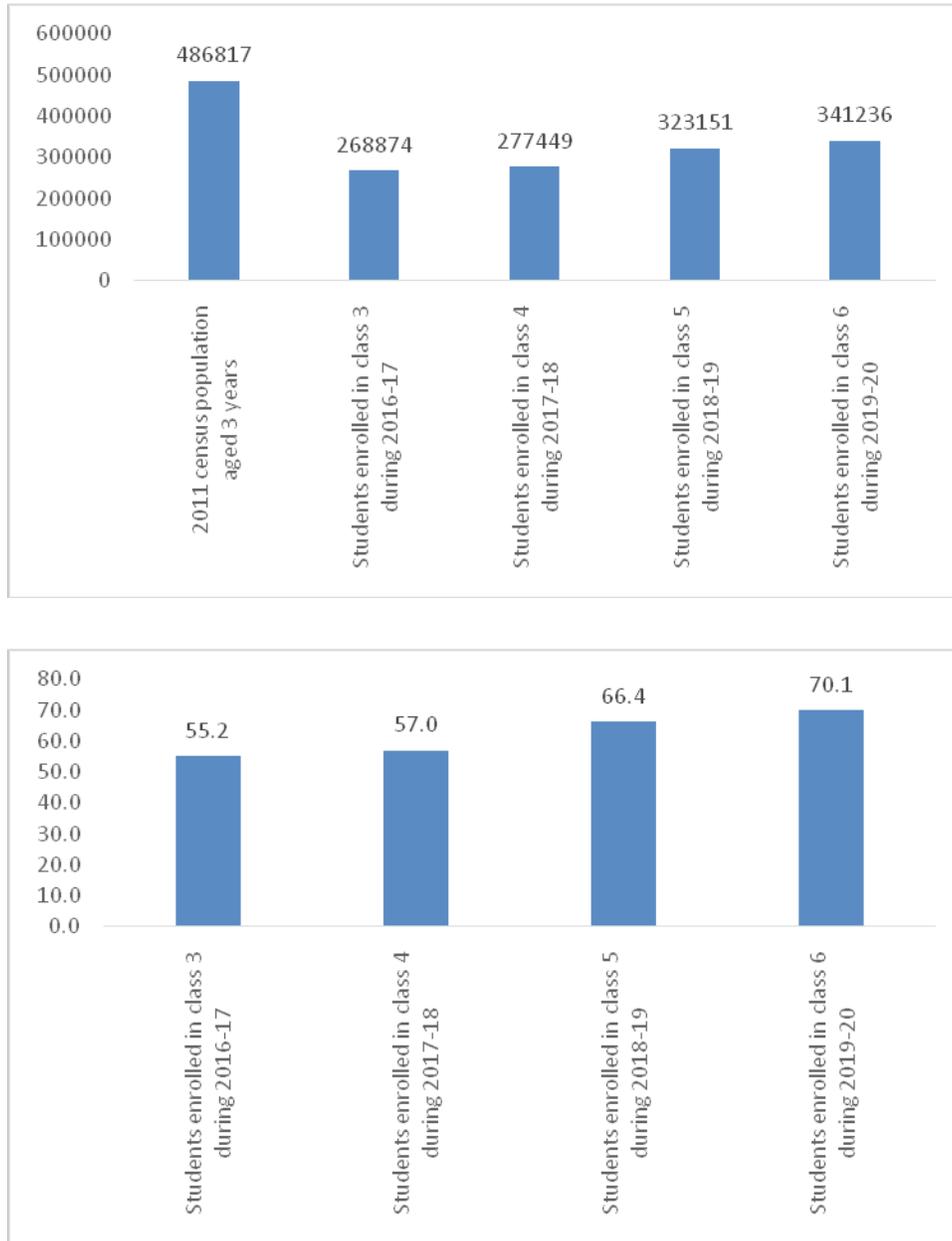
Source: Computed using the data collected from DPI

Graph 1.8 Number of Children Aged 4 in 2011 and School Enrolment
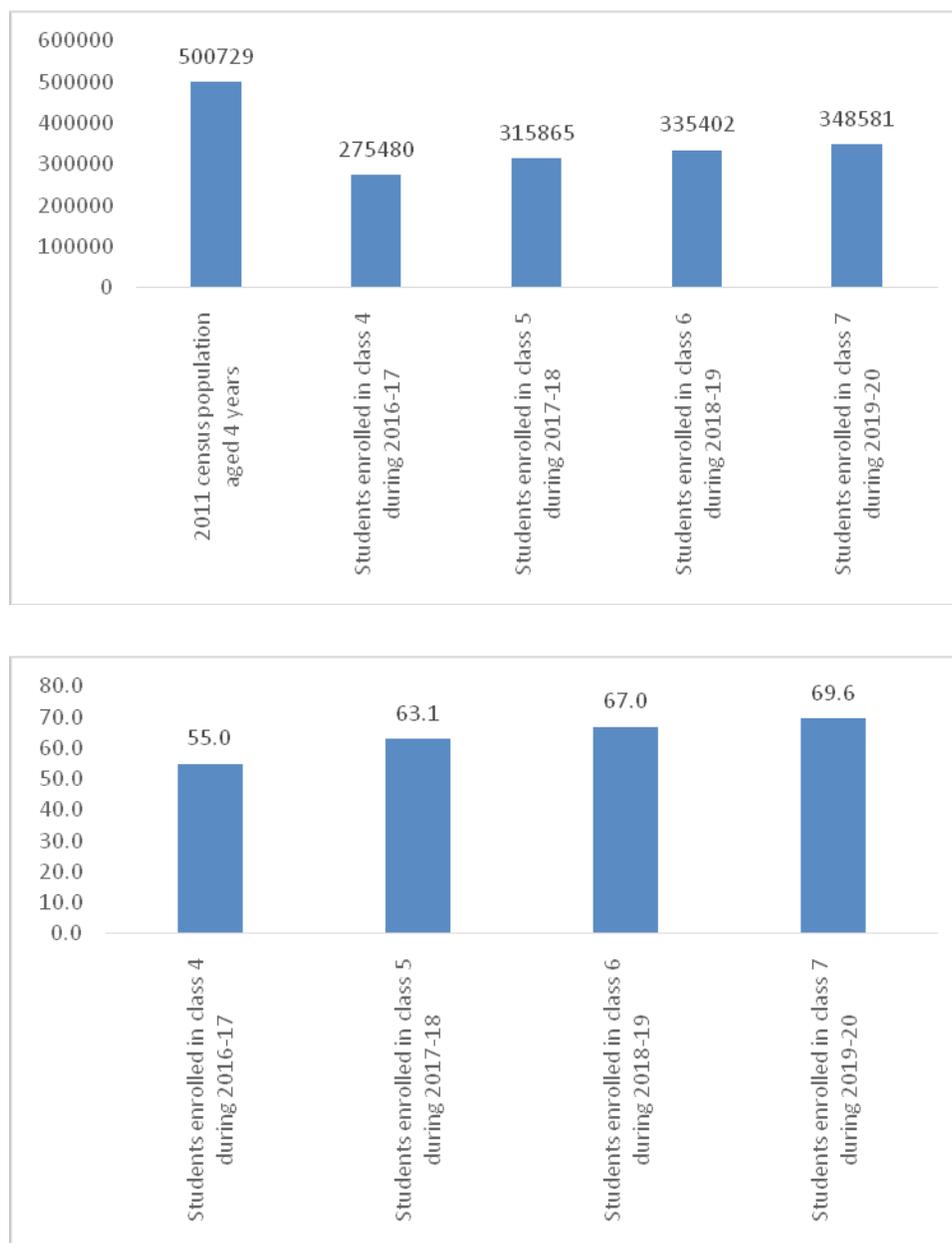
Source: Computed using the data collected from DPI

1.5. An Overview of Public Schooling in Kerala

The history of modern school education in Kerala can be traced back to the colonial period. In the pre-colonial period, education was a privileged right of the upper castes, and it also served religious purposes. Therefore, in that period, the role of the

State was minimal in giving education to the common people. The dissemination of knowledge in Kerala, during the said period, was socially regulated; it was strictly kept within the higher layers of social order, and within the control of the upper caste. The function of knowledge was then to reproduce the social hierarchy that maintained the feudal order.

1.5.1. The Colonial Period

The three regions in Kerala, namely Travancore, Cochin, and Malabar, before the formation of the State in its present form, have different stories to tell about the history of school education. Michael Tharakan links the development of education in Travancore with the commercialisation of agricultural economy, which spurred the demand for basic literacy skills such as the ability to read, write, and to do basic arithmetical exercises. Such skills were mainly provided in primary schools. Similarly, the bulk of the demand for personnel that came from the government was for persons educated in Malayalam (Tharakan 1984a: 1914). The school education and literacy during the period of anti-colonial struggle had also played a significant role in creating a consciousness against the then feudal system. Rajan Gurukkal identifies schooling as one of the sites that affected the socio-cultural reconstruction of colonial Kerala (Gurukkal 1999: 80-96). The modern education had not only made people literate but also sowed the seeds of modernity in peoples' mind. Both upper castes and lower castes simultaneously benefitted from this modern education, which was promoted by the progressive forces of the society. But the aims of the colonial education and colonial modernity cannot be separated from the colonial interests that were geared to meet the political-economic and administrative needs of the colonisers.

The acquisition of modern education by the upper castes prompted them to abandon many of the obsolete social practices and customs. The youngsters from among the upper castes were eager to learn English language and acquire modern education despite the opposition of the conservatives in the community who resisted any kind of change in this regard. As Houtart and Lemercinier observe, "When the social changes began, the Nambudiris refused to enter the stream of modernisation... Discontent showed itself first among the young, who demanded the right to English education, new marriage regulations, better means of subsistence, and an end to

the sufferings of the women, whose status was most unenviable" (Houtart and Lemercinier 1978b: 26).

The influence of the colonial modernity and colonial education system were very much visible on the socio-religious reform movements led by various progressive forces that emerged in Kerala by the end of the 19th and the beginning of the 20th century. These movements played a major role in spreading education and changing the existing social system.

1.5.2. Post Independent Kerala

After independence, the school education system in Kerala increasingly came under the control of democratically elected governments. In Kerala, it was particularly so after the formation of the first Communist-led government in 1957. Since then, various measures taken by the State governments have led to the rapid spread of education among the masses. As a result, the number of public schools increased considerably, which, in turn, contributed to the creation of a robust public education system. The educational institutions in the State are dominated mainly by two types of schools— government-owned and government-aided schools, known as the public educational institutions.

The successful development of a modern educational system, in fact, marks a turning point in the history of exploitation of the lower class, castes, and the women in the State, affecting and transforming generations of people across the State. For instance, the literacy rates among SC/ST population, though lower than those of the general population in the State, are higher than even the literacy rates for the general population in the rest of India (George 2011: 2). In their study, N Ajith Kumar and K K George enlist the inclusive features of the education system of Kerala (Kumar and George 2009: 55-56) as follows:

- School facilities to children in Kerala are available within a short distance, even in the rural area.

- The widespread availability of public transport system and the highly subsidised transport fares also facilitates easy access for rural students to higher educational institutions in towns and cities.

- Public educational institutions in Kerala are either owned or aided by the government. At present, education in these institutions is free.

Though the education system in Kerala is more inclusive than in the rest of the country, some exclusionary trends are also visible. Ajith Kumar and George (Ibid: 56-58) say that exclusionary trends have been getting stronger since the 1990s. They identify a few factors that led to the same in Kerala— one prominent factor is the proliferation of the private unaided schools along with the shift in the mindset of middle-class parents who preferred to send their children to private schools.

1.6. Democratisation of Education and its Challenges

As already mentioned, education was made accessible to all, irrespective of their caste, class, gender, and regional differences. The democratisation of education is universally recognised as integral to a secular and democratic polity and society. What constitutes democratisation in the field of education has different interpretations. One view tends to equate democratisation with universalisation. The democratisation of education fundamentally draws upon access, autonomy, and authority (Panikkar 1999: 70-71). Numerous factors have led to the democratisation of education in Kerala. The inclusive features, which are mentioned above, are significant among them.

K N Panikkar envisages a holistic concept of democratisation of education focusing on its structure and content, and says that such a holistic concept of democratisation has not yet become central to educational policy and practice. According to him, democratising of education is now facing a major threat from two sources, communalisation and globalisation (Panikkar 1999: 70-71). The increasing influence of globalisation and capital interests is a major threat to the democratisation of education in Kerala, which is evident in the phenomenal growth of the self-financed educational institutions in the State.

1.7. Modern Education and Democratisation of Kerala

Education has an important role in democratising a society. In Kerala, the practices of modern democratic education began to evolve during the later stages of colonialism, and they were not devoid of influences of the caste system and feudal values. But the situations have changed a lot. It is a generally agreed fact that Kerala

has achieved high social development, which has become a precondition for the overall democratisation process of Kerala. The developments in modern education has added further impetus to these wider social trends.

Education and literacy constitute the most important factors contributing to the Kerala Model of Development.This means that there is a direct correlation between education and development. Similarly, democracy and secularism are the two constituent elements of the social aspects of the Kerala Model of Development. The education system in Kerala has been designed in such a way that it inculcates the values of democracy and secularism in the minds of students.

1.8. Public Education Rejuvenation Campaign

The Public Education Rejuvenation Campaign is an integral part of the *Nava Kerala Karma Padhathi* (Mission for a New Kerala). It is a five-year-long action-oriented programme initiated by the Kerala government in 2016. Taking recourse to the participatory-governance process of the local self-governing institutions, the *Nava Kerala Karma Padhathi* tries to bring radical development in the sectors of education, health, housing, agriculture, waste management, and environment. The Public Education Rejuvenation Campaign is one of the flagship programmes in the *Nava Kerala Karma Padhathi.* The Public Education Rejuvenation Campaign aims at the resuscitation of the State's public education system through the phase-wise upgradation of the academic and the infrastructural settings and thereby to transform the public educational institutions as centres of excellence.

As part of the *Nava Kerala Karma Padhathi,* the Department of Planning and Economic Affairs released a circular on 26th November 2016. Based on the directives of this circular, the government designed a programme for the comprehensive revival of education schemes in the State, which was later named as the Public Education Rejuvenation Campaign. The above-said programme put forward a four-fold agenda:

1. Identify thousand public educational institutions and upgrade their academic standards to the international level in a gradual manner.

2. Convert all classrooms in government high schools and higher secondary

schools into Hi-Tech (or Smart) classrooms by using the advantages of modernisation and technology.

3. Carry out timely implementation of developmental schemes through close cooperation and constructive deliberation with Parents Teachers Association (PTA) and alumni organisations and thus enable the Rejuvenation Campaign to retain the old glory of Lower Primary and Upper Primary schools functioning in the public sector.

4. Provide special package for schools which have completed 50-100 years of service in the public education sector. Another aim is to make arrangements to equip students for English-learning.

What makes the Rejuvenation Campaign distinct is the way in which it uses the resources and materials of the State in order to design and implement its programmes. Apart from the State's financial sources, it seeks funds from many other sources for its functioning and operation. The people's participation in this regard makes it different from similar ones in the rest of the country. It is rather easy to formulate policies, but it required long-term vision, and the ability to take up the challenges of implementation, especially in a context where the education system is facing financial constraints. This means the combining of both financial and non-financial aspects in a synergetic manner to implement the programme successfully. In this sense, it reflects the great vision of the Government of Kerala, which came into power in 2016.

1.9. Major Objectives of the Study

The main objectives of the study are:

• To analyse the impact of the Rejuvenation Campaign with regard to the improvements in physical infrastructural facilities in the State's public educational institutions since the implementation of the campaign.

• To enquire about the impacts of the Rejuvenation Campaign with regard to improvements in the academic infrastructure in the State's public educational institutions over the last three years.

- To assess the impacts of the Rejuvenation Campaign with regard to the curriculum, pedagogy, and the learning process in the State's public educational institutions over the last three years.

- To identify the limitations of the Rejuvenation Campaign and draw suggestions for further improvement.

1.10. Rationale, Scope, and Limitations of the Present Study

Plenty of research has been conducted on the public education system in Kerala. This Public Education Rejuvenation Campaign is a new initiative in public education, and so far, no detailed research has been conducted on the same.

The present study identifies that the Public Education Rejuvenation Campaign has four foundational pillars:

(I)   Enhanced quality of education

(II)   Emphasis on the principles of democratisation, inclusiveness and social justice in education

(III)   Modernisation of public educational institutions

(IV)   Restoration of the link between public educational institutions and society.

On the one side, the Public Education Rejuvenation Campaign views education as the vehicle of social change, and on the other, it extols the nature of the 'public mindedness' of education. As the Public Education Rejuvenation Campaign is an ongoing programme in this direction, the present study intends to evaluate its relevance and impact on the ground.

1.11. The Methodology of the Study

 The Study is based on fieldwork on the public educational institutions in the State. Relevant information and data were collected from 336 select schools on which the analysis and findings of the study are based. Such data were triangulated through

Focus Group Discussions and Interviews with various stakeholders like officials, teachers, PTA office holders, LSG functionaries, peoples' representatives etc

1.11.1. Research Survey and Data Collection Method

The research adopted a triangulation method that encompasses both qualitative and quantitative tools for survey and data collection. For instance, five workshops were conducted in Thiruvananthapuram as part of the study, and a special workshop was conducted at Kerala Institute of Local Administration, Thrissur. Focus Group Discussions (FGD) and a series of open-ended individual interviews were undertaken primarily to identify the views, opinions, and perspectives of both high-level bureaucrats and teachers concerning the role of the Rejuvenation Campaign in empowering the present public education system, and these data collection methods fall under the qualitative approach. For the collection of primary data, the study conducted an extensive survey in selected 336schools across the State, and it adopted the quantitative approach in this regard to understand what sorts of programmes, projects, and schemes proposed by the Rejuvenation Campaign are actually in operation at the ground level. For this, the focus was given to the quantification of data. The present study has used Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) tools for the analysis of survey data.

The intention was to quantify ground-level perceptions, problems, advantages, and disadvantages emerging in the implementation of the Public Education Rejuvenation Campaign, and also to identify the responses of various stakeholders towards the same. The views and opinions of functionaries representing both administrative and executive realms, and the suggestions and criticism of the representatives of LSGIs, PTA associations, and educational experts on the Public Education Rejuvenation Campaign constitute the additional variables.

1.11.2. Quantitative Data Collection

In the present study, the fieldwork data, collected through structured questionnaires, have been analysed by taking recourse to MS Excel and Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS 16.0). So the quantitative analysis of the collected fieldwork data is done in the form of bar graphs in the present study. The extensive school-survey (based on structured questionnaires) constitutes the core of the quantitative

database. This is an essential part of the present study because, after all, it is intended to explore the ground reality concerning the implementation of the Public Education Rejuvenation Campaign for which the quantitative database is a fundamental pre-requisite.

1.11.3. Qualitative Data Collection

Individual or personal interviews, Focus Group Discussions, Workshops, and Seminars are the qualitative tools adopted in the present study for data generation. Such interviews of the elected representatives of LSGIs, office-bearers of the teachers association, private secretary of the Education Minister, representatives of PTA association, students and teachers, and the directors of the SCERT, and the members of the expert committee constituted by the government are taken to understand the views representing the ongoing status of the implementation of the Public Education Rejuvenation Campaign. All these individual interviews were qualitative, using open-ended questions for interviews.

Focus Group Discussions and Workshops, which are the vital tools of qualitative data collection, were conducted in a controlled environment based on a checklist of open-ended questions. Focus Group Discussions (FGD) were conducted at Gulati Institute of Finance and Taxation Thiruvanathapuram, KILA Thissur, SCERT, SSK, and various other institutions, including schools and LSGI offices, and educational experts, teachers, local body representatives, researchers, block and district-level functionaries of the Rejuvenation Campaign participated in these discussions.

1.11.4. Primary Sources

The present study takes recourse to the fieldwork data collected from school teachers, students, headmasters, students, PTA, Panchayat representatives, educational experts, and ground-level functionaries of the Rejuvenation Campaign for analysing the impacts of the Rejuvenation Campaign.

Also, it takes into account the sources such as Approach Paper, Roadmap, Government reports, expert committee reports, office orders, and circulars on the Public Education Rejuvenation Campaign. It considered various State laws, such as the Kerala Panchayati Raj Act, various educational acts, and Kerala Curriculum

Framework as part of the primary data. Similarly, the study also looked into Economic Reviews, the State budget reports, development/progress reports, and other relevant materials released by the government and its allied agencies on both the public education and the Rejuvenation Campaign.

1.11.5. Fieldwork Data Sampling

Kerala is one of the States in India that has a large number of schools working in the government, aided, and unaided sectors, respectively. For example, a total number of 3118 High Schools are functioning in Kerala at present, of which 1228 are government schools, 1432 are aided schools, and the rest (458) are unaided schools. As stated elsewhere in this chapter, this shows the aspect of accessibility of schools in Kerala— 'more than 94 per cent of the rural population is served by primary school/section within a distance of 1 km, while 98 per cent of the population has got one school within a distance of 2 km. More than 96 per cent of the population is served by an upper primary school/section within a distance of 3 km. Nearly 98 per cent of the rural population has the facility for secondary education within 8 km' (Kumar and George 2009: 55-56).

In the present study, schools located in all districts have been selected for fieldwork. However, the present study couldnot select all schools in each district, considering the practicability of fieldwork. So the present study selected two schools from each Block Resource Centre (BRC) in the State.

The selection of schools is based on the following parameters:

- School working in the government sector and school working in the aided sector

- School from the rural area (Panchayat) and school from the urban area (Municipality or Corporation)

- School from Lower Primary and Upper Primary sections

- Schools from High school, Higher secondary, and Vocational Higher secondary sections

- Schools located in the tribal-concentrated area

- Schools located in the fisherfolk area

- Both Boys and Girls schools

1.11.6. Stratification of the Fieldwork Data Sampling

- The total sampling size of schools is 336— two schools are selected from each BRC, and one teacher from each chosen school has been selected for the interview. Here,each selected teacher is considered a single data-unit representing each school selected for the study. A separate questionnaire (based on open-ended method) is designed exclusively for this purpose.

- The total sampling size of the headmaster/headmistress (Head of the School/ Institution) is 28. Concerning this method of sampling, the fieldwork of the present study randomly selected two headmasters/headmistresses from schools located in each district. A separate questionnaire based on the open-ended method is designed exclusively for this purpose.

- The total sampling size of the students is 672. Concerning this method of sampling, four students studying in schools from each BRC has been randomly selected for the fieldwork. A separate questionnaire, based on closed-ended method, is designed for this purpose.

- The total sampling size of the PTA presidents is 28. Concerning this method of sampling, two PTA presidents from each district have been randomly selected for the fieldwork. A separate questionnaire, based on open-ended method, is designed for this purpose.

Chapter **2**
Public Education
Rejuvenation Campaign: Conceptual
Framework and
Organisational Structure

2.1. Why the Rejuvenation Programme?

While the rest of the Indian states still wrestle with the tackling of problem of basic education, Kerala is doing better in the public education sector and has been suggested as a model of emulation for other Indian states. As is well known, Kerala was the first [Indian] State to have achieved universal literacy, with a near-universal school enrolment. The dropout rate in schools is also low, observes N Ajith Kumar and K K George (2009). Another notable feature of Kerala's educational system is that it developed mainly through institutions that are owned or aided by the government [so much so that] there are no fees at any level in schools (Ibid). Therefore, the public educational institutions (both government-owned and government-aided schools) in Kerala are the instrumental entities that satisfy the thirst for education of a large section of students who come from different economic classes and social groups.

Since the late 1980s, Kerala is not only at the forefront of mass literacy, but the State is also able to ensure that an overwhelming majority of children are getting adequate school education.[1] However, since the early 1990s, Kerala has witnessed the growth of private-unaided schools in the high school section. This is a significant event that demands particular attention because, in many ways, it is connected to the introduction of liberal policies in the educational sector of the country.[2] The case of Kerala, therefore, cannot be seen in isolation. For example, it was during 1991-1996; a total of 203 high schools were working in the private-unaided sector in Kerala. Likewise, during 2001-2006 the number of private-unaided high schools in Kerala rose to 366 and further increased to 453 during 2011- 2016.[3] For the most part, these private-unaided schools tend to view education from the logic of the market. By using the advantage of print and electronic media, these private-unaided schools project themselves as the centres of academic excellence. This has influenced the mindset of the middle-class and upper-middle-class sections in Kerala society; many among them believe that only CBSE or unaided private-owned schools can possess state of the art infrastructural facilities such as smart classrooms, libraries, laboratories, recreation centres, auditoriums etc. However, the Rejuvenation Campaign has rectified this misconception by providing better-quality infrastructural facilities to students in the public educational institutions free of the cost and thereby shattering the false notions of the middle-class and upper-middle-class sections about public educational institutions in Kerala. What is interesting is that the academic standard projected by private unaided schools is

1. See, Chandrasekhar, C P; Ramachandran, V K and Ramkumar, R (2001): Issues in School Education in Contemporary Kerala, A Paper prepared for UNICEF, New Delhi.

2. With implementation of liberalisation policies in India, the private investment in traditional service sectors like education became much easier, whichsubsequently led to transformation of education, that it has transformed from being a State's subject to a market good. This, in a way, signifies the withdrawal of the State from the service sector and many reasons have contributed for this. In the view of S Venkatanarayanan (2015), the increase in private unaided schools could be attributed to the decreasing expenditure on education by the Central Government. Further, it is also due to the reprioritisation of the Central Government more toward non-formal learning than toward investing in strengthening formal schooling in India. See, Venkatanarayanan, S (2015): Economic Liberalisation in 1991 and Its Impact on Elementary Education in India, Sage Open, Vol 5, No 2, pp. 1-13.

3. See, Expert Committee Report (2019) on Kerala's Education, p.32.

a matter of debate, for they do not conduct a screening test in the appointment of teachers like the State does for the appointment of teachers in the public educational institutions.

The unbridled growth of educational institutions in the private-unaided sector further emphasises the need for the revitalisation of public educational institutions, which calls for an urgent rejuvenation package for them. It is needed especially in the domains of physical-academic infrastructure, curriculum, and pedagogy so as to facilitate their transformation into future centres of academic excellence. With this backdrop, an attempt is made in the present section to discuss the idea behind the Rejuvenation Campaign— its objectives, characteristics, and the vital areas of emphasis for the radical rejuvenation of the public education system. The Rejuvenation Campaign is an action-oriented programme of the Government of Kerala. It aims at the phased up-gradation of the public educational institutions which thereby seeks to convert the same into future centres of academic excellence. In its basic approach, it aims at social commitment so that everyone gets equal opportunity to avail better quality education as their Fundamental Right. The spirit and rationale of the Rejuvenation Campaign rest in the history of the social renaissance and decentralised governance of Kerala, for it upholds the principles of freedom, social justice, equal opportunity, along with participatory governance and decentralised planning. In other words, the Rejuvenation Campaignis conceived as a catalyst for the creation of a 'just society' by transforming human beings through education.

The Rejuvenation Campaign has both short-term and long-term goals. For instance, assuring quality education through timely revision of syllabi is one of its short-term goals. And, empowering and enabling the future generation to address the pressing problems in the social, cultural, and environmental domains is one of the long-term goals envisioned by the Rejuvenation Campaign. What is more impressive is that the Rejuvenation Campaign carries a vision about education at its core. It considers the all-round development of a child, and provides a broad definition of education as an enlightening force that enables a person to discover his or her inner potential. Education opens up an understanding of human beings about the world in which they find themselves.

Since education is the highest of all virtues, the public educational institutions should become the centres of holistic development of students— i.e., the motto of public educational institutions should be the physical, psychological, moral, rational, and intellectual enrichment of students. The education imparted by public educational institutions should, therefore, equip the students to gain an understanding of the importance of principles like equal opportunity, democratisation, constitutionalism, secularism, and social justice. Besides, it should inculcate the values of humanism and scientific temper. One of the programmes proposed by the Rejuvenation Campaign named *Naitheekam* deserves particular mention here, for it helps the students to gain an awareness of their civil-political and constitutional rights as the citizens of the country. In short, the definition proposed by the Rejuvenation Campaign about education is broader than what is written in the school textbooks. The Rejuvenation Campaign lays emphasis on the self-enquiry of students, which in turn will make them free seekers of knowledge.

2.2. The Formation of the Rejuvenation Campaign

The Rejuvenation Campaign is an integral part of the *Nava Kerala Karma Padhathi* (Mission for a New Kerala), a five-year-long action-oriented programme launched by the State government in 2016. The *Nava Kerala Karma Padhathi* primarily focuses on the development of some key sectors such as education, health, housing, agriculture, waste management, and the environment by taking part in the participatory-governance process of the local self-governing institutions.[4] The Rejuvenation Campaign is one such programme under *Nava Kerala Karma Padhathi,* aiming at the resuscitation of the public education system in a manner that could meet the challenges and prospects of the future. To achieve the objectives of various sectors highlighted by the *Nava Kerala Karma Padhathi,* the Department of Planning and Economic Affairs of the Kerala Government released a circular on 26th November 2016. Based on the directives of that circular, the government designed a programme for the comprehensive revival of the public education scheme. This programme later renamed as the Public Education Rejuvenation Campaign, and based on the directives of the said circular proposes the following action-plan.

4.   Nava Kerala Mission Launched (2016): The Hindu, Thiruvananthapuram, 10th November; Nava Kerala Mission: Government Sets Project on (2016): Deccan Chronicle, Thiruvananthapuram, 11th November; Nava Kerala Mission Projects Launched (2016): Mathrubhumi, Thiruvananthapuram, 10th November.

- Identify 1000 public schools and make concrete efforts to upgrade its standard of education to the international level.

- Convert all classrooms of high school and higher secondary schools in the public educational institutions into Hi-Tech classrooms by using the advantages of ICT based teaching-learning tools and applications besides carrying out the improvement of the physical infrastructure of schools.

- Carry out timely implementation of developmental schemes in close cooperation and constructive deliberation with Parents Teachers Association and alumni associations and thereby tries to retain the old glory of lower primary and upper primary schools functioning in the public sector.

- Provide special package for schools which have completed 50-100 years of service in the public education sector. Also, create and execute learning programmes for improving the English-learning of the students.

2.3. Objectives of the Public Education Rejuvenation Campaign

As per the approach paper published by the Department of General Education, the following are the main objectives of the Rejuvenation Campaign.

- Creation of an entirely child-centred Anganwadis. The revision of the existing method of studying in pre-schools and offering new forms of training to teachers working in pre-schools.

- Make sure that children belonging to each standard have acquired enough knowledge, understanding, and skill to the best of his/her ability, of which he/she should have learnt as part of the curriculum.

- The children should possess a clear conceptual understanding of the disciplines taught at school. He/she should possess good knowledge and understanding in subjects like mathematics, science, and information technology. In addition, he/she should be active in extra-curricular subjects.

- The students should acquire knowledge in the domain of issues in social and environmental settings.

- Each student should develop communicative ability at least in three languages.

- Make sure that the education imparting at school has the potential to uncover the students'constructive abilities since the aim of the education process is the all-encompassing development of the students.

- Provide all necessary facilities that could bring international standards to the education system.

- Offer efficient training for teachers in order to ensure high-quality teaching in public educational institutions.

- Creation of plastic-free school campuses and develop environmental consciousness amongst the students.

- Convert the school campus as an environment for learning and gaining experience about life-lessons.

- Make arrangements to put an end to the school dropout.

- Develop an international model for emulation in all domains of school education.

- Give special priority to the marginalised and thereby bringing them to the centre stage of the mainstream discourse on education.

- Operationalise the democratisation of education in the real sense of the term.

- Develop skill education and vocational training as part of the curriculum in order to professionally empower the students. In doing so, the students could gain a primary knowledge about employment when they reach the age of eighteen.

- Modernise school labs and libraries.

- Provide counselling facilities to students at school.

- Establish public-oriented systems to monitor the function of the public educational institutions in the State.

2.4. Conceptual Framework of the Rejuvenation Campaign

The conceptual framework of the Rejuvenation Campaign revolves around the ideas and approaches it proposes in connection with the resuscitation of the public education system. The discussions unfold in the ensuing pages give a clear understanding of the conceptual framework of the Rejuvenation Campaign.

2.4.1. Revised Curriculum

One of the critical tasks of the Rejuvenation Campaign is to examine the academic potential of the students in public educational institutions. The Rejuvenation Campaign aims at enabling students in the public educational institution to comprehend the academic concepts and theorems taught in schools by imparting of 'quality education' of international standards. It emphasises the aspect of 'quality' over 'quantity' because Kerala State, has already addressed the problem of 'quantity.' In all the national indicators (such as universal enrolment, schools' accessibility, retention and dropout rate, inclusiveness of educational institutions, and gender and regional balance in education) of education, Kerala fares well and holds the top-most position. The question then is how good is the quality of Kerala's public education system as compared to the rest of the states in the country. The Rejuvenation Campaign addresses this question by aiming to upgrade the State's education system to international standards by transforming the public educational institutions into centres of excellence.

It is the Kerala Curriculum Framework (KCF) of 2007 that forms the basis of current curriculum revision taking place as part of the Rejuvenation Campaign. It stresses the principles of equal opportunity, constitutionalism, environmentalism, skill education, and social justice. Moreover, the curriculum revision also touches upon the process of individual-making and citizen-building since the Rejuvenation Campaign considers education as a potential tool for the development of an ideal human being. It is interesting to note here that the ongoing curriculum revision

recognises both self-study and group-study as integral methods of learning and thereby encouraging each student to develop self-sufficiency to overcome the problems and limitations that he or she encounter in the individual and associational life.

Besides, the present curriculum revision proposed by the Rejuvenation Campaign lays emphasis on the boosting of students' self-confidence by encouraging them to acquire knowledge through self-enquiry and thereby compelling them to use their mental capacity to the fullest. As Dr J Prasad, the director of the State Council of the Educational Research and Training (SCERT), correctly points out, the fundamental aim of the curriculum revision taking place under the Rejuvenation Campaign is the creation of 'organic intellectuals.'[5] Also, the current curriculum revision seeks to touch upon the values of secularism, equality, and democracy because education is, after all, a tool whose aim is to mould a civilised social being. Another noticeable aspect of the curriculum revision is its willingness to emulate wherever relevant, the contents, knowledge, teaching methods, and modes of evaluation from other countries that are faring well in education. The Rejuvenation Campaign, in that sense, can be called a 'search'— it is a search for finding new alternatives for further progress of the public education system. The curriculum revision, therefore, tries to synthesise new ideas, lessons, practices, and experiences emerging in the education sector and thereby strives to contribute something new to Kerala's educational culture.

2.4.2. Redesigning pre-school education

The pre-school centres are one of the vital areas of the early phase of education. The pre-school centres are the ones that first open up the world outside the home to children. Hence, the Rejuvenation Campaign's vision is that the atmosphere of the pre-school centres should be child-centred. It is estimated that around 40,000 pre-school centres are functioning in the State.[6] Many types of administration run and govern the pre-school centres— some pre-school centres are run by the government whilst some are administered by the PTA, and these pre-school centres get support from the government. Besides, Anganwadis working under the

---

5. Source: Personal Interview, conducted on 30th November, 2019.
6. See, Expert Committee Report on Education, 2019, Govt of Kerala, p.64.

Department of Women and Child Development also fall under the purview of pre-school centres. There are also some pre-school centres are managed by private educational institutions and individuals.[7]

Article 11 of the Right to Education Act of 2009 says that "with a view to prepare children above the age of three years for elementary education and to provide early childhood care and education for all children until they complete the age of six years, the appropriate government may make necessary arrangement for providing free pre-school education for such children." The above-cited Article of the Right to Education Act is exceptionally significant because, as yet, a standardisation policy is absent in the State discussing the modalities of the functioning of the pre-school centres. The expert committee report (2019) submitted by Prof. MA Khader suggests the need for constituting a regulatory body in this regard. The Rejuvenation Campaign also puts forward some vital observations similar to the said report. For instance, the Rejuvenation Campaign is planning to draft a curriculum design concerning the pre-school system in the State apart from the stress on the need for modernising the physical infrastructure of the pre-school centres so that a certain degree of executive control can be put in place in the pre-school sector. Apart from that, the government, through the Rejuvenation Campaign, wants to integrate the system of pre-school education with public education.

Another concern expressed by the government is related to the equity principle. That is to say; the Rejuvenation Campaign wants to make sure that the children belonging to tribal regions are also getting the same pre-school facilities and treatment that are available to their counterparts living in other areas. The Rejuvenation Campaign would take initiatives to establish 'model pre-schools' in all Panchayati Raj Institutions (PRIs), which, in turn would, bestow a democratic character to the said activities. Besides, the government will provide proper training to all pre-school teachers, including those working in Anganvadis. A resource team will be set up at the Block Panchayat level to carry out this task. The government will also make efforts to coordinate the activities of various departments and staff agencies working in the sector of pre-school education. Further, the coordination of all academic activities that fall into the ambit of the pre-school education will be carried out through the SCERT.

---

7. Ibid.

2.4.3. Education is a process of all-encompassing development of the students

The Rejuvenation Campaign has a broad view of education. It does not, therefore, consider education as mere academic activities often confined to the realms of textbooks and classroom tests. Activities that trigger the physical, artistic, and intellectual potential of students also form integral parts of modern education. Considering education as a potential tool in identifying and enriching the students' inherent talents, the Rejuvenation Campaign proposes 'to discover the inner potential of each student and help him/her to be the best in the areas where they can perform well.'[8]Because until the inception of the Rejuvenation Campaign, the curriculum design of Kerala's public education system was more teacher-centric and textbook-oriented, and, so, it did not provide much scope for a teacher to uncover the inner potential of the students.What becomes vital here is that such transformation demands the structural modification of the curriculum.

Such a focus on the all-encompassing development of the students leads not only to an attitudinal change of the students towards education but also radical transformation of the learning atmosphere of the public educational institutions.

Physical Education

It has been observed that physical education is often viewed as subsidiary or marginal in the Indian education system. But underestimating the relevance of physical education is akin to the undermining the importance of the students' physical wellbeing and fitness. In many public educational institutions in Kerala, the condition of physical education is poor primarily because of the paucity of physical education teachers, and the lack of proper infrastructural amenities. The Rejuvenation Campaign is, therefore, putting a great effort to improve the condition of schools' playgrounds and thereby trying to underline the importance of physical education in schools. The Kerala Curriculum Framework (2007), upon which the curriculum revision of the Rejuvenation Campaign proposes is based, recognises the academic significance of physical education. It says, for example, that physical fitness and a healthy mind are essential for a learner in his/ her learning process. Health, whether physical or mental, is a decisive factor in personality development, which is influenced by factors that are organic, social, cultural, economic, and

8. Source: Personal Interview, Director, Samagra Shiksha Kerala, Held on 28th November, 2019

political (KCF 2007). Physical education can spread health awareness amongst the students, besides reducing the mental stress of students. Richard Bailey (2005) contends that apart from mental development, physical education imparts many social values to the students, such as the ideals of fairness, self-discipline, solidarity, team spirit, tolerance, and fair play.[9]

Art Education

Likewise, modern educational theories and perspectives underline the necessity of art education. The application of the Multiple Intelligence Theory is of great importance in concept formation and creative expression. Art education promotes a learner's constructive and creative skills, observes, the Kerala Curriculum Framework of 2007. In tune with this observation, the Rejuvenation Campaign reminds us of the significance of incorporation of art forms like acting, dance, music, and painting in the curriculum. This should be made possible by revising the existing curriculum based on the Kerala Curriculum Framework of 2007 because art education is something that makes the students engage with society in a deep, intuitive and profound manner. In that sense, art education can convey, in many ways, the gist of the human condition to the students.[10]

Skill Training

Another point emphasised by the Rejuvenation Campaign is the significance of skill education in the curriculum. As we know, Kerala, albeit being a highly educated state,

9. See, Bailey, Richard (2005): Evaluating the Relationship between Physical Education, Sport, and Social Inclusion, Educational Review, vol 57, no 1, pp.71-90.

10. Take Vincent van Gogh's famous painting 'The Potato Eaters' (1885) as an example of the pure expression of art. It is the first knockout masterpiece of van Gogh. The thick dark colour is chosen in this painting is not for giving a pictorial effect, but to show us something philosophically about the meaning of human condition. The heavily loaded brush stocks is a metaphorical signification of the heaviness of the life of the manual labourers. The only light that makes the imagery visible in this painting is the pale light of the lamp hanging above the people who eat potatoes. Besides, the hands and clothes of the potato eaters are filthy, and their faces are lost in total identification. Yet, their eyes tell everything about the hardness of their life. The painting gives a hint that these people (i.e., the potato eaters) have dug the earth with their bare hands and using the same bare hands for putting the potatoes into the dish. In one way or the other, this signifies the human condition — these people are having an honestly earned meal after doing a long time hard manual labour.

still wrestles with the problem of educated unemployment. This has a lot to do with the nature of the education system in the State, which do not lay adequate emphasis on employability and skill training. In this context, employment-training and the development of vocational skills need a special focus in the school education itself, reason why the Rejuvenation Campaign proposes employment-training and the development of vocational skills at the school level. The imparting of employment-training and developing vocational skills at the school level enables the students to gain preliminary knowledge about employment before the completion of the higher secondary education. The incorporation of the Additional Skill Acquisition Programme (ASAP) within the purview of the school education is one such praise-worthy move.

Scientific Temper

The prime aim of the Rejuvenation Campaign is the imparting of scientific and rational awareness amongst the students. For this, a programme named *Mathrika Shasthralab* (Model Science Lab) is set up in 1000 selected Upper Primary schools. Also, a two-day programme called *Shasthrolsavam* (Science Festival)is conducted in each Upper Primary schools in every Panchayat. Apart from these, programmes like *Shasthrapadham*, *Ganitha Vijayam, Ullasa Ganitham,* Little Scientist, Science Exhibition, Book Fair, *Bhaumam, Humanities Padana Poshana Paripadi,* etc have been organised in the schools. All these programmes have different aims and address different target groups.

Language Skills

Language-acquisition is yet another area where the Rejuvenation Campaign tries to lay emphasis. Several Learning Enhancement Programmes(LEP) have been designed to improve the language skills of students— *Malayala Thilakkam, Hello English*, and *Sureeli Hindi* are some good examples in this direction. Another notable programme of the Rejuvenation Campaign is *Shradha,* which deserves special appreciation here. The meaning of the Malayalam term *Shradha* is 'attention' or 'focus,' and 'care'. As the name suggests, the programme pays special attention to under-performing students in various subjects. *Shradha* helps the students to overcome their weak spots, and improve their learning skills and pace.

2.4.4. Environmental education

The precarious climate change, air pollution, the unexpected spread of contagious diseases, and the sudden eruption of environmental disasters are nowadays making human life on earth unprecedentedly difficult. Our environment is at risk, and everyone, especially the younger generation, need to be sensitised about the responsibility to protect our environment.

The devastating floods in Kerala (2018 and 2019) and the subsequent surge in public consciousness about curbing human activities that contribute to such environmental risks indicate the transformation taking place in the worldview of Keralites. It seems that we have learnt a pensive lesson from our terrible experiences. Nevertheless, how many of our school students have an understanding of the potential dangers of the environmental risks in general, and how effective is the State's public education system in inculcating ecological consciousness amongst our children?. There is no doubt that the public education system has to acknowledge the necessity of imparting environmental values and inculcating environmental consciousness to students. The Kerala Curriculum Framework (2007) has already recognised the importance of environmental education to the students. It says, for example, that students should develop an environmental consciousness that is sensitive about preserving natural resources (Ibid).

Realising this, the Rejuvenation Campaign lays stress on environmentalism and seeks to create environmental consciousness amongst students by creating environmental zones at schools. Gaining knowledge through experiencing the environment is one of the most significant aspects of curriculum-revision proposed by the Rejuvenation Campaign. The setting up of environmental parks and biodiversity zones within the compounds of public educational institutions is another initiative worth mentioning here. In every school, a plastic-free environment is created, and the guidelines of the green protocol are being followed. All these attempts are expected to generate and nurture environmental consciousness among students.

2.4.5. Issue of social justice and inclusion

The issue of social justice is a pertinent question in our educational system. To address this question, the Rejuvenation Campaign aims to provide quality education

to all students regardless of the socio-economic and cultural position in society. Many programmes such as *Gothrabandu, Bridge Materials,* and *Ooru Vidhyabhyasa Kendram*, etc.are designed to address the issues of social justice and inclusion in education. These programmes specifically address the issues related to linguistic-cultural alienation often encountered by the Scheduled Tribes students in schools.

The idea of social justice is inextricably linked with the idea of inclusion, that means, in practical terms, the integration of groups/sections into the mainstream. For example, students who have problems like autismor physical disabilities, as well as students who are socially marginalised like those belonging to linguistic minority, etc. To address the problems of students who come under these groups/sections and to integrate them into the mainstream, the Rejuvenation Campaign proposes many programmes. The *Autism Park, Sahavasa Camp, World Day For Physically And Mentally Challenged*, etc are some such programmes. And for addressing issues of students with physical disabilities, the government conducts medical camps at the beginning of every academic year to identify the medical requirements of the students. And by November every year, medical aids and equipment are provided to the children free of cost. Wheelchairs, hearing aids, spectacles etc. are some of the equipment provided as part of the campaign. Sports meet and arts fest areconducted annually to ensure the participation of differently-abled students in extra-curricular activities. All these programmes of the Rejuvenation Campaign are designed for ensuring social justice in public educational institutions.

2.4.6. Democratic Values

The Rejuvenation Campaign envisions an educational system that upholds the value of democracy, and views the educational institutions as the prime agency of the early process of political socialisation.[11] The proposal to establish the school

---

11. Political socialisation is a conceptual term commonly used in sociology and political science. In short, political socialisation refers to the process of social and associational life in which the individual develops certain opinions, attitudes, views, orientations, and assumptions etc. towards the prevailing socio-political system. Often, schools and other educational institutions are considered to be the paramount agencies of political socialisation. Being an agent, the schools may contribute directly or indirectly in shaping the students' socio-political orientations and opinions toward the existing systems. In some cases, the orientation, attitude, and opinion of the students' towards the prevailing system may be supportive, whereas sometimes it may change drastically, enabling the students to look at its functions critically. In both cases, however, we discern a strong

parliament is conceived as an initiative in this direction. In practice, the school parliament has a significant role in inculcating democratic mindset such as respect for dissent and difference of opinions, concern for the public good, belief in gender equality and secularism, and respect for humanist values. It also has vital functions like assisting the School Management Committee (SMC) representatives, and coordinating the activities of National Cadet Corps (NCC), National Service Scheme (NSS), and Student Police Cadet (SPC).

2.4.7. Modernisation of school library and labs

A modernised and well-equipped laboratories and labs are essential to all public educational institutions. The Kerala Curriculum Framework of 2007, prescribes that every primary schools should have a class library. The secondary and the higher secondary schools ought to possess a school library and lab along with facilities to utilise modern technology.[12] Realising this, the Rejuvenation Campaign stresses the modernisation of school libraries and labs as they play an indispensable role in improving the quality and standard of public education system. Under the Rejuvenation Campaign, the task of modernising school libraries and labs comes under the purview of the academic infrastructure.

The modernisation of school libraries is essential for nurturing reading culture among the students. Hence, steps are being taken in digitalising school libraries along with the improvement of the schools' infrastructure. In fact, the most noticeable aspect of the ongoing modernisation programme of school libraries is the concept of 'classroom library' according to which each classroom would set up a library. Apart from developing a culture of critical thinking, the establishment of 'classroom library' enables the students to undertake some managerial responsibilities as well— for instance, according to 'classroom library' concept, the students can borrow books from classroom library which will be strictly monitored by a student who discharges the duties of a librarian. The books in the classroom library often come from students, parents, and teachers, and hence its operationalisation has

presence of the development of a socio-political thought process amongst the students, which we see as the resultant of the political socialisation process. The Rejuvenation Campaign, in many ways, contributes to accelerating the vivacity of the political socialisation process.
12. See, Kerala Curriculum Framework (2007), p.80

the character of a collective effort. Moreover, the government is also thinking of appointing people with professional training in the domain of library management. Such a decision of the government if materialised, will be of great help in the long run, and can make the school library system a well organised and professional enterprise.

The Rejuvenation Campaign also emphasises the modernisation of science labs in the schools. The infrastructural up-gradation is taking place in school labs as part of this programme. There is no doubt that a modernised and well-equipped lab is a requirement as long as the public education system stresses the aspect of science education and the creation of scientific temper amongst the students. Science is the foundation stone for the development of human beings. The scientific study aims to develop logical thinking and to wipe out superstition among students and to create a future generation who can observe freely in a natural way and enquires about it.[13]

2.4.8. Hi-tech classrooms and infrastructural development

For the Rejuvenation Campaign, the creation of Hi-tech classrooms, and the improvement of schools' infrastructure plays an essential role in enhancing the standard of public education. The Hi-tech classrooms will have internet connectivity, facility for video conferencing, projector for presentations, and better quality furniture. This will create enthusiasm amongst the students regarding the learning process and will help them in coping up with the up-to-date modes of teaching-learning tools such as eBooks, online study repositories, and educational portals. Besides, the employment of modern technological facilities in the sphere of teaching will also reduce the workload of teachers, and energise the teaching/learning environment.

Improvement of schools' infrastructure enhances the standard of the public education system, which will also influence the physical and psychological conditions of the student engaged in the learning process. Every school needs quality infrastructural facilities for developing different faculties in students like physical education and sports (playgrounds), art education (auditoriums and theatre), scientific temper (school labs), language skills (library and reading materials),

---

13. See, SSK, Annual Report, 208-19, Retrieved from
http://ssakerala.in/home/home/docs/Annual%20Report%202018-19.pdf

vocational training (experimentation centres), and environmental consciousness (biodiversity parks and environmental zones). It will also support the ongoing curriculum revision which demands the betterment of school infrastructure. For example, ICT-enabled teaching and learning is at the heart of both the curriculum and pedagogy in the State's public education policy. For the proper utilisation of ICT-enabled teaching tools and learning applications, better-quality classroom-infrastructure is a prerequisite. According to the Kerala Curriculum Framework of 2007,...'there has to be a total change in the curriculum. By this, we mean that there should be a change in the infrastructure of our schools. We should also reform the academic environment.'[14]

2.4.9.Teachers' Training

The Rejuvenation Campaign calls for adoption of a new framework for teachers' training, which aims to elevate the quality of teaching in the existing public education system and to bring the issue of social justice to the centre stage. It constitutes a resource team consisting of experts in the field of education to formulate the details of the new framework of teachers' training, and further links it up with the top scientific and higher educational institutions. In practice, this will help teachers to develop a research-oriented mindset in their profession. This new framework proposes an Induction Course— a training programme providing for newly qualified but less experienced teachers who are new in the teaching profession. Besides these, a mandatory eight-day annual training for all teachers is also given within the present system apart from ICT-enhanced training through Kerala Infrastructure and Technology for Education (KITE), to familiarise teachers with ICT-enhanced teaching tools and applications. Another significant aspect of this new framework of teachers' training is the constant performance appraisal of teachers.

2.4.10. Decentralisation in education: constituting a public body system for monitoring the functions of the school

India's public education system is marked by centralisation, and so is the case with Kerala too, where power, responsibilities, and tasks are still vested with the government department and its staff. The general public, until the inception of the

14. See, Kerala Curriculum Framework, (2007), p.6

Rejuvenation Campaign, had only a marginal role in the operational activities of the public education. They did not have any kind of participation except in the PTA meetings.The Rejuvenation Campaign invites the general public into the education process by emphasising the principle of participatory governance and thereby promoting a culture of decentralisationof the public education.

For instance, the Rejuvenation Campaign calls for active participation of the Panchayati Raj Institutions and also people living near the schools. The Rejuvenation Campaign proposes a road map for the comprehensive development of the schools based on the constructive opinions of teachers, parents, alumnus, elected representatives of the Panchayats, and local people interested in the functioning of educational institutions. Also, to evaluate the operations of the schools' development, the Rejuvenation Campaign suggests the need for creating community bodies based on the leadership of PTAs, School Management Committees (SMCs), and schools' committees. This is where the idea of social auditing comes in which is an essential and direct democratic tool to ensure transparency in the decentralised-participatory governing process of the educational system.

2.5. The Rejuvenation Campaign: Its Organisational Structure

The organisational structure of the Rejuvenation Campaign has a decentralised character as it comprises of several committees, task-forces, and staff agencies. The committees of the Rejuvenation Campaign are of four kinds, such as the state-level committee, district-level committee, constituency-level committee, and the committee working at the LSGIs level. Apart from these, several task-forces are also working at various levels as part of the Rejuvenation Campaign. And then comes the network of staff agencies whose responsibility is to assist the committees and task-forces whenever required.

ORGANISATIONAL CHART
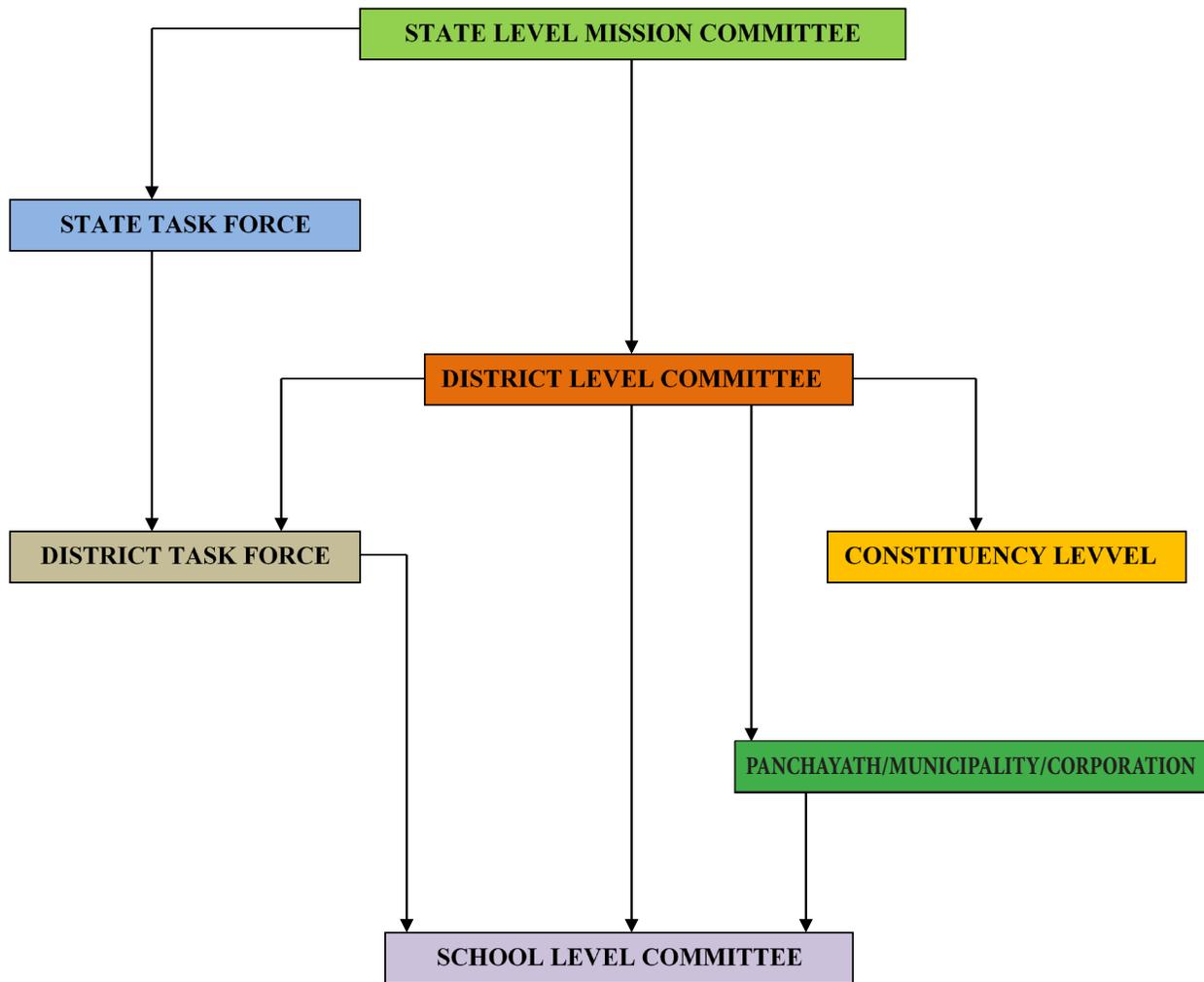
2.5.1. The State-level mission committee

The chairman of the State-level mission committee is the Chief Minister. The Minister of Education is the vice-chairman of this committee. The State-level mission committee has three deputy chairmen, such as the Minister of Finance, the Minister of Local Self-Government Institutions, and the Minister of Social Justice. The leader of the opposition, holds the position of special invitee in the State-level mission committee. Other members of the committee are— a member of the State Planning Board nominated by the vice-chairman of the said board, secretary of the educational department, secretary of the social justice department, secretary of the LSGI department, secretary of the scheduled caste and scheduled tribe department, secretary of the fisheries department, and finally the secretary of the IT department.

The State-level mission committee has a task-force headed by the secretary of the Education Department. The same secretary also holds the position of the mission-secretary of the State-level mission committee. Apart from having a chairman headed by the secretary of the Education Department, the task-force also has a full-time mission executive whose function is to undertake its day-to-day operations. Since the Rejuvenation Campaign stresses the aspect of ICT based education and comprehensive teachers training, the State-level task-force comprises of educational experts and directors of various institutes such as State Council of Education Research and Training (SCERT), IT@school[15], and Samagra Shiksha Kerala (SSK)[16]. The following are the primary responsibilities of the State-level mission of the Rejuvenation Campaign.

- Review the curriculum based on the comprehensive report submitted by the respective authority. Also, formulate an action plan that could help the differently-abled children, and take measures to tackle the problem of physical infrastructure of the schools apart from coordinating the activities concerning the deployment of ITC enabled education through installing

---

15. The IT@school has now become the Kerala Infrastructure and Technology for Education, acronymically known as the 'KITE' of which a detailed discussion is provided in chapter III of this study.
16. The Samagra Shiksha Kerala (SSK) is created as per the direction of 2018-2019 Union Budget proposal. The activities of SSK is, therefore, extensive comprising of school activities starting from pre-school to the higher secondary level.

internet connectivity in all schools.

- Pronounce directives on the composition of an executive agency in connection with the tasks mentioned above.

- Endorse the plan prepared by the mission task-force, and call for an evaluation meeting of the mission task-force and coordination meetings besides declaring department-wise orders required for the successful execution of the master plan.

- Prepare handbooks that comprised of mission tasks, a road map on comprehensive school development, approach paper on projects, and sketches, and plans on buildings. These handbooks should be distributed to school-level convenors, and also, the same should be used as materials for their training. The responsibility of undertaking the above tasks is assigned to Samagra Shiksha Kerala.

- Prepare a universal design of learning ICT-enabled pedagogical activities, offer teachers training that could accommodate all children belonged to all sections, and this should be done through the active monitoring of the State Council of Education Research and Training and KITE.

2.5.2. District-level mission committee

The president of the District Panchayat/the chairman of the District Planning Board will be the head of the district-level mission committee. Its membership comprises of the elected members of parliament and legislative assembly from the respective district (MPs and MLAs), Mayor, Municipal Chairman, one Block Panchayat President, two Grama Panchayat Presidents (those who occupies the position of president and secretary in the district-level association of the Panchayat presidents). The position of the secretary of the district-level mission committee is held by both District Collector and the secretary of the District Planning Board, respectively.

The responsibility of the district-level mission committee is to identify schools that need up-gradation as part of the Rejuvenation Campaign's agenda—the enhancement of the academic standards of the public educational institutions to the international

level. Also, the district-level mission committee should coordinate the activities of the PTA, mother PTA, alumni association, local voluntary organisation with that of the proposed programmes of the Rejuvenation Campaign. While identifying schools for the up-gradation process, the district-level mission committee should give priority based on two criteria: One, schools that have more enrolment; Second, schools that are functioning in comparatively old buildings. The following are the primary responsibilities of the district-level mission committee.

- Based on criteria made by the government, identify schools that are eligible to be converted as the future centres of academic excellence.

- Take leadership-initiative for coordinating and integrating the activities of the PTA, mother PTA, alumni association, local voluntary organisation with that of the proposed programmes of the Rejuvenation Campaign.

- Endorse the masterplan prepared by the mission task-force.

- Review programmes, undertake coordination activities and evaluate the progress of projects and programmes.

- Expedite necessary procedural steps that are required for the schools to receive financial assistance from sources other than the government and its allied institutions.

- Take actions to ensure transparency in fund allocation.

2.5.2.1. District Educational Body

The patrons of the district educational body are the ministers. The chairman is either the District Panchayat President or the chairman of the District Planning Board. The Deputy Director Education (DDE) holds the position of the convener, and the joint- convenor is either the principal of the DIET or District Programme Officer (DPO). The primary responsibilities of the district educational body are:

- Draft a comprehensive educational programme at the district level by codifying the academic-development projects working in the Grama

Panchayat and Municipality level. Besides, the district educational body has the responsibility to ensure that it can offer resource-support to institutions working at the district level.

- Coordinate the activities of various departments working at the district level as part of the Rejuvenation Campaign.

- Take the leadership role in the district level campaign activities.

- Ensure popular support in association with the organisation and the execution of the Rejuvenation Campaign's policies.

- Ensure fund-availability for the Rejuvenation Campaign.

- Take actions to identify sponsors, and integrate district level educational programmes with the proposed programmes of the Rejuvenation Campaign.

2.5.3. Constituency-Level Educational Body

The patron of the constituency-level educational body is the Member of Parliament (MP) representing the respective assembly constituency while the chairman of the same is the Member of Legislative Assembly (MLA). The vice-chairmanship of the constituency-level educational body is shared between the Municipal chairman and the Block Panchayat presidents. The District Educational Officer (DEO) and the representatives of both Higher Secondary and Vocational Higher Secondary principals hold the position of the convenor. The sub-district educational officer is the working convenor, and the joint-convenor is the Block Programme Officer (SSK) of the constituency-level educational body. Often, the composition of the membership of the constituency-level educational body is divergent— Grama Panchayat presidents, members of District Panchayat, members of Block Panchayat, educational activists, a faculty member of the DIET, sub-district educational officers, representatives of political parties, representatives of the teachers association, and Block engineer. The primary responsibilities of the constituency-level educational body are:

- Prepare a factual report about the schools in the constituency and based on

which design a comprehensive programme on a priority basis to convert these schools into the future centres of academic excellence.

- Take leadership-initiative for coordinating and integrating the activities of the PTA, mother PTA, alumni association, local voluntary organisation with the proposed programmes of the Rejuvenation Campaign.

- Select schools concerning the construction of swimming pools, arts-sports-cultural parks, autism centres, etc.

- Expedite necessary procedural steps that are required for the schools to receive financial assistance from sources other than the government and its allied institutions.

2.5.4. Local Self-Government-Level Educational Body

For the successful functioning of the Rejuvenation Campaign, educational-development bodies have to be created at the grassroots level (Grama Panchayat/Municipality/Corporation). The structure of the grassroots level educational-development bodies is comprised of a chairman (Grama Panchayat president/Municipal chairman/Corporation mayor) and vice-chairman (Grama Panchayat vice-president/Municipal vice-chairman/Corporation deputy mayor, standing committee chairman of the Grama Panchayat on health and education). The membership of the grassroots level educational-development body is vast, and it has an executive committee whose responsibility is to undertake the day-to-day work of the same. The primary duties of the executive committee are given below.

- Take leadership initiatives in the activities of Grama Panchayat/Municipality concerning the programmes of the Rejuvenation Campaign.

- Coordinate and organise activities in schools at the Grama Panchayat/Municipality level that are required for upgrading the schools' academic and physical infrastructure.

- Draft a comprehensive educational-development programme at the Panchayat/Municipality level.

- Ensure public participation in the ongoing Rejuvenation Campaign, and take initiatives for coordinating and integrating various educational programmes designed by the Central, State, and the Panchayat level governments.

- Prepare programmes for academic excellence at the local level and encourage the general public and parents to involve in the educational system functioning at the grassroots level.

- Ensure that every school has proper physical infrastructural amenities concerning the arts-sports training.

- Perform the job of school-resource mapping and ensure the services of special-teachers.

2.6. The Task-Forces

Two kinds of task-forces are functioning as part of the Rejuvenation Campaign—one is the State level, and another is at the district level. Usually, the task-forces work as supporting agencies whose principal duty is to the effective execution of the Rejuvenation Campaign's mission. The task-force functioning at the State level is more of an executive agency, for its chairman and the mission secretary is the principal secretary of the general education department. Its membership-composition is often vast, comprising of Higher Secondary Director, Vocational Higher Secondary Director, Director of the General Education department, Director of SCERT, Director of State Institute of Educational Management and Training (SIEMAT), Director of State Institute of Educational Technology (SIET), State Project Director of SSK, State Project Director of RMSA, Chief executive Officer of Additional Skill Acquisition Programme (ASAP), Executive Director of IT@school (KITE), one representative from the Department of Social Justice, and five educational experts.

Similarly, the chairman of the District level task-force is the District Collector, and the coordinator is the district office of Deputy Director of Education (DDE). The other members of the District level task-force are— all district-level educational officers, district project officer of the SSK, deputy director of the respective Higher Secondary educational zone, principal of the District Institute of Education and Training (DIET), District level Project Manager of ASAP, and Executive Engineer

(construction division). What, however, interesting is a few responsibilities of the task-forces working in both the State and district levels are identical, for instance, preparation of masterplan, and the planning and execution of the ICT centred teachers training programmes.

2.7.Education Agencies

Though the organisational structure of the Rejuvenation Campaign revolves around the activities of the political and permanent executives, its successful operation mostly depends on the performance of certain staff agencies that work at the ground level. The staff agencies assist the chief functionaries (incumbents who undertake various roles and responsibilities concerning the implementation of the Rejuvenation Campaign at various levels) by providing information, technical and material support, managerial and administrative skills/expertise, and undertaking activities that enable the processes of coordination, integration, evaluation, and monitoring of various projects, programmes, and schemes designed by the Rejuvenation Campaign.

2.7.1. State Council of Educational Research and Training (SCERT)

The State Council of Educational Research and Training functions as a research and development agency at the state level by providing guidance, support, and assistance to the State Education Department in its endeavour to improve the quality of elementary and secondary education in addition to teachers education. It often engages in academic activities such as formulation/revision of curriculum, preparation of textbooks, teachers' handbooks, and training. It also offers advice to the government on school education.[17] In the particular context of the Rejuvenation Campaign, the SCERT performs the following duties.

- Undertake activities required for the upgrading of the academic standards.

- Offer academic resource-support.

- Offer teachers training and undertake academic leadership.

17. See, the Official Webportal of SCERT, Retrieved from http://www.scert.kerala.gov.in/index. php?option=com_content&view=article&id=55&Itemid=18

- Carry out research activities.

- Coordinate the activities of other agencies working in the domain of education.

- Introduce innovative programs in learning-teaching and organise seminars, training classes, and workshops on education.

2.7.2. State Institute of Educational Management and Training (SIEMAT)

The State Institute of Educational Management and Training- Kerala (SIEMAT) is an autonomous institution established under Department of General Education in tune with the National Institute of Educational Planning and Administration, New Delhi (NIEPA) for imparting educational management training to the stakeholders in the education sector in the State of Kerala. Since inception, the SIEMAT has been contributing in various ways for imparting management training for leaders in the educational sector, including the heads of the institutions, educational officers, parents, LSG members, administrative staff, special school functionaries, etc. Imparting training to teachers in classroom management in order to create a student-friendly environment in schools has also been a fundamental objective of the SIEMAT.[18]

- Provide management training in such a way that it could help the proper execution of programmes.

- Arrange a platform for sharing unique experiences.

- Perform documentation work and conduct impact-analysis studies.

- Conduct keen evaluation and offer management training in the selected region, Panchayat, and school levels.

2.7.3. Kerala Infrastructure and Technology for Education (KITE)

The Kerala Infrastructure and Technology for Education, popularly known as KITE was formed in 2017. Before the establishment as a full-fledged company, the KITE used to be the part of the mission named 'IT@school project.' However, in the year

---

18. See, https://siemat.kerala.gov.in/about-us/

2017, the Government of Kerala decided to convert the then 'IT@school project' into the form of a government undertaking, and the net result was the formation of the KITE. The government did so because it wanted to expand the scope of the then 'IT@school project' into a broader spectrum through forming an SPV, the KITE.

- Lend technological support and offer technical training to teachers.

- Develop ICT based study material/resources.

- Online monitoring and e-governance.

- Promote educational activities through VICTERS channel.

2.7.3.1. VICTERS channel

The second phase of EDUSAT initiative was the launch of an educational channel - IT@School VICTERS (Versatile ICT Resource for Students) in 2006. Through Receive Only Terminals (ROTs) a large majority of schools in the State are able to access VICTERS. Over and above this, VICTERS is transmitted through the local cable networks and covers 80 per cent of the households in the State. Currently, VICTERS is telecast 17 hours in a day, from 6 a.m to 11 p.m.[19]

Figure 2.1 KITE (Representational Image)

2.7.4. District Institute of Education and Training (DIET)

The District Institutes of Education and Training (DIETs) were envisioned in the

---

19. See, https://kite.kerala.gov.in/KITE/index.php/welcome/ict/10

National Policy of Education, 1986. They were created by the Government of India, Ministry of Human Resource Development in the late 1980s, to strengthen the elementary education and support the decentralisation of education at the district level. They were created through a centrally supported scheme and following the guidelines suggested in the 'pink book' (Government of India,1989).[20]

- Develop a model for academic activities and closely monitor the same.

- Develop academic support-materials for both teachers and students.

- Organise training camps and workshops.

- Introduce innovative ideas and carry out academic evaluation programmes.

- Academically strengthen Block Resource Centres (BRC) and Cluster Resource Centre (CRC) and offers timely resource-support.

2.8. Concluding Remarks

The conceptual framework of the Rejuvenation Campaign is a novel one, and its organisational structure is designed to ensure effectiveness and transparency in the implementation of programmes intended to resuscitate the public education system in the State. The organisational structure, intent and pattern of implementation of the Rejuvenation Campaign, are geared to revamping of the public educational institutions in the State both with regard to the physical infrastructure as well as academic standards. The Rejuvenation Campaign intends to create bridge of trust between the school and the society at large.

---

20. See, DIET, Online Webportal, Retrieved from https://www.dietthrissur.org/

Chapter 3

Impact of Rejuvenation Campaign on General/Physical Infrastructure

3.1. Introduction

The general infrastructure of public educational institutions, such as buildings, spacious classrooms, seating-arrangements, lavatories, safe drinking water, playgrounds, apart from commutation service, the disabled-friendly architectural design, and gender-sensitive spaces etc have a definitive impact upon the physical, psychological, and academic welfare of students. Hence, along with curriculum and pedagogy, the condition of schools' general infrastructure invariably influences not only the students but also the mindset of parents, teachers, and the general citizenry towards the public educational system. School teachers and the functionaries of the Parents-Students Association often agree that the general infrastructure is a significant factor influencing the enrolment pattern of the school.[1]

---

1. Our fieldwork data further proves this postulation, that is, according to the opinion registered

The general infrastructure, therefore, constitutesthe basic learning/teaching environment of an educational institution. Afolabi (2002), for instance, contends that the deficiency in schools' general infrastructure can severely affect the learning environment and also the quality and productivity of students. Even a minor deficiency in the seating-arrangement in the classroom-space or lack of cross-ventilation can produce severe difficulties and discomfort in the learning environment of students, which undoubtedly generates a negative outcome in the quality of their learning process. General infrastructure of schools is, for that reason, a necessary pre-requisite, without which the public education system can no longer function properly, or can it attain academic productivity or excellence.

Nevertheless, the general infrastructure of the public educational institutions in Kerala is way better compared to most other Indian states. The 8[th]report of the seventh All India School Education Survey (2009) conducted by the National Council of Educational Research and Training (NCERT) is a testimony to the better infrastructural facilities in the State. The said report, for instance, praises the quality of the existing physical infrastructural amenities in the public educational institutionsin Kerala— all schools working in the public sector in the State have proper buildings, so much so that no public educational institutionsin Kerala function in 'open space' or under the shadow of trees.[2] Therefore, the infrastructural problems encountered by the public educational institutionsin Kerala at present are mostly 'third-generation problems'— those problems that are related to either the advancement or the improvement of the existing conditions of the schools'

by 96.1 per cent of schools in the field survey unanimously agree that the betterment of schools' infrastructure can influence the enrolment pattern. Moreover,in the qualitative interviews of the PTA presidents also underscores that there is a considerable improvement in the enrolment pattern after the improvement of the infrastructural facilities in many public educational institutions. The personal interview with C K Latheesh, the state convenor of the Kerala Government Schools PTA Forum deserves a special mentioning in this regard.

2. The said report states that in both Kerala and Tamil Nadu, no schools function in 'open space'. Whereas in Andhra Pradesh, a total number of 728 schools function in 'open space', and in Karnataka, 23 schools do not have proper buildings so they function in 'open space'. See, Seventh All India Educational Survey (2002): New Delhi: National Council of Educational Research and Training, Retrieved from http://www.ncert.nic.in/programmes/education_survey/pdfs/Schools_Physical_Ancillary_Facilities.pdf

general infrastructure.[3] The Rejuvenation Campaign tries to address these 'third-generation problems,' and seeks to upgrade the schools' general infrastructure gradually in order for the public educational institutions in Kerala to attain international standards.

3.2. The Rejuvenation Campaign and Changes in the Key Areas of Public Educational Institutions

Since the inception of the Rejuvenation Campaign in 2016, the general infrastructure of the public educational institutions in Kerala is undergoing a dramatic transformation. The predominant force that made such transformation possible was the proactive roles played by the State government (including all its apparatuses), Local Self-Government Institutions (LSGIs), elected representatives, civil society organisations and the general public. They are all integral part of the Rejuvenation Campaign's concerted efforts to revive and reform the public education system in the State, and to influence public perceptions about government schools. In a way, this new consciousness seeks to re-establish the lost link between society and schools, which is also one of the crucial impacts conceived by the Rejuvenation Campaign in the domain of public education, in order to bring about a transformation in the perception of the general public about the public educational institutions in Kerala.

The Rejuvenation Campaign aims to convert the existing public educational institutions into the future centres of academic excellence, and to realise the same, the existing infrastructural facilities in the State's public educational institutions need to be upgraded in the first place. It has been noted that a favourable attitude towards school infrastructure facilitates motivation for an increase in school attendance and improves the academic performance of students (Mehra, Bali, and Arora, 2012). What seems interesting though is Kerala as compared to other Indian states is at the top in terms of the schools' infrastructural facilities (Ibid) as many public educational institutions in the State have the facilities like playgrounds, boundary walls, safe drinking water, useable toilets, girls' lavatories, auditoriums, and hygienic kitchens. Besides, the Rejuvenation Campaign also demands the

---

3. The first-generation problems are, on the contrary, related to the paucity or the lack of schools' infrastructure, and Kerala is, of course, not facing any of such problems.

betterment of the infrastructural facilities of the public educational institutions. Because in order to accomplish the productive outcomes of such curriculum and pedagogical revision, the current infrastructural facilities of the public educational institutions have to be upgraded equivalent to the international standards as part of the larger project of revitalising the public education system.

Similarly, there is an increase in the participation of the general public in schools' activities since the implementation of the Rejuvenation Campaign. For example, the participation of the general public in programmes like the annual school day fest and *Praveshanolsavam* (school opening festival) has been steadily increasing shortly after the implementation of the Rejuvenation Campaign. The general public nowadays also take part actively in works concerning the improvement of schools' infrastructure, and sometimes they offer financial contributions/assistance for the same as well. This kind of unprecedented increase in the participation of the general public in matters related to the functioning of the public educational institutions is, indeed, a good sign, signifying the emergence of a new social consciousness in the civil society sphere which carries a message that the success of the public educational institution depends on the result of a collective effort of the people.

Graph 3.1. Rejuvenation Campaign and Changes in the Key Areas of Public Educational Institutions
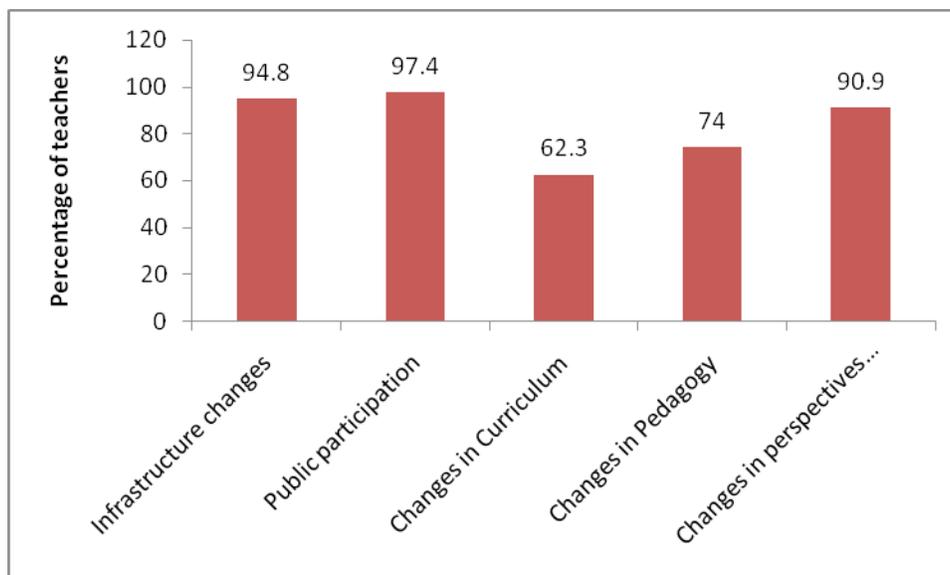
Source: Fieldwork

3.2.1. Increasing Public Participation in Schools

The field data collected from schools (both government and aided) across the State underscore the fact that there is a staggering increase in the participation of the general public in school-related activities since the implementation of the Rejuvenation Campaign. For example, 97.4 per cent of school teachers who have participated in the field survey hold the opinion that there has been a steady increase in the participation of the common populace in matters related to the functioning of the public educational institutions after the implementation of the Rejuvenation Campaign.[4] Besides, all head of the institutions (headmasters/headmistresses) and presidents of the Parents-Teachers Association who have also participated in the field survey hold the same opinion that the Rejuvenation Campaign is able to enhance the participation of the general public when it comes to the issues concerning the daily operation of their schools.[5]

"For the last three years or so, the level of public participation is increasing steadily in our schools. When I joined here as the headmistress, the ordinary people hardly took part in activities/events organised by the school, such as the celebration of Keralapiravi or Independence Day, for that matter. However, for the last few years, we start getting financial assistance from the state government and panchayat for carrying out works related to the improvement of the schools' physical infrastructure. Besides, we have got laptops, projectors, printers, and speakers from KITE. As a result of strenuous work in cooperation with the state government, we have now converted all classrooms into hi-tech, and our students are showing keen interest in ICT based learning methods. It seems to me that all these have influenced the ordinary people to reflect upon our school. As a result, they are now actively taking part in activities/events in the school, be it related to the annual day celebration or it related to the preparation of the school for the cluster-level school youth festival. What is the most astonishing thing is that ordinary people now start giving the financial contribution to our school, telling us that they have a commitment to fulfil because many of them used to be former students."
— *Headmistress, Govt Vocational Higher Secondary School, Kanakkary, Kottayam*

Source: Fieldwork

To gain an in-depth understanding of the increasing public participation in school-related activities, the present study takes a serious note of some of the 'elements'. So

---

4. A total number of 336 schools have been selected for the fieldwork. The major group of respondents in the school survey is the teachers. Each teacher participated in this survey is represented as a single unit representing the respective school. Hence, 336 teachers here represent 336 schools. (See Graph 3.1.).

5. A total number of 28 school headmasters/headmistresses were randomly selected for fieldwork based on the criteria of 2 headmasters/headmistresses from schools located in each district (2 x 14 = 28). Each of this selected headmaster/headmistress is taken as each unit representing the respective school. The total sampling size of the PTA presidents is 28 —from each district, 2 PTA presidents were interviewed as part of the fieldwork.

the first element present study wants to examine in connection with the increasing public participation in school-related activities is the proactive involvement of the school alumni itself. Here, the present study observes positive transformation since the implementation of the Rejuvenation Campaign. Nowadays, the school alumni association is not just an organisation comprising of former students, but has become one of the potentially significant funding-sources for infrastructural development of the schools. For example, in the opinion of 53.8 per cent of teachers (See Graph 3.5) who have participated in the field survey, the alumni association has now become one of the vital sources of funding for infrastructural development of public educational institutions. Therefore, the proactive engagement of alumni associations can certainly bring radical changes in the physical infrastructure of schools, and they can also function as the catalyst for accelerating public participation in school-related activities.

Realising this fact, the Rejuvenation Campaign prescribes the formation of alumni associations in every school.[6] No doubt, a committed and well-functioning alumni association is an asset to the school, for it can do many things for enhancing the school's academic and infrastructural standards. For example, the alumni association in the Government LP School Madappally, Changanassery, Kottayam donated a school bus, and as a result, the commutation facility of the students in the said school had improved considerably. Such proactive involvement of the alumni association is, indeed, a good sign, for it can increase public participation in school-related activities. Moreover, the proactive involvement of the schools' alumni associations and the subsequent increase in public participation in school-related activities are also indications of democratisation of the public education system triggered by the Rejuvenation Campaign.

With regard to public participation itself, the field data suggest that there is an increase in matters related to schools, particularly after the implementation of the Rejuvenation Campaign.[7] Here, the present study cites some instances concerning

---

6. See, Approach Paper (2017): Public Education Rejuvenation Campaign.
7. For example, 97.4 per cent of school teachers who have participated in the field survey hold the opinion that there has been a steady increase in the participation of the common populace in matters related to the functioning of the public educational institutions after the implementation of the Rejuvenation Campaign. The same opinion is also shared among the headmasters/headmistress and the PTA presidents who participated in the field survey conducted in schools across the state.

the increase in public participation in matters related to schools. One such example is the greater participation of the public in annual school-day celebrations.[8] Another example is the financial contributions provided by the general public for improvements to the physical infrastructure of the schools. One such instance is Government LP School Puthenpeedika, Anthikkadu, Thrissur, where local people have donated a park for little children in the school.[9] It may be noted here that public contribution and participation are mutually related. Unless there is active public participation, public contributions are hard to come forth for the improvement of schools' infrastructure. The third example is the free service offered by the general public in matters related to the functioning of the schools. In Government New UP School Vadasserikkara, Pathanamthitta, the newspapers are sponsored by the local people as part of a collective effort to make the 'Talent Lab' facility efficient.[10] All these instances prove the fact that the Rejuvenation Campaign has functioned as a catalyst for increasing the participation of the public in school-related activities.

3.2.2. Improvement of Schools' General Infrastructure

Compared to other states, the physical infrastructural facilities in Kerala's public educational institutions are far better (Chandrasekhar, Ramachandran, and Ramkumar 2001 and Mehra, Bali, and Arora 2012). The physical infrastructure is a necessary pre-requisite for the public educational institutions because, without that, they cannot function efficiently. The physical infrastructure can influence the retentive power of the schools and can determine the effectiveness of the educational programmes (Das 1974). Besides, it can attract parents and pupils and hence, can function as an impetus for increasing the enrolment rate of the schools. The physical infrastructure is also linked to the quality of imparting knowledge in educational institutions. The productive utilisation of the available infrastructural facilities in schools undoubtedly influence the physical, psychological, and academic life of students.

The problem faced by Kerala in the education domain in contemporary times is a complex one. On the one side, these problems are partly associated with the lack

---

8. See, the quote cited above.
9. Source: Fieldwork Survey.
10. Source: Fieldwork Survey

of physical infrastructural facilities in government schools, especially in schools functioning in the remote parts of the State.[11] While on the other side, many of the government schools are still not making the full utilisation of the available infrastructural facilities, observe K K George and N Ajith Kumar (1999). Also, by pointing out the pernicious sides of the aided management schools, K K George, George Zachariah, and N Ajith Kumar (2003) contend that....'most of the aided managements utilise at least a major portion of the money collected from the staff for making capital investments, and maintenance, and also for developing [infrastructural facilities like] library, laboratory, computer centres etc. [This helps the aided schools to get an edge in the domain of infrastructural facilities] as compared to the government schools'.[12] Whereas in the case of the government schools, the State government is the sole source of funding, and hence, they cannot generate capital investments and make use of the same for improvement of the schools' infrastructure.

However, with the implementation of the Rejuvenation Campaign, the condition of the government schools' infrastructure has been steadily improving. For instance, nowadays, many schools are utilising a portion of the classroom for the 'Classroom Library,' a novel concept evolved through the Rejuvenation Campaign. Moreover, many schools (government and aided) are renovating the old buildings, constructing new building blocks, playgrounds, libraries, etc as part of the improvement of infrastructural facilities by using the financial help from the state government, and all these works on infrastructural improvement have been taking place in the name of the Rejuvenation Campaign. In the ensuing paragraphs, the present chapter gives some detailed account of fieldwork observations concerning the improvement of the schools' infrastructural facilities and the role of the Rejuvenation Campaign in it.

---

11. See, Report of the Expert Committee on School Education (2015): Thiruvananthapuram: Kerala State Planning Board.

12. See, George, K K; Zachariah, George; and Ajith Kumar, N (2003): Financing Secondary Education in Kerala, Working Paper, no 8, Kochi: Centre for Socio-Economic and Environmental Studies. Also, this point deserves a special attention from the side of the government since it gives financial assistance to the aided schools for improving the infrastructural facilities as part of the Rejuvenation Campaign. This is, indeed, a pertinent point that deserves particular attention of the government since the government has included the aided educational sector within the operational purview of the Rejuvenation Campaign.

Figure 3.1: Washroom in a government school in Trivandrum
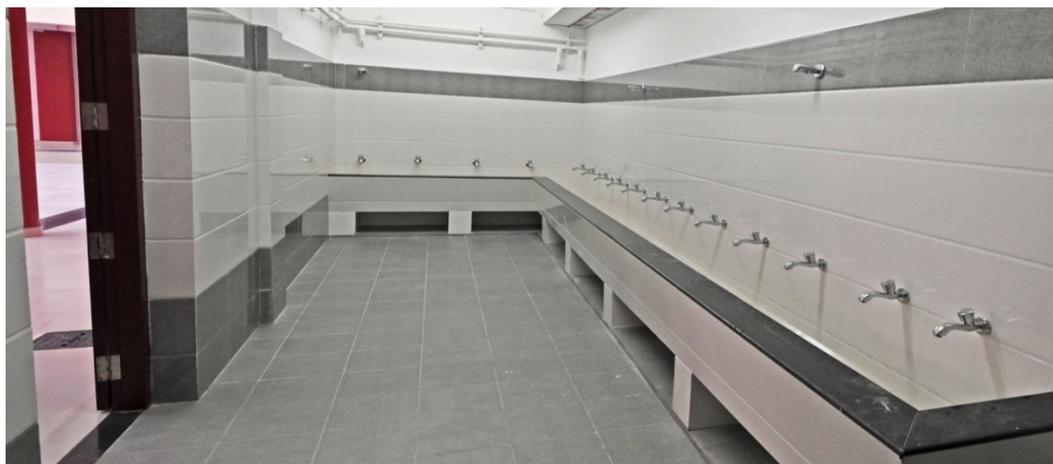
Source: Fieldwork

The field data show that the schools' infrastructure has undergone a significant improvement with the implementation of the Rejuvenation Campaign. For example, for 94.8 per cent of school teachers, the Campaign has created a remarkable improvement in the physical infrastructure of the schools.[13](See Graph 3.1) The following examples from the field survey reflect the opinion expressed by the teachers. For instance, the Government High School Achoor in Wayanad district has got Rs 1 Crore from KIIFB for improving the infrastructural facilities. In addition, the school also got Rs 64 lakh for the renovation work.[14] As a school functioning in the heart of the tea estate region, most of the students in the Government High School Achoor come from lower-income families and scheduled tribes. Yet, the school has facilities such as the library, playground, science lab, computer lab, smart classrooms, bio-gas, incinerator, and internet connectivity, etc.

Similarly, the Government Model Boys Higher Secondary School Thycadu, Thiruvananthapuram, has received an assistance of Rs 3 Crores from KIIFB and 1 Crore from the State government for improvement of infrastructural facilities. This is one of the oldest schools in Kerala (formed in 1910). Several infrastructural

---

13. In addition to them, many school teachers, headmasters/headmistresses and PTA presidents also eulogise the Rejuvenation Campaign for producing dramatic improvements in the domain of schools' infrastructure. Source: Qualitative Interviews of school headmasters/headmistresses and PTA presidents.

14. Source: Fieldwork

improvements have taken place in this school after the implementation of the Rejuvenation Campaign, such as the renovation of the playground, maintenance work of the existing building, modernisation of library, etc. The school is also utilising the existing lab facilities to the fullest. The school already converted all classrooms into Hi-tech by taking advantage of the Rejuvenation Campaign, and its current infrastructural facilities are excellent compared to an unaided school.[15] The Government Girls Higher Secondary School, Thripunithura, Ernakulam district, received Rs. 5 crores from KIIFB for infrastructural development. At present, the construction of a new building block is progressing, and the school has already converted old classrooms into Hi-tech. Also, the municipality is giving support for maintenance work at the school. The school already possesses sufficient infrastructural facilities, and the Rejuvenation Campaign has helped the school to improve the existing quality of the infrastructure apart from making new endeavours like the modernisation of the school library and classrooms.[16]

The improvement of schools' infrastructural facilities is linked to many objectives proposed by the Rejuvenation Campaign. First, the improvement of the infrastructural facilities of the public educational institutions itself is a cardinal objective of the Rejuvenation Campaign. Second, the betterment of the schools' infrastructure can work as a catalyst for enhancing the educational standard of the public education system. Third, it can attract more students and can change the perception of parents, and thereby it can increase the enrolment rate in public educational institutions.For instance, after the infrastructural improvement in Government Model Boys Higher Secondary School Thycadu as part of the Rejuvenation Campaign, a considerable level of enhancement in the educational standard of the students was visible which in turn changed the perception of the parents towards the school.[17] Similarly, the proposed curriculum revisions based on the Kerala Curriculum Framework (2007) also demand the total transformation of the existing infrastructural facilities of the public educational institutions. For example, the new curriculum revision demands a multitude of changes to be made in the traditional concept of the schools' infrastructure. Accordingly, the classroom should have the facility of electricity and the internet, and only then,

15. Ibid
16. Ibid
17. Source : Personal Interview, D L Jayaraj, UPS teacher, Govt MBHSS, Thycadu, Thiruvananthapuram.

the students could keep up with the audio-visual lessons in the classroom using LCD projectors and digital whiteboards. Here, the internet, electricity, and other ICT based equipment became an integral part of the schools' infrastructure. Thus, the improvement of the infrastructural facilities cannot be seen as part of the beautification project of the schools. Instead, it needs to be seen as an integral part of the proposed curriculum revision of the Rejuvenation Campaign.

3.2.3. Change in the Perception of People towards Public Educational Institutions

There is no doubt that the Rejuvenation Campaign has an instrumental role in changing the perception of ordinary people about the public education system. The general populace before the inception of the Rejuvenation Campaign more or less had uninterested opinion about the functioning of the public educational institutions. Earlier, people had a view that schools working in both government and aided sectors had no advanced infrastructural facilities and academic standards notwithstanding the fact that they catered to the educational needs of a large section of the ordinary populace in the State.

The problem of quality in education has been brought into sharp focus and a special action plan is being implemented. Some reports, including NCERT, critically point out the importance of the enhancement of the quality of education in primary level. This seems to have overshadowed, at least in part, by the major achievements like universalisation of elementary education. In addition to the concern and often despair over the real and perceived deterioration in quality, this has also led a section of the middle-class to turn to private schools, predominantly with English as the medium of instruction' (Mitra et al. 1999).[18] The growth of the Kerala economy and the subsequent entry of market forces further worsened perceptions on 'quality-problem' of the public education system, using that to foster the private sector (unaided) education in the state.[19] Joining hands with the education capitalists,

18. See, Mitra, Ashok, et al. (1999): Report of the Kerala Education Commission, Thiruvananthapuram: Kerala Sastra Sahitya Parishad.
19. For example, in 1990-91, Kerala had 111 unaided private high schools (72 upper primary and 134 lower primary schools). However, in 2000-01, the number of unaided schools rose to 218 (124 upper primary and 158 lower primary schools). Moreover, by 2010-11, the number of unaided high school had been increased steadily — i.e. 371 high schools, 217 upper primary schools, and 267 lower primary schools. And, in 2017-18, a total number of 499 unaided private high schools working in the state (244 upper primary schools and 356 lower primary schools. Even in the higher

a group of televised and print media also aided and abetted the private educational institutions, circulating propaganda to project the private-unaided sector as the model of quality education and career opportunities. However, the question of 'quality education' projected and claimed by the unaided sector was more of a myth rather than a reality.

The reason is that the appointment of many teaching faculties working in the private-unaided educational institutions is not made through a screening test or competitive examination, and hence, the yardstick for analysing their academic/teaching competency is absent. In contrast, teachers in government schools are qualified and competent, as they go through a state-level screening process, in the form of competitive tests and interviews; and even after getting the employment, they need to attend refresher courses, orientation classes, and other training programmes. What they relatively lack is the advanced infrastructural facilities in schools, and it is in this context that the Rejuvenation Campaign becomes all the more relevant, for, it not only upgraded the infrastructural facilities but also introduced new programs to increase the efficiency of teaching and learning. This, of course, reinvigorated and enkindled the morale of teachers and students alike.

"Nowadays, people realised that only public educational institutions could mould afuture generation that is endowed with moral values. This is because the education that is imparted in public educational institutions upholds the humanism. We take children to old-age homes; we create opportunities for them to interact with elderly citizens who have faced the evils of caste system so that our children would get an idea of what caste stood for in the past and what sort of changes have taken place in contemporary society. History is always a good teacher, for it can teach us a lot of things in life. So our education stresses the aspect of individual-making. So the education imparted in public educational institutions is functioning as a 'levelling-force' because, on the one side, it helps the student to discover his/her inner potential and on the other side, it enables the student to addresshis/her vulnerabilities. Contrary to the unaided private schools, the education imparted in public educational institutions teaches the value of fairness, compassion, equality, righteousness, cooperation, justice so that a social outlook will form in the minds of the students during the school education period itself.

☐   *A teacher from Government Higher Secondary School*
Edakoli, Kottayam

---

secondary sector as well, one can see the gradual growth of the unaided private schools. When the government started the first higher secondary batch in 1990-91, not even a single unaided private school had got permission to establish plus-two courses. But in the year of 2000-01, 8 unaided private schools started plus-two courses, and dramatically, this number had been further increased to 431 in 2005-06. See, Report of the Expert Committee on School Education (2019): Thiruvananthapuram: Government of Kerala.

Elements such as the enhancement in the quality of education and improvement of the schools' infrastructure, the increase in public participation, etc led to the rise of enrolment ratio in schools prompting the general public (and the middle-class) to change their perception about the public educational institutions in the State.[20]

The recent statistics of the Director of Public Instruction of Kerala (DPI) shows that a total of 5,04,851 students have newly enrolled in the public educational institutions in the State during the last three years due to the effective functioning of the Rejuvenation Campaign.[21] The following graphs show the year-wise increase in the enrolment of students in various types of schools during 2017-2020.

Graph 3.2 Increase in Enrollment in Different Types of Schools, Lower Primary, 2016-2020
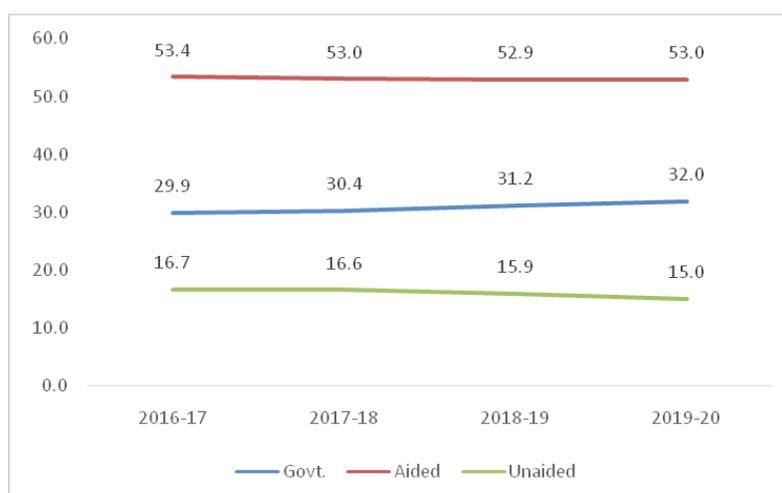
Source: Authors Calculation

---

20.   Here, we do not discuss about improvement of the schools' infrastructure, enhancement of public participation at great length because the previous sections have already discussed about these indicators.

21. Director of Public Instruction (DPI) Statitsics, 2020, Government of Kerala

Graph 3.3 Increase in Enrollment in Different Types of Schools, Upper Primary, 2016-2020
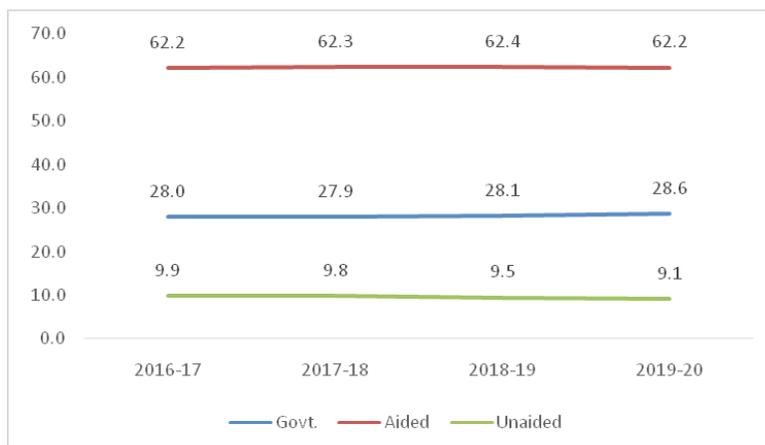
Source: Authors Calculation

Graph 3.4 Increase in Enrollment in Different Types of Schools, High School, 2016-2020
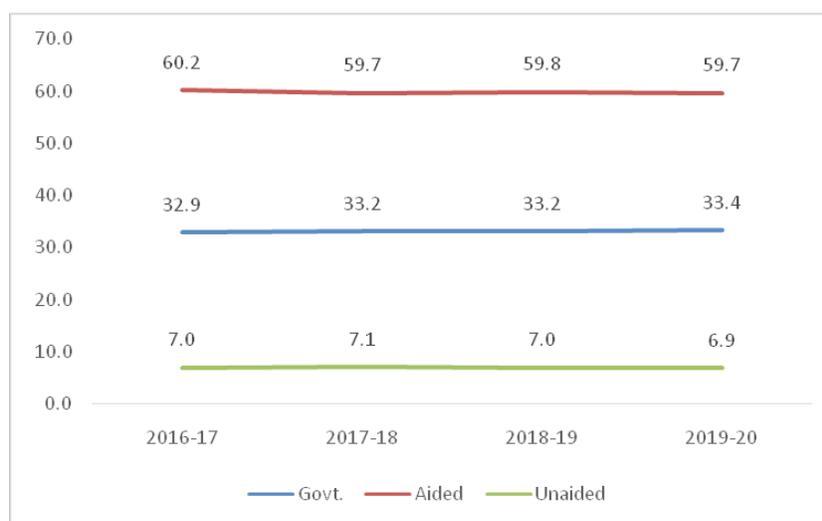
Source: Authors Calculation

The opinion of the headmaster of Government Upper Primary School Muttuchira, Kottayam further attests this fact. He says, 'the improvement in schools' infrastructure and the enhancement of the educational standard of children have helped in building a 'bridge of trust' betweenthe parents and the PTA members with the school and its functionaries. The headmaster further states that compared to the past, he is receiving more respect and recognition from the public nowadays

because his school is performing well, and the enrolment of students has been steadily increasing over the last three-four years. As a result, people are now getting closer to the public schools, and for them, the public school function as a symbol of pride.[22]

It is interesting to note here that 90.9 per cent school teachers who participated in the field survey opined that the Rejuvenation Campaign has altered the perception of the general public about the quality of education imparted in the public educational institutions in the State (See Graph 3.1). What this indicates is that ordinary people have now realised that public educational institutions also have the potential to become the centres of quality education. Being an inclusive space that accommodates every child regardless of caste and class, the public educational institutions treat everyone equally and impart high quality education to all. It recognises the constitutionality of education, which means that the public educational institutions endorse the

> "In the opinion of a PTA president, the government is doing everything it could for the empowerment of public educational institutions. The best example is the tremendous financial aid provided by the KIIFB. However, the problems exist at the micro-level regarding the improvement of the schools' infrastructure.
>
> ☐ *Former PTA President, Government Lower Primary School, Areekuzha, Idukki*

constitutional spirit of the Right to Education.[23] One of the most notable outcomes of the perspectival change brought by the Rejuvenation Campaign is the emergence of a new social consciousness amongst the general public.[24]

3.3 The State Government and the Improvement in Schools' General Infrastructure

According to the present study, there has been significant improvement of the

22.   Source: Fieldwork Interview, Headmaster, GUPS Muttuchira, Kaduthuruthy, Kottayam.
23.   The Constitution (Eighty-sixth Amendment) Act, 2002 inserted Article 21-A in the Constitution of India to provide free and compulsory education of all children in the age group of six to fourteen years as a Fundamental Right in such a manner as the State may, by law, determine. The Right of Children to Free and Compulsory Education (RTE) Act, 2009, which represents the consequential legislation envisaged under Article 21-A, means that every child has a right to full time elementary education of satisfactory and equitable quality in a formal school which satisfies certain essential norms and standards.See, the official notification of the Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA), retrieved from https://mhrd.gov.in/rte
24.   Source: Field Survey.

infrastructure of public educational institutions upgrading its academic standard and related amenities to international levels. The allocation of public funds is a good criterion to measure the level of infrastructural improvement in public schools.

For example, the budget outlay since 2016 (the year when the Campaign was launched) shows an increasing trend— In the year 2016-17, the annual budget outlay for school education was Rs 502 crores. In 2017-18, it rose to Rs 863 crores, which further increased to Rs 970 crores in the year of 2018-19.[25] In addition to this, the government also started providing financial assistance to schools through Kerala Infrastructure Investment Fund Board (KIIFB) for undertaking the infrastructural development, which further accelerated the ongoing pace of infrastructural up-gradation of schools. Also, the government spends Rs 104 Crores for infrastructural improvement of the public educational institutions by utilising the fund from the scheme of the National Bank for Agriculture and Rural Development (NABARD). Moreover, the government has created the 'Challenge Fund' for carrying out the infrastructural development of the aided schools in the State and has provided financial assistance to nearly 500 schools concerning the physical infrastructural improvement from the State's Plan Fund.

3.4. The Kerala Infrastructure Investment Fund Board (KIIFB) and the Infrastructural Improvement of Public Educational Institutions

The Kerala Infrastructure Investment Fund Board (KIIFB) came into existence in 1999 November under the Kerala Infrastructure Investment Fund Act 1999 (Act 4 of 2000). The primary purpose of the KIIFB is to offer investment for critical and large infrastructure projects in the State (Krishnan, Vishnu, Balasubramanian 2018). Often, investment in the infrastructural development of any sector is an obstacle-ridden task, for a large amount of the invested money tends to go for the salary and other purposes, and this creates problems in the progress of the investment project itself.

---

25. See, Budget Speech 2016-2017, OommenChandy, Chief Minister of Kerala. 12[th]February 2016. Budget Speech 2016-2017 (Revised), Dr Thomas Issac, Finance Minister of Kerala., 8[th]July 2016. Budget Speech 2017-2018, Dr Thomas Issac, Finance Minister of Kerala, 3rd March 2017. Budget Speech 2018-2019, Dr Thomas Issac, Finance Minister of Kerala. 2nd February 2018.

Fig.3.2 Government HSS for Girls Cotton Hill, Thiruvananthapuram

Source: Source: Fieldwork

To address problem of investment, the KIIFB acts as the special purpose vehicle (SPV) for mobilising and channelising funds for various infrastructural domains. Hence, the fund allocation for investment projects under the KIIFB will be fully utilised because no money from the allotted KIIFB fund will be spent on the salary and other purposes.

It may be for the first time in the country that the General Education Department of a State government is launching an ambitious project for the improvement of infrastructure of public educational institutions with the objective of rejuvenating the existing public educational system. It commenced with the upgrading of 141 High Schools (one in each assembly constituency) at an estimated cost of Rs.5 Crores each and a total cost of Rs.705 Crores to facilitate their gradual transformation into 'Centres of Excellence. Also, the KIIFB is spending money for the betterment of the infrastructure facilities for 395 other schools at an estimated cost of Rs.3.00 Crore each for the selected schools, and the total cost of this project comes to around Rs.1185.00 crores. Besides, the KIIFB is also putting forward another category of projects for which a total number of 446 schools are selected, and the financial assistance worth Rs 1 crore is allotted to each public school for carrying out infrastructural improvement. Apart from that, some public educational institutions do not possess own or adequate amount of land. Hence, a scheme is prepared

through KIIFB for purchasing additional land necessary for these educational institutions.

3.5. The Model Proposed by the Rejuvenation Campaign for Infrastructural Improvement

The model of infrastructural improvement proposed by the Rejuvenation Campaign also gives due space to both Local Self Government Institutions and non-state actors. For that reason, the whole project turns into a participatory engagement that brings together the ordinary people, government agencies, civil society organisations and grass-root level governing institutions to address a social need. Prior to the Rejuvenation Campaign, the model for the improvement of schools' infrastructure was a centralised one— and besides, it was more bureaucratic and less people-oriented. Under that system, the government gave money to the schools and tried to improve the schools' infrastructure through bureaucratic monitoring. It basically followed a traditional model in its conception and implementation. As a result, the general public and civil society actors did not have any role in that model. The present model, in contrast, focuses on and ensures inclusiveness, public cooperation, and flexibility at the operational level. The Rejuvenation Campaign conceives the general public and the civil society as potential actors of change— that is, it does not see them as mere agents of money-generation but rather as initiators of social change.

"The current government seems to be seriouslyconcerned about the education of the children. The government launched the Public Education Rejuvenation Campaign to protect the government and aided schools in the same year when it came to power. The government realised that the improvement of infrastructural facilities is necessary because a vast majority of common people still depend on public educational institutions to satisfy the educational needs of their children. For people like us, this is a sign of public concern."

        ☐   *A teacher from Government Lower Primary School, Chenkulam, Idukki*

The unprecedented growth in peoples' participation and the radical shift in their perception regarding the functioning of government schools substantiates the positive impact of the Rejuvenation Campaign.

3.6. Rejuvenation Campaign: The Source of Funding

The graph below indicates that the State government is the leading funding-source in improving the schools' infrastructure, as in the opinion of 97.4 per cent of teachers, the State government and its allied institutions do provide considerable financial aid to public educational institutions for improving infrastructural facilities. The term 'allied institutions of the State government' here refers to the three-tier Panchayati Raj Institutions, KIIFB, and the elected representatives, all of them work in tandem to financially support public educational institutions in all possible ways. Also, the opinion of PTA presidents and the schools' headmasters/headmistresses give further authenticity to the above argument.

As the public education system is created for the wellbeing of people, people themselves are its immediate and prime beneficiaries. The rejuvenation of public education also means the empowerment of people living in the margins of society, who cannot afford education and the facilities offered by the private-unaided schools. This idea of social commitment is what educational thinkers term 'the care of the state.'

Graph 3.5 Major Sources of Funding
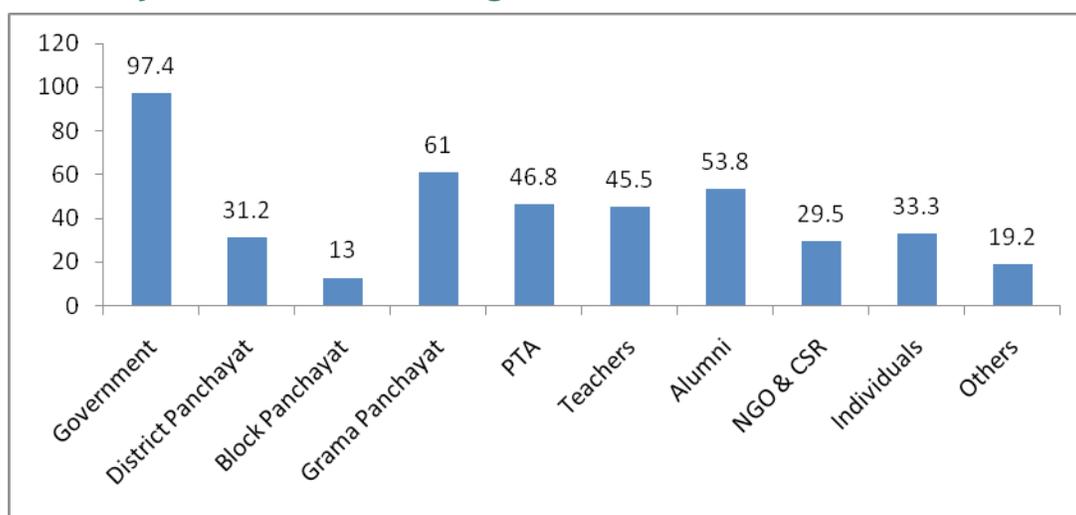
Source: Fieldwork

According to the above Graph, Government, Grama Panchayats, Alumni Associations, PTA and Teacher Community form the major contributors of funds to Schools for infrastructure development.

Among these, the role of different levels of local self-governments is emerging as the most crucial. Grama Panchayats are the second-largest funding agency as far as the infrastructural development programme of the public educational institutions is concerned. Inthe case of 61 per cent schools,the Grama Panchayat is offering a considerable amount of financial assistance to schools for infrastructural development. Besides, the Grama Panchayats are the institutions of participatory democracy in the grass-root level, and hence, it is easy for the functionaries of the school to approach the office bearers of the Grama Panchayats whenever a requirement arises. It may be noted that Kerala has 6874 lower primary schools, of which 2597 are government-owned, 3914 are aided by the government, and the private managements own 363 schools. According to the Kerala Panchayat Raj Act (as amended in 1999), the government pre-primary and primary schools and their staff are under the control of the Grama Panchayat, GPs are responsible for improving the infrastructure of the schools such as classrooms, office, compound wall, water supply, toilets, playground, setting up the library, laboratory, IT infrastructure and furniture etc.[26] There are several instances where a significant role was played by the Grama Panchayat in improving the infrastructure of the schools. In GLPS Ammadam, Thrissur, the Grama Panchayat offered financial assistance for fixing the classroom ceiling, a necessary infrastructural facility required for fixing the Hi-tech classroom devices.[27] Likewise, in GM UPS Edappal, Malappuram, the Grama Panchayat provided financial assistance for the renovation of toilets.[28] In GUPS Kozhanchery East, Pathanamthitta, the Grama Panchayat lent financial assistance to construct the incinerator facility for the safe disposal of sanitary pads, and also offered economic aid for the renovation of Biodiversity Park. In addition, the Grama Panchayat also conducts equivalent examinations specifically for the Scheduled Class students.[29]

Another notable case is the Government Fisheries UP School Manikkoth, Kasargod, where the Grama Panchayat offered financial assistance for building two additional classrooms. Whereas in schools like GLPS Malappanchery, Kasargod, Grama

26. Govt of Kerala (2017): Administration Manual for Transferred Functions: Primary Schools, Thrissur: KILA
27. Source: Fieldwork Survey
28. Source: Fieldwork Survey
29. Source: Fieldwork Survey

Panchayat gave financial assistance to construct a dining hall, which according to the teachers of the said school, is a good sign of infrastructural change taking place under the banner of the Rejuvenation Campaign.

Moreover, the District and Block Panchayats also play a pivotal role in the infrastructural development of public educational institutions. For instance, in the case of 31.2 per cent sample schools, the District Panchayat offered financial assistance to schools with regard to the development of infrastructural facilities. The Kerala Panchayati Raj Act 1994 delegates certain powers to the District Panchayats concerning public education— it has the power to manage and administer high schools (including lower and upper primary schools attached to high schools) and higher secondary schools.[30] Hence, the infrastructural improvement of high schools and higher secondary schools is one of the vital responsibilities of District Panchayats.[31] Here, the study team identified some mention-worthy examples concerning the financial assistance of the District Panchayats for infrastructural improvements. The Government Vocational Higher Secondary School Kalpakanchery, Malappuram, received considerable financial assistance from District Panchayat for the improvement of infrastructural facilities — Rs 50 lakh for the lab facility, Rs 5 lakh for setting up a band, Rs 5 lakh for the fixing the sound system, Rs 15 lakh for the construction of toilets, Rs 15 lakh for building a rainwater harvesting plant, and Rs 10 lakh for the construction of an auditorium.[32] Similarly, the District Panchayat offered economic aid to the Government Vocational Higher Secondary School Kanakkari, Kottayam, for constructing a rainwater harvest plant

30. See, Fifth Schedule, section IX of the Kerala PRI act. In Kerala, there are 1227 high schools and 847 higher secondary schools working under the government sector, however.

31. One of the most worth-noticing projects of the District Panchayats is known as 'Sarathi.' The 'Sarathi' project, at present, is the part of the proverbial Public Education Rejuvenation Campaign of the current government. According to this project, the District Panchayats provide one school bus with each to the 26 government high school and higher secondary schools. Not only will the buses make students' journey to school smooth and comfortable, but also help improve their safety. The vehicles will benefit, especially those living in tribal settlements in the hilly areas of the district that are away from the social mainstream (The Hindu 2019). Nevertheless, any reference related to the 'Sarathi' project has not reflected in the field survey, for no school teacher has made any reference concerning the said project. See, The Hindu (2019): District Panchayat Launches Two Education Projects, November 3rd, Retrieved from https://www.thehindu.com/news/cities/Thiruvananthapuram/district-panchayat-launches-two-education-projects/article29866537.ece

32. Source: Fieldwork Survey

in the school to meet the need for the availability of safe drinking water.[33]

Whereas, concerning the improvement of the schools' infrastructural facilities, the Block Panchayats played only a marginal role. The reason is perhaps that the Block Panchayats, in comparison to the Grama Panchayats, possess little powers regarding the management and the administration of the public educational institutions.[34] Such marginal role of the Block Panchayats was clearly reflected in the field survey as well— Here, it is crucial to note that only 13 per cent of teachers say that their schools are getting financial help from the Block Panchayats in connection with the improvement of infrastructural facilities. But there are certain exceptions too. In Government LP School Puthenpeedika, Thrissur, the Block Panchayat has offered financial assistance for the renovation of the kitchen.[35]The GM UP School Edappal, Malappuram also received (financial assistance from the Block Panchayat for the improvement of the school's infrastructure), Government UP School Valiyora, Malappuram, (for new toilet blocks) and Government LP School Madappally, Kottayam (for laptop.LCD projector and a white screen-board) received financial assistance from the respective Block Panchayat.[36]

3.7. The Rejuvenation Campaign and the Role of Local Self-Government Institutions

In most cases, the Local Self-Government Institutions (LSGIs)[37] played a significant role in the ongoing improvement of schools' infrastructure. In our democratic system, it is the LSGIs that ensure participatory governance through constant cooperation with other agencies and monitoring of the schools working at the grass-root level.

---

33. Source: Fieldwork Survey
34. See, Fourth Schedule, sub-section 1 of section 172 in Kerala PRI Act 1994
35. Source: Fieldwork Survey
36. Source: Fieldwork Survey
37. Also known as the Panchayati Raj Institutions (PRIs)

Graph 3.6The Involvement of LSGIs in Improving Schools' Infrastructure
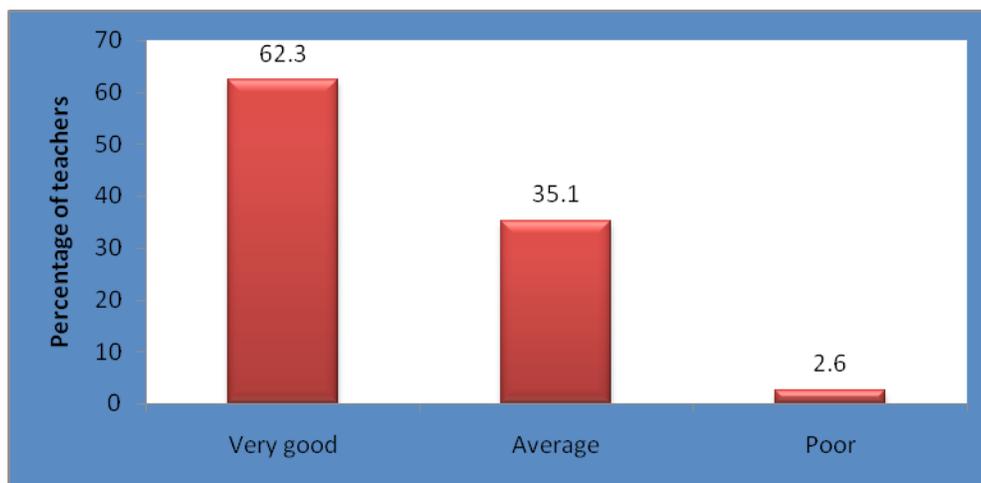
Source: Fieldwork

For example, the above graph shows that 62.3 per cent of teachers who participated in the field survey hold the opinion that the performance of LSGIs is very good in terms of improving the prevailing infrastructural condition of schools. However, in 35.1 per cent of school teachers, the involvement level of LSGIs is average. It is important to note here that only in the case of a small percentage (2.6) of schools, the performance of LSGIs is not found significant with respect to the infrastructural improvement.

Therefore, we can contend that in most cases, the performance of LSGIs seems effective in bestowing a new vigour to the infrastructural development of public educational institutions. The entry of LSGIs into the domain of schools' infrastructural development seems to have further strengthened the participatory character of the Rejuvenation Campaign. This has gradually led to the building of trust between the local level government, the schools' functionaries, and the local people. It is observed that the decentralised model proposed by the Rejuvenation Campaign works more efficiently in areas where there is high 'interaction frequency' between the people, schools' authorities, and the functionaries of LSGIs. In areas where this 'interaction frequency' is low, the role of LSGIs in offering financial assistance has been limited.

LSGIs being the centres of participatory governance, their 'interaction-frequency' with people and civil society is a precondition for more effective level of participatory governance. Higher the 'interaction-frequency' of LSGIs, lesser the time it takes to complete governance/administrative processes relating to availing of funds.

Here, the term 'interaction-frequency' refers to the continuity in the attendance of school authorities in the Grama Sabha meetings in a year. Chapter III of the Kerala Panchayati Raj Act says, 'Grama Sabha shall meet at once in three months at a place fixed by the Village Panchayat...compulsory to invite the member of the Block Panchayat, the District Panchayat, and the Legislative Assembly representing the area of the Grama Sabha.'[38] What seems interesting here is chapter III on Grama Sabha does not mention anything about the compulsory invitation/attendance of the functionaries of the school in that area. Hence, the authorities of the LSGIs can easily avoid the functionaries of the schools through non-invitation to the Grama Sabha.

Graph 3.7 Interaction-Frequency of Schools with Grama Sabha
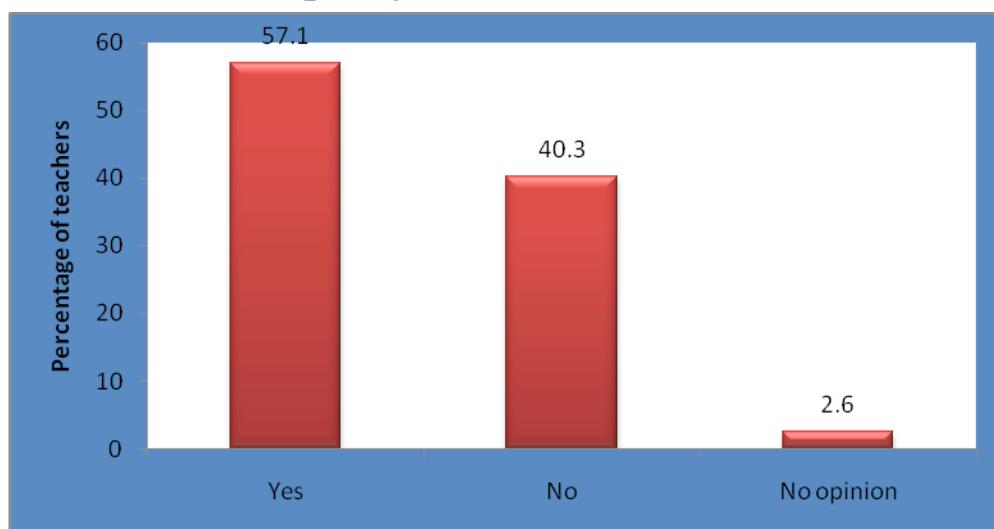
Source: Fieldwork

Moreover, 'interaction-frequency' is also a pre-requisite for creating a healthy rapport between the functionaries of schools and LSGIs authorities. Graph 3.7 vividly highlights this aspect— it shows that 57.1 per cent of schools possess a high-interaction-frequency' in terms of attending the Grama Sabha meetings, and in the case of 40.3 per cent of schools, their representatives do not attend the Grama Sabha meetings. Only a minority of schools (2.6 per cent) have no opinion on this subject. This is indeed a worrying trend because in one way or the other the 'interaction-frequency' has to be improved both to explore funding support from LSG and to forge links between the school and local government.

---

38. See, Kerala PIR Act 1994, Chapter III

Graph 3.8 Are the Grama Sabha Discussions Helpful?
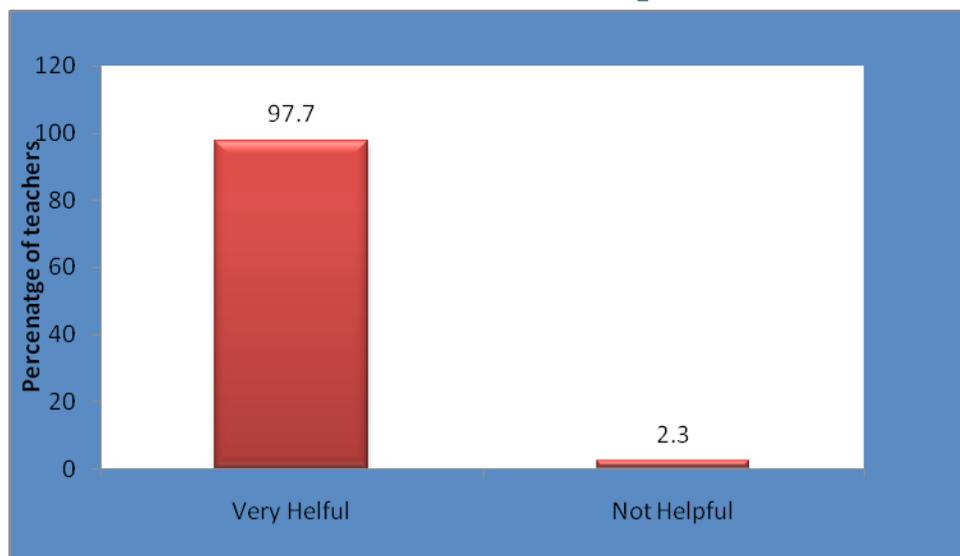
Source: Fieldwork

Almost all the teachers (97.7 per cent)who represent the school in the Grama Sabha meetings consider the discussion in the Grama Sabha meetings as very helpful and instrumental tothe infrastructural development of the schools (Graph 3.8). Even though the proportion of teachers who consider such meetings as 'Not Helpful' is minimal (2.3 per cent) it deserves special attention from the side of the government. When a school representative (be it the teacher, Headmaster, or PTA president) attends the Grama Sabha, it offers them an opportunity to raise issues concerning the school like infrastructural development, procurement of school bus, renovation of playgrounds, and so on. Moreover, the Grama Sabha is also a space for direct interaction with the general public, which, in effect, can make the school-society bond stronger. Considering all these, it is important that efforts be taken to maintain high levels of interaction frequency.

3.8. The Involvement of Public in Improving the Schools' Infrastructure

Concerning the model proposed by the Rejuvenation Campaign on the improvement of schools' infrastructure, one cannot underestimate the contributions of civil society organisations and private individuals—both lend a high degree of financial support and services for this particular cause. By the term civil society, the present study conceives all forms of groups, organisations, and personal associations working in

the realm of non-political society[39] such as Parent-Teacher Organisations, Teachers Associations, Alumni Associations, Non-Governmental Organisations, Trade Unions, Philanthropic Associations, Trusts and so on. The term private individuals include those who are service-oriented and those ready to offer financial help to educational institutions. The major characteristic of the former category (i.e., the civil society organisations) is their organisational framework: for the most part, they are entities falling underthe category of an organisation or association, and hence, they already have an operational framework fortheir functions. The latter category (i.e., private individuals), however, does not possess a strict organisational character. Their decisions are not driven by a predetermined organisational agenda but by the subjectiveor ethical positions.[40] Nonetheless, both contribute immensely to the improvement of schools' infrastructural facilities.

Graph 3.9 presents the opinion of school teachers regarding the role of civil society organisations and private individuals as contributors to the infrastructural improvements of the schools. This question has two parts— the first part stresses the role of civil society organisations' financial contribution while the second part focuses on the contribution lends by the private individuals for the same regard.

Graph 3.9 Civil Society Organisations and Private Individuals: Their Economic Contributions to Infrastructural Improvement of Schools
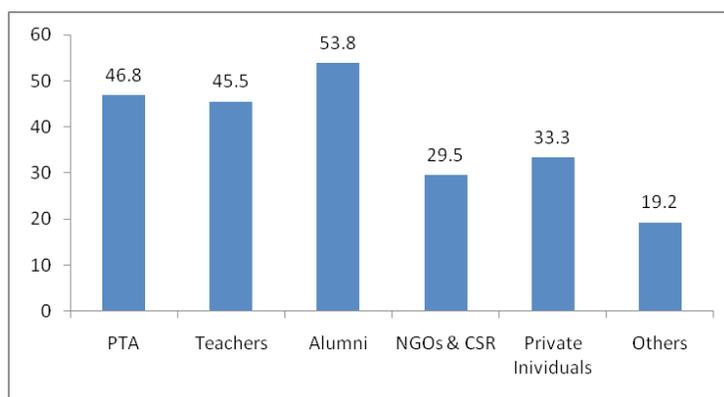
Source: Fieldwork

---

39. The term political society is a Gramscian understanding representing the State.

40. Here, one cannot conflate the term ethical position with the term moral responsibility because the former is purely a subjective position whereas the latter is the part of a collective attitude determined by the various forms of discourses floating in the society in a particular historical epoch.

As for the first part of the question, out of the total number of teachers surveyed, 29.5 per cent reported that their schools receive financial assistance (including services) from NGOs for infrastructural development. What this also indicates is that an overwhelming majority of public educational institutions in the State still do not receive any kind of economic aid from NGOs in matters related to the improvement of the schools' infrastructure.

The Government Higher Secondary School Thrippunithura, Ernakulam, is a good example that can be cited in this context. The school is getting CSR funds from corporates for infrastructural improvements; besides, the Rotary Club of Cochin Milan is also helping the school for the improvement of its academic infrastructure.[41] According to the present study, it is found that generally, the public educational institutions face more problems in receiving financial assistance from NGOs for infrastructural improvement.

In contrast, to the NGOs, the public educational institutions relatively encounter fewer problems in availing financial help from the Alumni Associations. As per field data, 53.8 per cent of the schools get financial assistance from Alumni Associations for infrastructural development. Though the NGOs play significant role as social change agents in our society they still contribute less for the improvement of school infrastructure; this is despite the fact Kerala is a state where many NGOs work in the education sector. This, in a way, indicates the social commitment that has been emerged amongst the former students, which was identified and recognised by the Rejuvenation Campaign.

Alumni Associations

One such example, is Government Higher Secondary School Thonnakkal, Thiruvananthapuram, where its Alumni Association named 'Evergreen 9' offered financial help for constructing a new classroom.[42] Another is Alumni Association of Government Higher Secondary School Koipram, Pathanamthitta, which donated books for the school library.[43] Likewise, the Alumni Association in Government LP School Madappalli, Kottayam, donated a school bus, and the immediate result of

41. Source: Fieldwork Survey
42. Source: Fieldwork Survey
43. Source: Fieldwork Survey

this was the increase in the school's enrolment. In Government Higher Secondary School Meppadi, Wayanad, they got a sound system (speaker, mic, and amplifier) from the Alumni Association.[44]

Figure 3.3
School Bus, CHMKS GVHSS Kottepuram

Parent-Teacher Association (PTA)

The contributions of Parent-Teacher Associations is also found to be much higher than that of the NGOs. According to Field Survey, 46.8 per cent of the sample schools receive monetary aid from Parent-Teacher Associations for the improvement of infrastructural facilities. The PTA of the Government LP School Keezhoor, Mulankunnam, Kottayam, provides free labour-service for promoting banana cultivation in schools and also takes an active part in cleaning the school building and lavatories. Likewise, the PTA of CHMKS GVHSS Kottepuram, Nileswar, Kasargod donated money for purchasing a 'school bus'.[45] Now, with the implementation of the Rejuvenation Campaign, the school masterplan becomes an essential element in infrastructural development, and the PTAs show a keen interest in realising the agendas set in the school masterplan.

------

44. Source: Fieldwork Survey
45. Source: Fieldwork Survey

All these entities such as PTA, Alumni Associations, and NGOs are organisations function in the civil society sphere, and the perplexing question is why do schools receive comparatively less amount of financial aid from NGOs compared to Parent-Teacher Associations and Alumni Associations? We know that often NGOs work for numerous causes and in various like niche or specific areas like training differently-abled and challenged children, policy-reforms in education, gender and women empowerment. Hence, all NGOs need not be interested in offering financial aid for the development of schools' infrastructure. Moreover, it is found during fieldwork that only schools that are located in areas close to cities and townships get more NGO funds whereas schools that are situated in rural and backward areas have less access to NGO funding. The same phenomenon can be inferred in the case of Parent-Teacher Associations as well— in schools where the proportion of students from lower-class/caste sections is high, the financial contribution of the PTA is found to be less. The Government Higher Secondary School Thrissilery, Wayanad is an example in this regard.[46]

Individuals & Teachers

It is interesting to notice that both private individuals and teachers contribute comparatively higher than the NGOs. In such cases, money is raised from among teachers or individuals for development of infrastructural facilities of their schools— 45.5 per cent of schools receive money from teachers for carrying out the works on infrastructural development. For instance, the Government Higher Secondary School Thonnakkal, Thiruvananthapuram collected money from teachers for making necessary arrangements to launch its dream project named 'Civil Service Margadeepam'.[47]The joint initiativeof parents, LSGs, peoples' representatives etc. under the leadership of teachers have helped to procure 1.5 acres of land for GHSS Pala for the playground.[48]

The Government Vocational Higher Secondary School Valappad, Thrissur, has launched an annual merit-cum scholarship programme with the monetary help of private individuals.[49] But the Government Higher Secondary School Thrissilery, Wayanad set a unique example for us concerning the improvement of the school's

---

46. Source: Fieldwork Survey
47. Source: Fieldwork Survey
48. Source: Fieldwork Survey
49. Source: Fieldwork Survey

infrastructure. The teachers working in the same school have collected Rs 1 lakh from among themselves to improve the infrastructural condition of the school.[50] This means that apart from performing their teaching-jobs, teachers also put little extra effort in the form of giving financial help to the schools in which they work and thus become an essential agent of social change. As a result of all these joint endeavours, a kind of collective consciousness and reciprocal interaction is generated among the teachers, parents, alumni, the general public, and NGOs, which is, of course, a positive impact of the Rejuvenation Campaign.

3.9. Hindrances While Receiving Financial Assistance

Do the schools face any hindrances while receiving financial aid from State (its institutions/agencies) and the civil society organisations? Here, 19.2 per cent of teachers who participated in the field survey reported that their schools still encounter various problems in availing financial assistance from the State and its allied institutions. Often, these problems are related to the procedural delays in allocation and transfer of funds. Besides, in some LSGIs, there is no masterplan while granting permission for the implementation of the projects concerning the schools' infrastructural improvement. Despite these problems, it is worth-noting that an overwhelming majority of schools do not find or encounter any sort of impediment in availing financial aid from the State and its allied institutions.

Graph 3.10 Problems in Receiving Financial Aid from Government and Civil Society Institutions
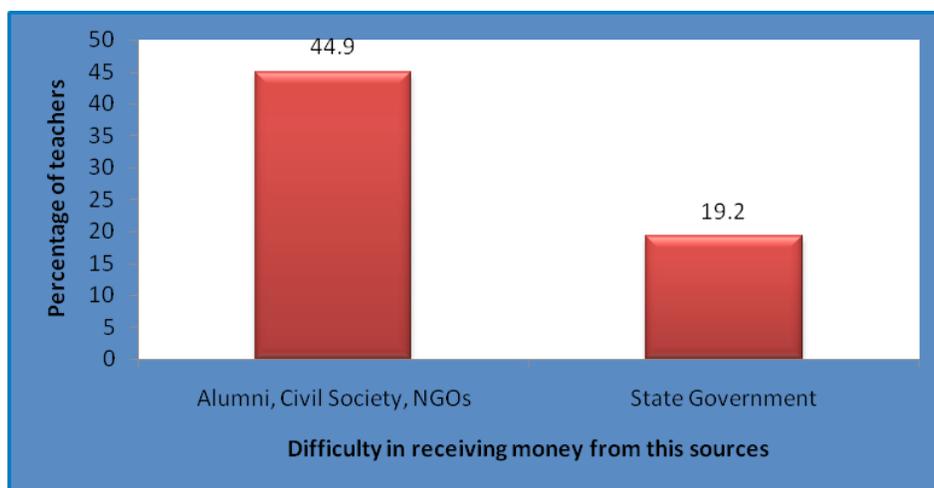
Source: Fieldwork

50. Source: Fieldwork Survey

However, the picture is entirely different for receiving financial aid from civil society organisations. For example, 44.9 per cent of teachers participated in the field survey report that their schools find it difficult to avail financial aid from civil society organisations as compared to the State and its allied institutions.

3.10. Conclusion

In the backdrop of the above discussion, the present study puts forward some concluding observations highlighting the proactive role of the Rejuvenation Campaign. It is to be noted that the improvement of infrastructural facilities of public educational institutions is one of the core objectives of the Rejuvenation Campaign. Firstly, as the examples and figures above show, there have been significant and positive changes in this regard since the introduction of the Rejuvenation Campaign in the domain of the general/physical infrastructural facilities. Secondly, this has acted as the catalyst for increasing not only the enrolment in the public schools but also in enhancing the participation of the general public in matters related to the functioning of the schools. Thirdly, State itself plays the predominant role in the improvement of the schools' physical/general infrastructure, which is a good sign in the direction of reviving the public education system in the State. Fourthly, the improvement of the infrastructural facilities of the public educational institutions is also crucial in the context of the proposed curriculum revisions based on the Kerala Curriculum Framework (2007), as it demands a multitude of changes in the physical/general infrastructural facilities of the schools. Such improvements also create a more constructive learning/teaching environment for the students. Finally, the model of infrastructural improvement proposed by the Rejuvenation Campaign has a decentralised character. For that reason, improving schools' infrastructure within the model of the Rejuvenation Campaign has been a participatory engagement that brings together the ordinary people, government agencies, PTA, Alumni Associations, and grass-root level governing institutions to address a social need. This also indicates that any policy intervention of the government will achieve success only when it generates constructive response and cooperation from the people at large.

Chapter 4
Improvement in Academic Infrastructure

4.1. Introduction

Though a distinction is made in the present study between the general infrastructure and academic infrastructure, the existence of the latter is heavily dependent on the former. For example, the LCD Projector in Hi-tech classroom is, indeed, the part of the academic infrastructure, but the school building needs to have proper roofing with painted walls and electrical connection, which is, of course, an integral part of the general infrastructure. Besides, the introduction of new methods in curriculum, pedagogy also demands the creation of advanced academic infrastructure facilities in schools. By academic infrastructure, we mean facilities such as Hi-tech classrooms, modernisation and digitalisation of libraries, ICT instruments, and also, renovation of playground facilities for physical education.

It is necessary to talk of curriculum and pedagogy briefly before analysing the impact of the Rejuvenation Campaign in the academic infrastructure of schools because as stated earlier the introduction of modern concepts in the existing curriculum based on Kerala Curriculum Framework 2007, and the application of new forms of teaching in the pedagogy call for a radical change in our current understanding of the academic infrastructure. In traditional understanding (before the Rejuvenation Campaign), the scope of academic infrastructure revolved solely around study materials and classrooms. Hence, the life of students was confined within the four walls of the classroom and the compound of the schools. The students' quest for knowledge about things outside the syllabus was restricted in the traditional curriculum framework. Likewise, the learning process that unfolded between teachers and students was more through one-way communication in the past— teachers engaged in teaching through talking, and the duty of the student was to listen to them carefully. As a result, academic infrastructure received less priority in the traditional curriculum and pedagogy. However, with the Rejuvenation Campaign, things started changing, and areas like academic infrastructure gradually started coming to the centre stage of the discussion on education. This is, indeed, one of the most significant impact of Rejuvenation Campaign that has brought academic infrastructure into the realm of conceptualisation and delivery of education.

The Rejuvenation Campaign also brought changes in curriculum and pedagogy, which presupposed technical innovations and modernisation of the schools' academic infrastructure. With this in view, the Department of General Education in Kerala introduced ICT-enabled education besides adopting novel techniques/tools in the process of learning. New forms of academic infrastructure such as Hi-tech classrooms, computer labs, science labs, digitalised libraries, environmental/biodiversity parks, and modernised playgrounds etc were established apart from new learning-teaching programmes about which the ensuing pages intends to discuss.

4.2. The Rejuvenation Campaign and the Change in the Academic Infrastructure

Since the late 1980s, Kerala has been not only at the forefront of mass education and literacy, but it was also able to ensure that an overwhelming majority of children get adequate school education (Chandrasekar et al. 2001). However, many reports on education, such as Ashok Mitra Report (1999), Expert Committee Report (2015), etc

strongly criticise the quality of education and the standard of academic infrastructure in the State's public educational institutions, and made many recommendations to address the issue. For instance, the integration of skill education and vocational training with the curriculum is one of the recommendations of the Ashok Mitra Report (1999), which in the context of the Rejuvenation Campaign, has enormous relevance. So, the ideas and proposals in the Rejuvenation Campaign, like refashioning the schools' academic infrastructure, incorporation of new programmes, methods, and tools in curriculum and pedagogy etc draw from various such sources and informed discussions of the past. With the financial aid and assistance of the State government and its institutions like KIIFB, LSGIs, elected representatives of Legislative Assembly and Parliament, the Rejuvenation Campaign aims at fulfilling the following targets in a phase-wise manner; some of which have a lot to do with the revamping of the existing academic infrastructure of the schools. They are— (A) Technology-intervention through Hi-tech classrooms (or smart classrooms) and academic content creation; (B) Up-gradation of both general and academic infrastructure through creating or renovating the classrooms, laboratories, libraries, extra-curricular activity centres; (C) Transforming of 140 High Schools as 'centres of excellence' at an estimated cost of Rs 5 crores each, and a total cost of Rs 705.00 crores; (D) Using the technical know-how and expertise of the KITE, the Rejuvenation Campaign tries to modernise, digitalise, and transform all public educational institutions so that they can improve the existing potential and productivity and can gradually attain the international standard in terms of the quality of education it imparts to the children.[1]

4.3. Rejuvenation Campaign: Redefining the Academic Infrastructure

The aim of the Rejuvenation Campaign is, of course, the gradual up-gradation of the standard of the public education system, through phased transformation of the existing academic infrastructure.

The Rejuvenation Campaign intends to create 'Hi-tech classrooms' in schools, with the government agencies providing ICT-based hardware equipment like laptops, computers, projectors, projection scanners, mounting accessories, DSL cameras, webcams, televisions, MF printers to all schools Furthermore, the Rejuvenation Campaign intends to provide high-speed broadband internet connectivity to

---

1. See, KIIFB Newsletter, Vol.2, Issue 4.1 and Discussions with Officials.

all schools along with ICT-based training to both students and teachers. These transformative interventions are aimed at bringing about a conceptual change in the traditional understanding of the academic infrastructure.

In the redefined context, the teachers become a mentor rather than an instructor. The teachers have to draw from their knowledge to utilise the potentials offered by the new academic infrastructural setting in the schools. For this, they have to get updated about each issue taking place in the domain of their own discipline as well as education technology and new modes of teaching and learning.

4.4. The Modernisation of Academic Infrastructure

The modernisation of the academic infrastructure based on ICT tools is an integral part of the Rejuvenation Campaign through which the public education system is enabled to attain international competency. As discussed elsewhere in this chapter, one of the principal aims of the Rejuvenation Campaign is to transform the public education system into centres of excellence. For that to happen, all classrooms at High School and Higher Secondary School have to be made High-tech. Apart from this, classrooms from Pre-school to Higher Secondary level are also to be made High-tech as part of the aim of ensuring high-standards in teaching and learning. The ICT enabled education in schools had already been launched in Kerala before the inception of the Rejuvenation Campaign. However, with the Rejuvenation Campaign, the then ICT enabled education programme was given further acceleration as well as an organised and institutional form, as a result of which dramatic outcomes are emerging from public educational institutions.

Figure 4.1: A Teacher Taking Class Using ICT, KITE

It was through the launching of a pilot project named 'Hi-Tech School Programme' through KITE in 2016-2017, that the foundation was laid for refashioning the academic infrastructure. As part of the Rejuvenation Campaign, it was implemented in 139 schools located in four different constituencies[2]. Besides, a total number of 1147 of laptops, 998 LCD projectors, 337 desktops were given to the selected schools in the said constituencies[3]. With the success of this pilot project, in January 2018, the Government of Kerala declared the State-wide launch of the said programme and linked the same with the Rejuvenation Campaign. The Chief Minister inaugurated this State-wide launching of the Hi-Tech School Project. As of now, the KITE has installed various ICT equipment in almost all schools as part of the Rejuvenation Campaign, and this has made a far-reaching impact not only in the quality and standard of public education but also in the rate of enrolment as well. The following graphical representation gives precise information about the distribution of ICT-enabled educational equipment through the KITE as part of the modernisation of the schools' academic infrastructure envisioned by the Rejuvenation Campaign.

Graph 4.1: List of the Types of ICT Equipment Provided by KITE
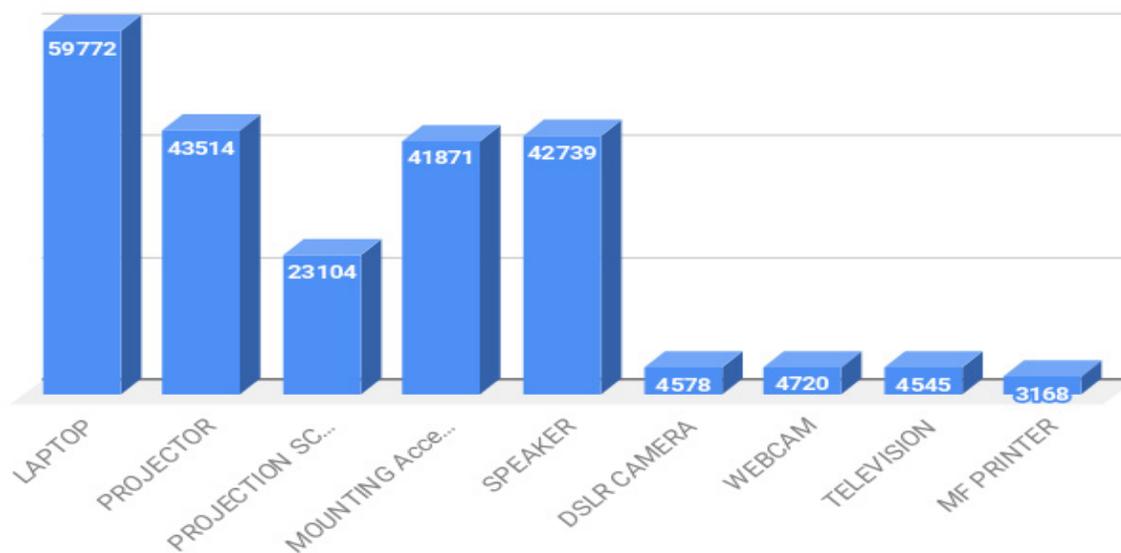
Source: Official Web Portal of KITE

2. These constituencies are respectively Alappuzha, Puthukkad, Kozhikkode North, and Thaliparamba
3. See, Official Web Portal of KITE, https://kite.kerala.gov.in/KITE/index.php/welcome/ict/1

The above graph presents details related to the distribution of ICT enabled educational instruments to schools, which is an indicator of the success of the Rejuvenation Campaign in terms of modernising and redefining the academic infrastructure of schools. The aim behind this is to ensure a high-quality education for children. But the mere distribution and installation of ICT-enabled educational instruments and programmes will not necessarily bring high-quality education for the children studying in public schools because the teachers should familiarise themselves with the operation of such instruments and programmes in a well-versed manner in the first place. The following graph dwells upon this issue:

Graph 4.2: On School Teacher's Training and Knowledge of ICT enabled Educational Instruments
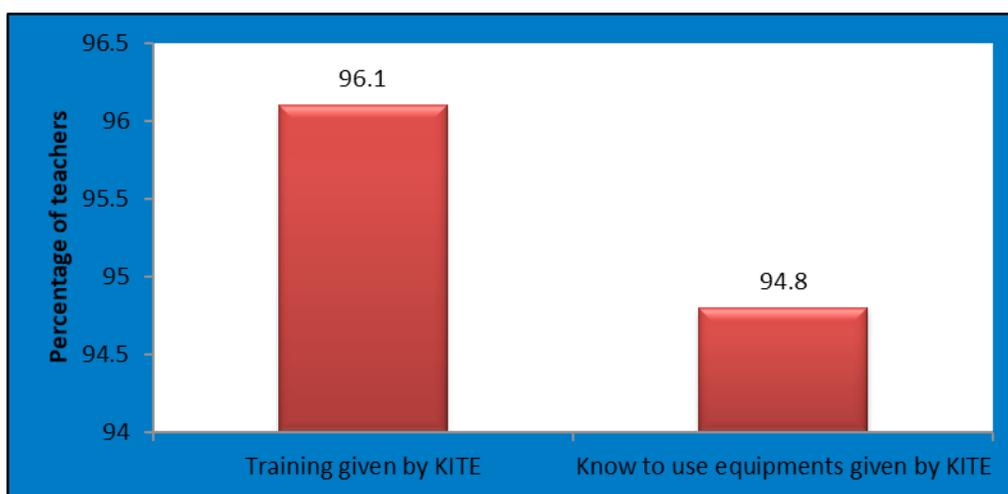
Source: Fieldwork

The above graph shows that a vast majority of teachers (94.8 per cent) are familiar with the operation of ICT-enabled educational instruments and programmes. This indicates the impact of the Rejuvenation Campaign in extending IT literacy amongst both the students and the teachers. However, nearly 5 per cent of school teachers still have to acquire ICT knowledge, on which serious attention needs to be paid by the government. Concerning the issue of training, the KITE organises four days of ICT training camps to teachers during the summer vacation (April/May). Our field survey shows that 96.1 per cent of teachers working in various schools across the State have received ICT training from the KITE. This, of course, has improved the efficiency of teachers in fully utilising the facilities of Hi-tech classrooms,

which in turn leads to the betterment of the academic standard of students as well as the schools. For instance, in the Government Model Boys Higher Secondary School, Thiruvananthapuram, all classrooms are converted to High-tech, and the teachers are well-versed in using ICT instruments. The library in the said school is digitalised, and the students have been able to utilise the ICT-enabled educational applications fully. Hence, an astounding improvement has taken place in the field of academic activities in the said school, especially after the implementation of the Rejuvenation Campaign.[4]

Figure 4.2: Hi-tech Classroom

Source: Fieldwork

4.5. Hi-tech Classroom: A New Innovation in Schools' Academic Infrastructure

The Hi-tech Classrooms or ICT-enabled classrooms created in schools have radically transformed the face of the public schools in the State. With the introduction of Hi-tech classrooms, the process of learning has become more interactive and exploratory. In the past, however, the learning process was associated with the activity of listening to classroom lectures and the reading of textbooks. Both listening and reading are linguistic activities— this is how a student tries to understand

4. Personal Interview (2020 February), D L Jayaraj, Teacher in Upper Primary Section, Govt Model Boys Higher Secondary School, Thycadu, Thiruvananthapuram.

the concepts and theorems taught in school. Besides, the activities of listening to lectures and reading textbooks demand only limited academic infrastructural facilities— a classroom space for listening to teachers' lecture and the study material for reading, the synthesising processes, which we call 'understanding and memorising', come only at the final stage in the form of knowledge. However, now with the Hi-tech classrooms, the students need not memorise concepts or theorems taught by teachers. The process of learning in Hi-tech classrooms becomes an interactive, audio-visual experience that engages the students more deeply.

The Hi-tech classrooms are equipped with interactive textbooks, digital content, online and offline resource portals, evaluation mechanisms, multimedia projectors, internet accessibility, and library facilities. All these help students to make the process of learning as a self-exploratory kind of activity which ultimately transforms the quality of learning and in turn, the standard of education.

The field survey provides an overall picture of the ground-level effectiveness of Hi-tech classrooms and its effects on the educational standard of students.

Graph 4.3: Do Hi-tech classrooms Increase the Standard of Education
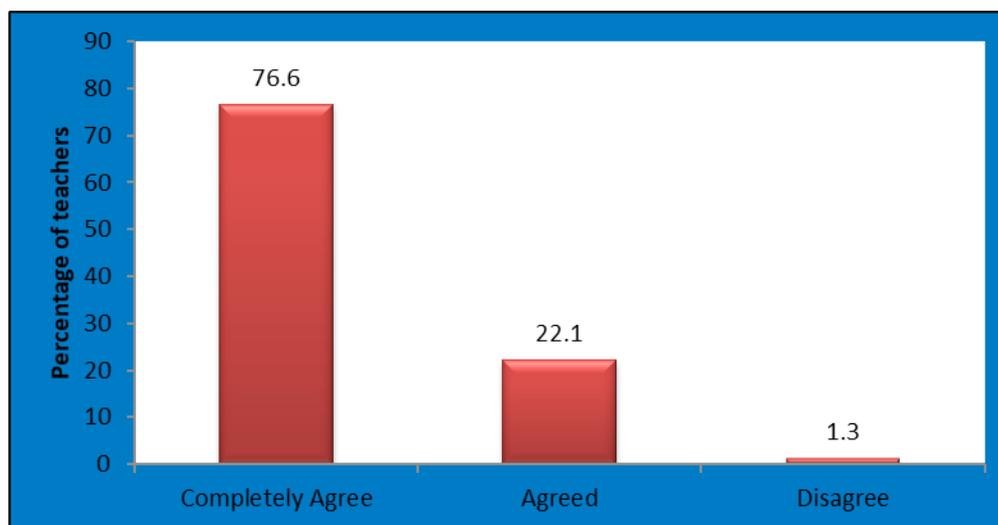
Source: Fieldwork

For example, regarding the effectiveness of Hi-tech classrooms, 76.6 per cent teachers (see Graph 4.3) gave a positive answer. According to them, with the

proper use of the Smart-Classroom facilities, schools are witnessing a definite enhancement in the standard of education.

According to 22.1 per cent of teachers the system of Hi-tech Classroom has not made a remarkable change in the educational standard of their schools. The authorities need to analyse the ground level issues and sort them out at the earliest. However, the remaining 1.3 per cent teachers responded to the field survey have a different story to tell altogether— Hi-tech classrooms are not functioning in their schools at all, so in these schools, it has not created any impact in the enhancement of the educational standard.

Concerning the function of Hi-tech classrooms, the present study could identify a few problems at the school level, some of which occur due to 'human error' or 'technical deficiency.' The term 'human error' refers to the lack of proper knowledge of teachers in using the ICT programmes and tools installed in Hi-tech classrooms. Whereas the term 'technical deficiency' denotes the ground-level problems existing in some schools regarding the installation of ICT hardware equipment— for example, a few schools need proper infrastructural facilities to install projector or to mount accessories in classrooms.[5] Another problem is related to the safety of the installed ICT hardware instruments in Hi-tech classrooms because some schools are devoid of proper classroom-ceiling, mainly, those schools whose roof is made of roof-tiles instead of concrete.[6] While some schools still do face problems with regard to internet connectivity and electricity connection in classrooms, which, of course, creates hiccup in the effective operationalisation of the ICT hardware instruments/equipment.[7] Though these problems were encountered in a small number of schools, it deserves special attention from the government.

4.5.1 Role of Hi-tech class rooms in Enhancing the students' involvement

Regarding Hi-tech classrooms, it is essential to examine its role in enhancing the student's involvement in the process of learning, as the engagement of the student in the learning process is something that determines his/her level of proficiency in the subjects/disciplines. The students find Mathematics or Biology as difficult subjects

5. Source: Field Survey
6. Source: Field Survey
7. Source: Field Survey

because they neither have any interest in it nor any academic engagement with that subject/discipline. The problem faces by the education system would be how to make the subject interesting and engaging to students, which will subsequently enable the student to attain proficiency in that subject.

Graph 4.4: Role of Hi-tech class rooms in Enhancing the students' involvement
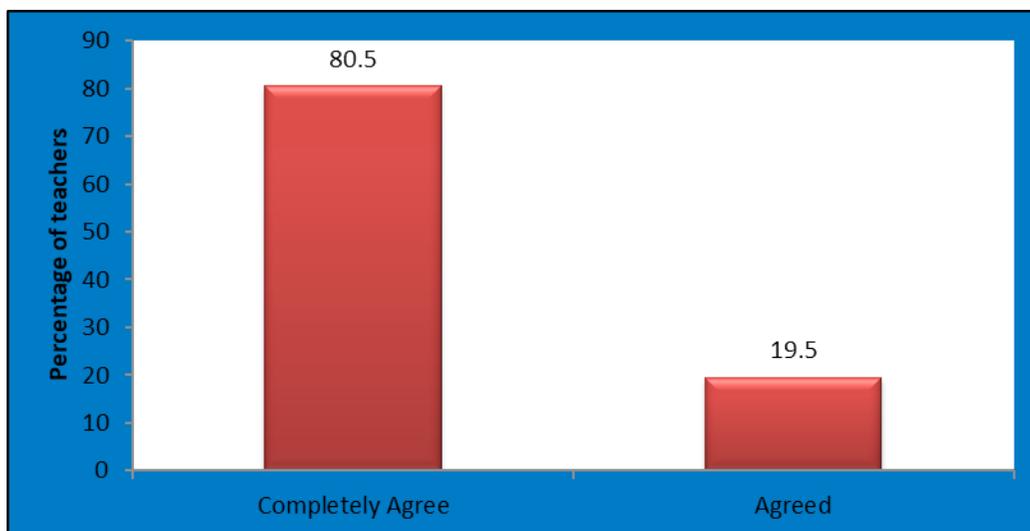
Source: Fieldwork

According to the field survey, 80.5 per cent of the teachers completely agree with the potential and role of Hi-tech classrooms in enhancing the engagement of students. However, the experience of field work and the data reveal that there are difference of opinion existing in the schools on implementation of Hi-tech classrooms. Various reasons have been raised by the teachers on this issue. Mainly, the difference of opinion exists on the method of implementation of the Hi-tech classrooms. A group, consisting of 19.5 per cent of teachers, says that Hi-tech classrooms would be helpful very much to the enhancement of the student's involvement in the curricular activities. Nevertheless, they are registering their dissent on the way of speedy implementation of the Hi-tech classrooms. Another group of teachers, amongst the same category, have raised the questions on the priority of the development in the school. They added that they have agreed up on the importance of modern equipment for teaching but they have apprehensions

that the imaginative capacity of the children might be ruined by the Hi-tech instruments in the classroom. One of the opinions is that the time of play might be captured by the continuous interaction with the Hi-tech instruments and it might make student feel lonely and introvert.

In summary, a considerable change has been witnessed in the enhancement of student engagement of students in the class room and outside. However, qualitative difference exists between these two sets of schools. The former (those 80.5 per cent of teachers working in schools which are in complete agreement) have already seen the positive result in this matter— this means that these schools are already in a position to identify and pinpoint the dramatic transformation in terms of academic engagement, the enhancement of academic interest and performance of students. The latter category of schools is still in the process of result-making and not yet in a position to judge the impact created by Hi-tech classrooms.

4.6. The Modernisation and Digitalisation of School Libraries

School libraries have a critical place in the academic infrastructure, and has an instrumental role in enlightening students. Traditionally, the school library had only minimal infrastructure such as tables, chairs, book-shelves, and of course, books. Most of the school libraries in the past did not even have enough books, and the renovation of school libraries did not figure as a prime concern in the educational policy of the government. Many such school libraries existed only for the namesake.

Government Model Boys Higher Secondary School, Thiruvananthapuram, is a good case in point to mention here. This 130 old year school has developed a well-functioning digital library in addition to classroom libraries with the help of students, teachers, PTA, alumni, and of course, the Rejuvenation Campaign has offered a moral fillip to carry out this task. At present, the school library has a collection of roughly 15000 books, journals, and newspapers

A Teacher, Upper Primary Section, Govt Model Boys Higher Secondary School, Thycadu, Thiruvananthapuram.

Figure 4.3: School Library

Source: https://childwelfare.kerala.gov.in/project/library/

The Rejuvenation Campaign stresses the modernisation, renovation and digitalisation of school libraries. The desire for knowledge is an inherent part of education, and libraries play a significant and essential role in it. This is why the government took steps to digitalise school libraries through the Rejuvenation Campaign. As a result, there has been a considerable improvement in the condition of school libraries nowadays— these school libraries also have a good collection of journals, magazines, newspapers, and periodicals, in addition to books.

4.7. The Classroom Library and the Collective Effort

One of the significant changes brought by the Rejuvenation Campaign is not only the modernisation of school libraries, but it also succeeded in involving the general public, LSGIs, civil society organisations, and parents in the process— in the form of books, monetary assistance, or physical infrastructure. On the one side, this has helped the school to make an enduring linkage with the civil society and people in general, but on the other, it has improved the reading habit of students, which is a catalyst for developing the culture of critical thinking. Besides this, the concept of classroom libraries also enables students to undertake some managerial responsibilities as well— for instance, according to classroom library concept, each classroom has to set up a library, from which the students can borrow books. The library will be strictly monitored by a student who discharges the duties of the

librarian. The books in the classroom library often come from students, parents, and teachers, and hence its operationalisation has the character of a collective effort.

The field data collected from various schools across the State also underscores the fact that modernisation and digitalisation of school libraries has received great fillip under the Rejuvenation Campaign. For example, 68.8 per cent of teachers who participated in the field survey reported that the work related to the modernisation and digitalisation of school libraries is going at an accelerated pace. However, in the opinion of the remaining 31.2 per cent of teachers, the modernisation and digitalisation work of school libraries is yet to take place, and the present study suggests that the government needs to pay special attention in this regard.

Graph 4.5: Modernisation of School Library through the Rejuvenation Campaign
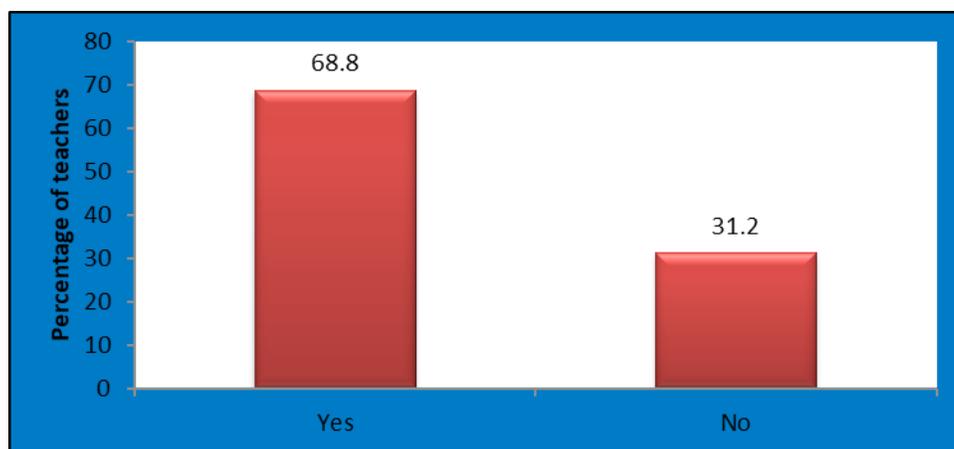
Source: Fieldwork

Based on field information, the present study proposes a few suggestions for improving the ongoing process of modernisation and digitalisation of school libraries. First, a library masterplan should be put in place in each school based on the discussion in the committee for the development of the school library. In this committee, representatives from LSGIs, PTA, students' community, staff council, and the members of alumni associations should have mandatory membership. The role and functions of each member representing their respective sections need to be defined clearly. Second, the LSGIs shall include an assistance programme for the

development school library in its annual budget concerning the improvement of the general and academic infrastructure of schools. Third, the school authorities, with the help of the LSGIs, should try to draw the attention of KIIFB and elected representatives (MLAs and MPs) to the modernisation of school library and seek monetary assistance for the same. Fourth, the school authorities need to approach corporate organisations for assistance from their CSR fund for improving the condition of the school library.

4.8. Renovation of Computer Labs in Schools

This is yet another impact brought by the Rejuvenation Campaign as it gives particular emphasis on setting up computer labs in each school. For operationalising this facility, a total amount of Rs 300 crores is being expended from KIIFB to establish computer labs in all Primary and Upper Primary schools.[8]

Figure 4.4 Computer Lab

The emphasis here is to make the children computer-literates from the early stage of education. The fieldwork investigation conducted as part of the present study gives an interesting picture in this regard as most of the teachers who participated

---

8. See, Varma, Prabha (2018): Rejuvenating Public Education in Kerala, Peoples Democracy, vol XLII, No 30, Retrived from https://peoplesdemocracy.in/2018/0729_pd/rejuvenating-public-education-kerala

in the field survey opined that their schools have received computers/laptops from various sources such as the state institutions (KITE), PTA, alumni associations, and civil society organisations. Besides, the government, through KITE has so far delivered laptops, projectors, USB speakers to 9941 Lower and Upper Primary schools from which over 20 lakh students expect to get the benefit.[9] It is found that the computer lab programme proposed by the Rejuvenation Campaign with the help of the State and the non-state actors is a success, and besides, it is fast changing the face of public education in the State.

4.9. Rejuvenating Science Labs and Scientific Temper

Science labs are very important, especially for students pursuing studies in the physical science and natural sciences. Since science is very much about learning through observation, experimentation, and inference, science labs in schools play a vital role in fostering the spirit of scientific enquiry and scientific temper amongst the students. Scientific temperament and attitude helps to foster logical thinking and to wipe out superstitions among students and to create in the future generation the spirit of free-thinking and enquiry.[10] Apart from modernising the outdated science laboratories that existed in schools, the Rejuvenation Campaign, is creating new programmes and projects to resuscitate science labs, *Lab on Wheels* is one of them. This has been implemented in all elementary schools as part of the Rejuvenation Campaign. The Project provides a van with all the necessary equipment, gadgets, science kits, working and still models, digital materials, posters, and charts. This vehicle, with a self-sufficient lab, will visit schools in different Block Resource Centres (BRCs). The vehicle will be stationed in a school for a day or for a few hours. The students of the schools can use and conduct experiments using the materials in the lab on wheels. The tutors in the lab will help students in experimentation, observation, model building. The Lab on Wheels project promoted the popularisation of learning science in elementary schools. It also promoted scientific attitude, critical thinking, skills in experimentation, and process skills related to the learning of science among students.[11]

---

9. See, https://kite.kerala.gov.in/KITE/downloads/kite_presentation.pdf
10. See, SSK, Annual Report, 208-19, Retrieved from http://ssakerala.in/home/home/docs/Annual%20Report%202018-19.pdf
11. Ibid

4.10. Physical Education: A New Addition to the Academic Infrastructure

The Rejuvenation Campaign has a broad view of education. It does not, therefore, limit education to mere academic activities confined to study materials and classroom tests. Activities that trigger physical wellbeing are also considered part of the education system. This is where the inclusion of the scope of physical education becomes significant.

Figure 4.5 Physical Training Session in Public School

Source: Fieldwork

It formulates activities to encourage sports in educational institutions. For instance, the Rejuvenation Campaign also promotes indigenous sport/games that are on the brink of extinction. The Rejuvenation Campaign also institutes a cluster-system for both sports and arts as well. The fieldwork data shows that 76.6 per cent of teachers who participated in the survey conducted across schools in the State emphasised the importance of physical fitness of students, and the need to revitalise physical education in schools, which is highlighted by the Rejuvenation Campaign. The renovation of playgrounds should be seen in this backdrop.

Graph 4.6: Physical Education: Playground Renovation and Swimming Training
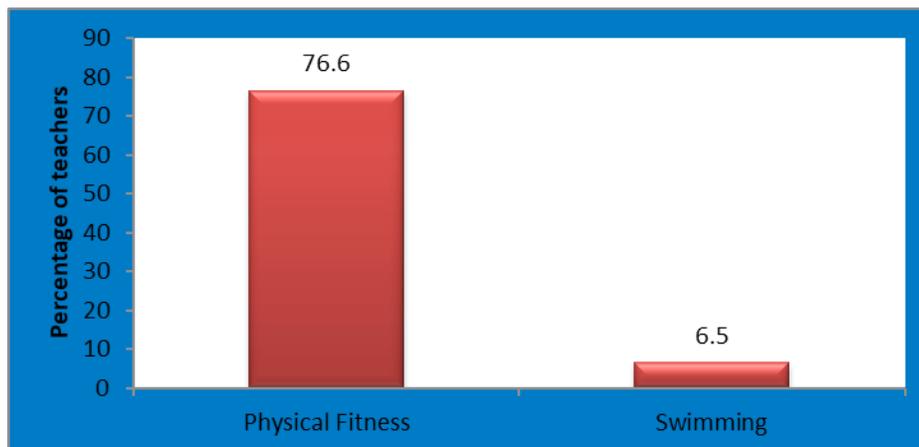
Source: Fieldwork

Though only students of a few public educational institutions (6.5 per cent), get specialised training for swimming, it has to be considered a unique intervention. Swimming has never been a part of physical education in public educational institutions, and the introduction of the same was prompted by several cases of drowning that was reported in the State. The Government High School Guderle Idukki sets a unique example in this regard, where the children get swimming training as part of physical education.[12] Besides, swimming is also a sport, and many CBSC unaided schools do have a swimming coach. Considering its importance as a life skill and a sport, the government should seriously consider extending swimming training to schools in the State.

4.11. Concluding Observations

The impacts brought about by the Rejuvenation Campaign are far-reaching when it comes to the improvement of the academic infrastructure of the public educational institutions. This is, indeed, one of the most significant impacts brought by the Rejuvenation Campaign into the realm of conceptualisation and delivery of contemporary education through creation of more Hi-tech classrooms, modernisation of library and lab facilities, and so on, which in turn, makes possible gradual up-gradation of the standard of the public education system. Most importantly, such improvement in the academic infrastructure has led to increase

---

12. Source: Field Survey

in enrolment in public educational institutions. For example, according to DPI statistics, 5.05 lakh new students have enrolled in public educational institutions during 2017-2018 to 2019-2020. These facts speak volumes about the success of the Rejuvenation Campaign. The library and lab facilities of the schools have also witnessed considerable improvement under the Rejuvenation Campaign. Another positive fallout has been the increased and active involvement of parents and local communities in the activities and functioning of the public educational institutions, by offering various kinds of help to improve the academic infrastructure at schools. All these point towards the positive impacts of the Rejuvenation Campaign in the field of the academic infrastructure of the public education institutions in the State.

Chapter 5
Curriculum, Pedagogy, and the Learning Process under Public Education Rejuvenation Campaign

5.1 Introduction

It is the curriculum, pedagogy, and the learning process that ultimately concern the students who are the prime stakeholders of any education system. The Rejuvenation Campaign is a comprehensive intervention in all these areas.

In the following sections, an effort is made to understand the conceptualisation and operationalisation of the curriculum, pedagogy, and the learning process proposed and aimed at under the Rejuvenation Campaign in Kerala. This chapter is divided into two parts. The first part tries to understand the curriculum and pedagogy both in its historical and contemporary developments. The second part tries to understand the impact of curriculum and pedagogy adapted by the Rejuvenation Campaign upon students and their learning process.

Part I

5. 2 Curriculum and Pedagogy: A Background Analysis

As noted in previous chapters, the revision of curriculum in the context of Kerala is taking place under the Kerala Curriculum Framework (KCF), 2007. In the following section, an effort is made to map the reformation of the curriculum and pedagogy at the national level in general and in particularat the State level in the context of the Rejuvenation Campaign.

5.2.1 School Curriculum Preparation and its Revision at National Level

Education has certain specific aims, and the curriculum is designed to fulfil them. Based on changes in the academic field and according to the needs of the time, the curriculum is also revised from time to time. At the core of the curriculum, are the basic principles on which it is designed, apart from the needs of the time. For instance, the curriculum of education in the colonial period was designed to serve the colonial interests and to assist the colonial administration. As Macaulay said, the aim of English education in colonial India was to prepare a generation who are Indians in blood but English in taste. In the post-independence period, when education came under the control of the independent nation, the purpose and content of education also underwent change.

From the post-independence period onwards, there were efforts to reconstruct the school education system in the country. The formation of the National Curriculum for Educational Research and Training (NCERT) deserves a special mention in this regard. It is an autonomous body established in 1961 by the Government of India to assist and advise the central and state governments on policies and programmes for qualitative improvement in school education.

5.2.2 School Curriculum and its Revisions in Kerala: A Historical Background

In Kerala, the efforts towards preparing a new curriculum for education were taken up only after the formation of the State in 1956. The ministry led by EMS Namboodiripad, took the first steps in this regard and the curriculum based on Kerala Education Rules (KER), was passed by the Kerala Assembly in 1957.

The Pothuvidyabhyasa Commission Report (Public Education Commission Report) constituted by Kerala State Teachers Association (KSTA) (KSTA 2017: 97) summarises the changes brought aboutin the curriculum by KERas follows:

- The KER prepared the rules for the administration of education. According to KER, the lower age for entry into school was limited to 5. English and Hindi languages were also made compulsory part of the curriculum, and learning them was to begin in classes V and VI respectively (KSTA 2017: 97-).

- The change that occurred in 1962 made an opportunity for the 9th class students to learn a particular subject through its selection.

- The change that occurred in 1964 limited the school education only to a level of 10th class. All subjects should be studied until the 10th class, and no special subjects were allowed until the 10th.

- Efforts were also made to revise the syllabus based on the NPE 1986 and NCF 1988. The said Policy and Framework had suggested better curriculum changes and teaching methods. But they could not be implemented effectively. The difference between theory and practice was so wide.

- Kerala started to implement the reforms put forward by the Minimum Level of Learning (MLL) scheme, which was prepared by NCERT in 1991, in the academic year of 1994-1995 in 280 schools.

- The efforts of the curriculum revisions were aimed at making quality education in the schools. Meetings were held both among the general public and the experts on revising the curriculum. The curriculum as part of DPEP for the lower primary school was the one which was evolved in this way. Textbooks were revised, and the new teaching aids were also prepared. The training was held for making the teachers familiar with the new methodology and style of teaching.

- All efforts to revise the curriculum before 1997 had certain limitations since they were not based on any scientific approach or concepts. From 1997 onwards, meetings and debates began to be held on the question of

curriculum revision. Curriculum approach documents in a scientific way were also prepared before revising the curriculum.

- The curriculum revision, which began at the lower primary level, was extended to the higher levels too in later periods. Thus the curriculum for class V was revised under SCERT in the academic year of 1998-99, and the same was done for class VIII also in 2001-02. The textbook for class VIII as per the revised curriculum was brought in 2002-03, and the same for class X was done in 2003-04.

- The government, which came to power in 2001, refused to continue all the efforts done so far with regards to curriculum revision. But following the mass protest, the government finally decided to continue with the programme.

- By the time in 2000, as seen above, the Union Government came up with a new curriculum framework known as National Curriculum Framework 2000. NCF 2000 was widely opposed as it was communal. Thus in 2005, the then UPA Government came up with a new one, i.e., NCF 2005.

- Kerala Curriculum Framework is based on the above mentioned NCF 2005.

According to KCF 2007 it was in 1997 that an effort was made for a comprehensive revision of curriculum focuses on the process of teaching and learning. Rooted in the emerging methodologies and strategies, an integrated method of learning, a process-oriented, activity-based approach, viewing the learner as a constructor of knowledge, recognising the role ofsociety in knowledge construction andthe idea of continuous andcomprehensive evaluation came into effect (KCF 2007: 15).

5.2.3 Kerala Curriculum Framework (KCF) 2007

According to KCF 2007 itself, it is for the first time that the State was initiating such an exercise to develop a curriculum framework, which was rooted in the ideas articulated in the National Curriculum Framework (NCF) 2005. It can also be considered the last document with regard to the revision of school education curriculum in Kerala. KCF covers school education at all levels, i.e., from the level of pre-primary to higher secondary.

The classroom practices in the earlier school education system were undemocratic and power-centric. In the earlier system, the students were made silent listeners, and teachers alone were allowed to speak. Students were not given enough freedom and opportunity to ask questions, and they were not availing opportunities for self-learning. But in the proposed curriculum, the rights of the students are recognised as important, and the role of the learners in acquiring knowledge was also acknowledged. All these efforts make classrooms democratic, where knowledge production and its social implications become complementary.

5.2.4 KCF 2007 and its Societal Relevance

KCF 2007 conceives that education should address social problems. Apart from addressing contemporary issues, the curriculum should also be futuristic. A concept of future society should guide the curriculum. The future society is perceived as one where all have equal access to opportunities. Such values can only be promoted through an ideal education system, for which the curriculum should be reframed with a comprehensive vision. The KCF 2007 perceives following as the aims of education (KCF 2007: 17-19):

- Promoting a social order based on equality and social justice

- Protecting the environment and making aware of environmental issues

- Preparing the children to be responsible citizens in society

- Creating a generation upholding nationalism rooted in a universal vision

- Making the children aware of their rights

- Providing an opportunity to be familiar with current developments in the field of science and technology

- Developing logical reasoning and scientific temper amongst the students

- Promoting regional and traditional forms of knowledge and culture

- Developing vocational skills among children and making them value labour

- Inculcating values of democracy amongst the children

- Strengthening the children to resist all sorts of invasions- cultural, economic, and geographical

- Developing in learners, the ability to construct knowledge through interaction and sharing

- Providing space for learners to engage in critical dialogue

5.2.5 Imagining Curriculum Practices in the Context of the Rejuvenation Campaign

The change in curriculum was not directly proposed under the Rejuvenation Campaign. But according to the present study, substantial changes have occurred in the realms of curriculum and pedagogy of school education. These were directly and indirectly triggered by the Rejuvenation Campaign, which was launched in 2016, which proposes the idea of a Kerala model of education,and curriculum constitutes an integral part.Technically the last revision was done in 2007, but the revision process is still going on based on the Kerala Curriculum Framework 2007, and in certain other ways, according to the director of SCERT. Hence, the present study, at this point,is not going into all the nuances of the curriculum revision in the context of the Rejuvenation Campaign[1].

5.2.6 How RejuvenationCampaign Affects Curriculum?

Under the Rejuvenation Campaign, the government took substantive steps to transform the theoretical and conceptual formulations of the curriculum into a practical form.The transformation of theory into practice itself can be considered a kind of revision since it brings new changes. When a theoretical formulation turns into a practical form, it needs to fill many vacuums that could not be foreseen when theoretical or conceptual formulations were made. Another notable aspect of the Rejuvenation Campaign is its willingness to learn from and adapt innovative practices and methods in teachers training, modes of evaluation, leading practices from other countries etc. The Rejuvenation Campaign, in that sense, can be called

---

1. Interview with director SCERT

a 'search'; a search for finding new alternatives. It often synthesizes new ideas, lessons, and experiences in education and thereby attempting to improve and energise educational culture.

The major emphasis of the Rejuvenation Campaign is on creating a learner-centred atmosphere in both pre-school and pre-primary schools in the place of textbook-oriented system. By laying emphasis on the identification and enrichment of students' potential in various fields, it triggers the search for new approaches to the curriculum. By recognising both self-study and group-study as integral methods of learning, it enables each student to overcome his/her limitations. Learning becomes a collective effort and goes beyond the traditional curriculum setting.

The Department of General Education has designed separate programmes for making the learning process easy and effective. Apart from this, the schools also were allowed to design and implement their own programmes and schemes.

The science subjects and the scientific temper are specially promoted under the Rejuvenation Campaign, and so the learning of science is given importance. The possibilities of modern technology are also promoted along with science learning. Besides this, the promotion of arts and sports also help the mental and physical development of the children.

The scope of the curriculum and learning process was widened and enriched beyond the mechanical dissemination of information, and they were redefined to address existing limitations and to forge new ways of learning.

5.2.7 The Ideals behind the Curriculum under the RejuvenationCampaign

The imagination of a Universal Design of Learning is a major feature of the curriculum and the learning process under the Rejuvenation Campaign. The universal design of learning is considered inclusive since it ensures all the children opportunities for learning irrespective of their caste, religion, gender, and region and renders special consideration to the socially and economically marginalised and the differently-abled. This means that the universal design of learning considers all and leaves nobody. Apart from this, the curriculum and learning process, as mentioned KCF 2007, bears following ideals and principles.

- The learning process has been designed, and the learning atmosphere has been imagined in a way in which the values of democracy, secularism, equality, cooperation, coexistence, and sympathy are upheld.

- The children are made aware of environmental issues, social issues and waste disposal, and of having critical consciousness.

The children are made aware of equality and gender sensitivity and promote among them all a healthy relationship between men and women.

5.2.8 Changes and Revision in Pedagogy under the RejuvenationCampaign

The conventional pedagogy is considered teacher-centred where only the teachers are allowed to speak in the classrooms, and the students are made silent spectators. In fact, even teachers were not free to make their own choice, as they are compelled to teach only what is instructed by the textbook and syllabi. In this sense, conventional teaching was textbook-oriented. In a nutshell, both teachers and students were not free to make their choice in this system. Instead of conventional pedagogy, what is offered under the Rejuvenation Campaign reflects a participatory character. Both students and teachers have their roles to playin it, and it is not textbook-oriented.

5.2.9 Towards a Critical Pedagogy

Pedagogy should make the students free and enable them to analyse things critically. NCF 2005 emphasises critical pedagogy as it provides an opportunity to reflect critically on issues in terms of their political, social, economic, and moral aspects. Knowledge makes the learners free from oppression, for which, the students should feel free in their learning, and possess critical consciousness. NCF 2005 makes the point that students are critical observers of their own conditions and needs, and should be participants in discussions and problem-solving related to their education and future opportunities. Hence children need to be aware that their experiences and perceptions are important and should be encouraged to develop the mental skills needed to think and reason independently with the courage to dissent.

Though the teachers were also not free in the conventional method of teaching, a

hierarchy existed between students and teachers with the latter placed above. But in critical pedagogy, both teachers and students have their own respective roles, and students are not 'under' the teachers. Paulo Freire's (2005) *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* can be considered one of the foundational texts of the concept of critical pedagogy where he envisages a new relationship between students and teachers. He calls conventional pedagogy as 'banking of education' since the students are considered as objects for knowledge in the form of information to be deposited in.

At present, under the Rejuvenation Campaign, both teaching and learning are made participatory processes. The students have their own role in learning.What the children learn outside the school becomes important. NCF 2005 says that while class participation is a powerful strategy, it loses its pedagogic edge when it is ritualised, or merely becomes an instrument to enable teachers to meet their own ends. True participation starts with the experiences garnered by both students and teachers.

Under the Rejuvenation Campaign, the old pedagogical structure has witnessed a transition from 'teacher-centric' to 'student-centric', for it recognises each student as a 'single unit' and each student gets due recognition under the curriculum and pedagogical change. This has created an attitudinal shift in the understanding of classrooms, which in this case, represents the conglomeration of many units (many students). This helps the teacher to identify the hidden potential of the students in the classroom.

Moreover, this sort of change in pedagogy can also help the teacher to locate the vulnerable sides of the students and other socio-economic or family-related factors that make them indifferent, subservient, and lethargic. Most importantly, this pedagogical change is learner-oriented; and it gives ample opportunities for a teacher to make contact with each student at an individual level. As a result, a healthy rapport between the teacher and students will develop, teaching becomes more of an informal activity because the teacher plays the role of a mentor here. Once a healthy student-teacher environment is created, many constructive outcomes can come into being in both academic and non-academic realms.

Another notable change in the pedagogy is related to the method of teaching. The present teaching method is a performative activity in which a teacher relies on

new modern technological tools; the activity of teaching goes beyond the purview of what is provided in the textbook, and uses modern technological tools available in Hi-Tech classrooms such as LCD Projector, Mounting Accessories, PowerPoint slides, Content images, and videos to help the students understand more about the topic or subject.

When teaching becomes interactive, a space for open communication unfolds between the teacher and the students. This is precisely where teaching as a performative activity inspires the students, and therefore, the students have no need to memorise the topics or subjects because, in performative teaching, the process of learning is akin to an experience. Whatever we learn through experience will stick with us and functions as an inventory of knowledge.

The present study observes a paradigmatic shift in the pedagogy after the implementation of the Rejuvenation Campaign. For example, the old paradigmatic structure of the lesson plan (before the Rejuvenation Campaign) in public education had a passive character, that is, the character of the lesson plan largely depended on what the students could fathom from textbooks. However, with the paradigm shift in pedagogy, the lesson plan becomes active, that is, it uses the medium of virtual display such as those applications available in Samagra portal and attempts to make the lesson plan dynamic in such a way that it can generate curiosity among students. As a result, teaching becomes a facilitating activity, for its ultimate aim is to create good citizenry for the nation and society.

5.2.10 New Framework in Teachers' Training

The Rejuvenation Campaign calls for the adoption of a new framework for teachers training, which aims to elevate the quality of the existing school education system and to bring the issue of social justice to the centre stage of discussions. It constitutes a resource team consisting of experts in the field of education to formulate the details of the new framework of teachers' training, and further links it up with the top scientific and higher educational institutions. In practice, this will help teachers to develop a research-oriented mindset in their profession.

One of the noticeable aspects of this new framework of teachers training is the Induction Course— a training programme for newly qualified but less experienced

teachers who are new to the teaching profession. In addition to this, a mandatory eight-day annual training for all teachers is given within the present system. Besides, ICT-enabled training is also provided to the teachers through Kerala Infrastructure and Technology for Education (KITE), which in essence enables teachers to get familiarised with the state-of-art school education system. Besides, with the aid of the Social Welfare Department, the government will provide training to all pre-school teachers, including those working in Anganvadis. A resource team will be set up at the Block Panchayat level to carry out this task.

Amongst various trainings provided, one of the most important is the training on ICT. ICT enhances the scope of both teaching and learning. But all the learning and teaching process cannot be supported by ICT. In such a context, there is a need for blended learning. Blending is prompted by the recognition that not all learning is best achieved in an electronically-mediated environment(Thomas 2014: 170).

Another significant aspect of this new framework of teachers' training is the constant performance appraisal of teachers— that is, the yearly evaluation of the performance of the faculty members.

Trainers are selected from among the teachers based on their qualifications and the performance at the interview. The selected teachers, join SSK and train other teachers. The trainers can re-join the school as teachers and direct experience from the school makes them more qualified for giving training to other teachers. Earlier training was given only to the teachers who were teaching only up to 8th class. Now it has been extended to the teachers who teach at the high school level also.

Part II

5.3.1 The Learning Process under Public Education Rejuvenation Campaign

As already mentioned, the curriculum that was revised in 2007 remained unimplemented or partially implemented until the introduction of the Rejuvenation Campaign. One of the aims of the Rejuvenation Campaign is to implement the curriculum based on the values of democracy, secularism, equality, and social justice. In order to facilitate the implementation of the curriculum, the Rejuvenation

Campaign has devised several programmes and strategies. The General Education Department, in its own way and through the programmes designed by SSK, tries to realise the aims of the revised curriculum and thereby enhance the quality of the school education. The revised curriculum implemented by the Department in three ways, viz,:

1. In the first case, the Department tries to implement the curriculum in its own ways drawing upon NCF 2005 and KCF 2007 and other reports.

2. In the second case, the curriculum is implemented through the Learning Enhancement Programmes (LEP) designed by SSK. The LEP helps the students to learn things in a new way, which is different from the past.

3. In the third case, it is done through the special programmes designed by the schools. The schools are free to design their own programmes independently and implement them as part of the Rejuvenation Campaign programmes. This one also helps the students to learn things unconventionally.

5.3.2 The Programmes of Actions and the Rejuvenation Campaign

These programmes under the Campaign are meant to enable students in their learning, and to become better citizens and individuals, by inculcating social and cultural values in their minds. There are programmes for the learning of language, social science, science, mathematics, and Information and Communication Technology, understanding of nature and ecology, acquiring life skills, employability skills, and so on. Apart from all these, there are programmes for extra-curricular activities also. All the schools must implement these programmes. There are separate programmes for each level of classes. This means that some programmes are for LPS or UPS or for both, some others are for High Schools, some others are for Higher Secondary Schools, and some others are for all. Apart from this kind of categorisation of the programmes, some are meant for those who are backward in learning, and some others are meant for all. But all students are covered in most of the programmes which are meant for those who are backward in learning. There are programmes exclusively for girls also.

Each programme is under the mentorship of a teacher. It is the duty and responsibility of the teachers to see that a programme is functioning well or not. There is no separate time-schedule for the programmes. The teachers are supposed to find time for the functioning of the programmes during free times and break times, i.e., time available before starting the class in the morning, during lunch break, and other free times are taken for such programmes. Holidays, like Saturday, are also considered for certain programmes to be held.

5.3.3 Language Learning Programmes

KCF 2007 has emphasised language learning and its importance in school education. As per this, the mother tongue should be given the first preference. It suggests the medium of instruction to be Malayalam. It also talks about the importance of English and Hindi. Along with these languages, there are opportunities to learn other languages also. Those who are interested can be given chances to learn Sanskrit, Arabic, and Urdu. Opportunity can be made to learn Arabic from the first standard onwards. But it suggests that it is better to start learning Sanskrit and Urdu only in the 5th class. In the same way, it is better to start learning foreign languages, other than English, only at the higher secondary level.

There are separate programmes for language learning at present. Programmes are there for enhancing the learning capacity of Malayalam, English, and Hindi. The learning is not textbook oriented but using learning tools that have been developed for the purpose. Teachers train the students for learning the language in a way which is different from traditional or conventional methods, which is also practical-oriented.Training is targeted towards improving conversations in English as well as Malayalam. Though some of the language programmes are meant for those students who are backward in learning, other students can also be benefitted from the programmes. In such cases, all the students are invited to the programmes.

Malayalathilakkam

This programme was actually formulated in the academic year 2016-17 for those students in classes in 3 and 4 who are backward in Malayalam learning. But in a later period, the programmes were extended to the higher classes also. So, at present,

this programme is meant for both elementary (LP & UP) and secondary schools, but in a different way. In both cases, those who are backward in Malayalam language learning are selected and trained. The students are trained in language through small words, songs, stories etc. There are separate texts for that. The students are encouraged to write songs and stories and to draw pictures and so on. Here both students and teachers are engaged in writing. The programme expects the students to achieve a high standard in reading and writing, capacity for independent reading and grasping the read stuff, and capacity in creative writing. In the secondary level also the students are trained through stories, songs, and visuals. Under this method, the students are not under much pressure, and they can enjoy the learning process. All students, under this programme, are expected to achieve a high standard in the mother tongue. It is also expected to encourage the students to read much. Students are also expected to engage in creative writing activities. In 2017 SCERT conducted trials that proved the programme to be a success. Out of the 584 students, who attended the pre-test, 580 were selected. Out of them, 117 students secured A+ and A grades for the mother tongue.

Hello English

Developed during the academic year 2016-17 with the aim of improving the teaching skill of teachers in English. This programme is designed for both elementary and secondary schools, including higher secondary and vocational higher secondary. This programme is aimed at improving the English communication skill of the students and enhancing their standard to an international level. The students are trained in using the language without fear and error. The programme also aims at preparing the teachers to speak English fluently. The teachers are trained in June and made to come together as a collective in July and August. There are separate modules for *Hello English*. Textbooks are prepared for *Hello English* modules, and classes are based on it. In every Panchayat, two schools each are selected as camp schools, and the English fest will be conducted in these schools in November. In the festival, students communicate only in English with the parents and people's representatives invited to attend it. The English library will also be there in the classes. There are separate modules for both HSS and VHSE for the programme. It was decided to divide the module for both the streams in 2019.

Sureeli Hindi

Sureeli Hindi,a programme implemented in UP and HS level, aims at enhancing students' knowledge in Hindi and preparing them to communicate in Hindi easily. It also aims to enable the teachers in this regard. As part of this programme, workshops are conducted with a view to formulate ideas. Workshops for making learning tools are also held, apart from efforts to ensure a Hindi friendly atmosphere in classrooms. Moral stories are presented to the students in visual forms with the help of this lab. Try-outs are held to test the taste and knowledge of students in Hindi. There is a Hindi language lab that helps the students to make language learning easier. It has been functioning since 2017. It started in Kilimanoor Town UPS, and there are different chapters of the lab at present. This lab makes learning and use of Hindi language easier. There isa big screen in classrooms along with earphones, laptops etc. The lab can be operated for all the students, in batches of 30. Vocabulary building is one of the major achievements of this programme. One of the most important features of this programme is that it does not need the teachers to operate it.

5.3.4 Social Science Education

KCF, 2007 has tried to understand the existing problems and limitations of social science learning. The teaching methods had certain limitations, and teachers were also not so capable of dealing with certain things. The class was purely based on classroom teaching. The tools of learning were limited to textbooks and teaching aids. No other possibilities were explored in this regard. The excess of ideas and facts and the rigid ordering of the contents also made teaching more complicated. There were fewer opportunities or no opportunities at all for the students to reflect upon or critically evaluate what they have learnt. At the higher secondary level, there were various combinations for social science and commerce subjects. All these subjects were treated in a similar manner. This made the learning of social science subjects difficult. Each subject has its own distinct methodology, which was not considered in the past while approaching the social science subjects in the school. Due to this, the students were not familiar with methodologies or the specificities in dealing with various social science subjects. The then existing period system for various subjects for classroom teaching also had limitations. The subjects have to be dealt with differently in primary, secondary, and higher secondary level schools.

There are Social Science clubs in every school, which helps the students to acquire knowledge of their social surroundings. The campaign has promoted to form the Social Science clubs in every school, which helps the students to acquire knowledge of their society. Heritage museum scheme also helps the students to be in touch with social science subjects in a different way. One of the examples is that the limitations of the students on learning geography has been identified by the task force of the campaign. In order to address this problem, a new scheme called 'Bhaumam' was launched. As part of this programme and the enhancement of social science learning, the government has taken various steps. To help students have a better understanding of basic geography and to create ideas regarding it, a month-long try-out module was designed and conducted in a visioning workshop. Apart from these learning tools were developed with the help of experts. The government conducted try-out, interim evaluation, and post-test, and took steps to improve the module based on try-out before extending this programme at State level. The same kind of steps has been taken both in UP/HS and higher secondary level. Observation of special days provides new opportunities for the students to study and be aware of the historical facts, incidents, and other socially important subjects. New ways of observing holidays such as Independence Day, Gandhi Jayanthi, World Health Day, Environment Day etc become important in this regard. The State Government has launched a new programme called 'Naithikam', which is meant to celebrate the 70th year of the Indian Constitution. Through this, the students get the opportunity to be aware of the importance of the constitution, the democratic and secular values that it highlights and so on.

5.3.5 Science Education

As in the case of all other subjects, science subjects were also textbook and classroom-oriented in the past. Teachers were supposed to speak to the students on certain assigned, and prescribed topics and the students were supposed to listen to them. Science education was nothing but the distribution of codified knowledge. Here the students were learning not from experiences, experiments, and tests. They were compelled to learn what they were taught. So they were not creators of the knowledge. Examinations were like memory tests. The eagerness and thirst of the students to know more about something were not entertained. The teaching and textbooks were purely examination-oriented. The science education in those

days failed to create scientific temper and literacy in the minds of the students. It is because of all these reasons that the learning of science was not attractive and interesting for the students. The principles and the ideas they come across have hardly anything to do with their practical life. There was a huge difference between theory and practice in the case of science learning.

The new curriculum under the Rejuvenation Campaign intends to make the students to think in rational and scientific ways to study science and technology. Under the revised curriculum, science learning becomes self-learning, self-doing, and experimenting. There are several science programmes for the encouragement of science education among the students, which are functioning not based on conventional methods. 'Little Scientist' is a programme of this kind, which aims at preparing the students to attain excellence in science, making them interested in science research, and making all the students interested in science. This programme helps to identify students interested in science and encourage them to share their science experience and express their abilities. It also conducts 'Open Science Stage'. Physics, chemistry, biology, environmental studies, and bio-diversity are considered under the programme.

Besides the above-mentioned kind of programmes, there are also certain other initiatives like science camp etc. Science clubs are functioning in every school. Science Park is another initiative in this kind. It constitutes a space where students can make their experiments and observations interestingly and innovatively. Working models, charts, and puzzles will help students to understand science concepts in a fun and interactive way. The PTA in each school will be actively partnering the science park project. BRC trainers under the SSK will help the schools in setting up the facility. The partners in the learning process will receive training on how to assemble and dismantle the learning equipment. Science Park is emphasised in creativity. There were other initiatives in various names like *Shasthrapadham, Shasthra Rangam, Shasthrothsavam, and Shasthra Kauthukam* also taken for better science education of the school students in Kerala.

Shasthrapadham is a science camp of this kind, which is held for HS and HSS students at the state level, and aims to elevate the students to international standards. The State-level science camp, *Shasthrapadham*, was organised with the help of the

Indian Institute of Science Education and Research (IISER) in 2019. It was a 3-day residential camp. Eminent persons from various fields led the camp. Students were made aware of science courses and related opportunities in the future. As part of the camp, group discussions were held in which students actively participated. Another camp was held at National Centre for Earth Science Studies (NICESS) for geography related subjectson 3rd February 2020. The first Geography lab was established in Mupliyam GHSS, Thrissur, in the year 2020. The Rejuvenation Campaign wants to start more camps and programmes in different level. It is helpful for students to learn more about subjects related to geography and space science.

With a view to enhance the scientific and rational awareness of the students, a programme named *Mathrika Shasthralab* is set up in 1000 selected Upper Primary schools in the State. Besides this, a two-day programme called *Shasthrolsavam* is conducted in each Upper Primary schools of every Panchayat, and this programme aims to inculcate the scientific temper amongst the students.

Considering the unparalleled challenges faced by our world today, it is inevitable to reckon the necessity of imparting ecological awareness among the student community. The context of Kerala floods of 2018 further points to its relevance and urgency. The Rejuvenation Campaign stresses environmentalism and proposes to create environmental zones at schools. The notion of gaining knowledge through experiencing the environment is one of the most significant aspects of curriculum-revision proposed by the Rejuvenation Campaign. The setting up of environmental parks and biodiversity zones within government school compounds is a good case in point. Under the initiative of SSK, a roadmap for this has been developed, and a booklet titled *Venalpacha* has been distributed to every school. All these are expected to help create an environmental-friendly, ecologically conscious and plastic-free atmosphere in schools across Kerala. In many schools,Nature/Eco clubs are functioning. It helps the students to get close to nature and the environment and acquire knowledge directly from the environment. Bio-diversity parks are also there in many schools to help the students to learn directly from nature and the environment.

Science Exhibitions also play an important role in the science education of the school students, in helping to cultivate scientific mentality among students, and to generate interested in science and influence of science in our life. Apart from

the exhibition, a book fair is also held with a view to encourage dissemination of scientific literature.

The introduction of the initiatives like Model Labs and Lab on Wheels effectively contribute towards the curriculum change in the field of science education. Study tour within and outside the State give students opportunities to visit reputed scientific and science history institutions. A study tour outside the State is meant for secondary students. The government has earmarked Rs. 40 lakhs towards this end. Opportunities for 20000 students for study tour within the state and for 1000 students outside the state are created through this programme. Students are selected based on their learning achievement and screening tests. Those from the poor background will be given preference.

5.3.6 Mathematics Education

For most students, mathematics is considered to be the most difficult subject, especially under the conventional modes of teaching. Under the Rejuvenation Campaign, various mathematics learning programmes have been designed and launched. 'Little Mathematicians' is one of the most important of them, which aims at enhancing the capacity of students to learn mathematics. It also exposes them to possibilities for higher learning in mathematics. Under this programme, the students are trained both at district and state levels. There are mathematics labs in certain schools to learn mathematics easily and making the process of learning enjoyable. It covers arithmetic, algebra, measures and weight, shape, and space. Apart from all this, there are initiatives like *Ullasa Ganitham, Ganitha Vijayam,* and *Ganithothsavam.* In 2020, *Ganithothsavam* was organised by the Department of General Education in 1500 LSGIs in Kerala.

5.3.7 Computer Education

In the past, ICT was not a subject in school education. As already seen, ICT is now an integral part of school education in Kerala. The introduction of ICT has influenced the education system in two ways. On the one hand, ICT itself has become a subject, and on the other, as a medium of learning, it makes the teaching and learning of all other subjects easier. With the introduction of ICT, the curriculum and

pedagogy have also changed a lot by making the classrooms, libraries, laboratories etc. ICT-enabled. According to a study, ICT has contributed to shifting the focus from teaching to learning. ICT provides an opportunity for the students to explore knowledge to learn the content through self-study. Role of the teacher is to help the students by ensuring the right direction towards learning (Thomas 2014: 170).

The content of ICT education and its implementation is prepared in tune with the taste and ability of the learners. A comprehensive Learning Management Information System (LMIS) is an integral part of it. Digital contents are prepared and given as part of the learning activities of students. Content preparation is done in a centralised way. Learning resources and techniques like interactive textbooks, presentations, videos, audio files, animations, simulations, applets, interactive games, web pages, learning management software, mobile apps etc. are used as digital resources. But integrating ICT with the learning process is a complex one:.."[t]he effective integration of ICTs into the educational system is a complex, multifaceted process that involves not just technology but also curriculum and pedagogy, institutional readiness, teacher competencies, and long-term financing, among others. The policymakers in developing countries should formulate a framework for the appropriate and effective use of ICTs in their educational systems" (Thomas 2014: 171). This is what the Rejuvenation Campaign too is attempting to put into practice.

5.3.8 Acquiring Employability Skills

Employability is one of the chief concerns of modern education system. George and Sunanina (2005: 11) say that the State can definitely do much more to attune its educational system to the changing labour market trends within the state, country, and abroad.

The Rejuvenation Campaign stresses skill development and employability in the prevailing educational system, and strives to create a new consciousness among the students about the employability. The introductionof topics like skill development in the curriculum of Upper Primary level is an excellent example in this regard, apart from lessons on employment-training at the High School and Higher Secondary levels. Through this innovative initiative, the government aims

to emphasise the aspect of employability, which is, meant for the students to gain preliminary knowledge on forms of employment once they complete their higher secondary education.

Further, the government is also trying to link the regional employment-training centres with public education system by promoting Additional Skill Acquisition Programme (ASAP). Many schools in their own individual capacity have also designed and implemented special programmes to train the students in acquiring vocational skills. The work experience and work-oriented knowledge accumulation is the best example in this regard. It is explained in detail in the section below.

5.3.9 Activity and Work Oriented Knowledge Accumulation

Here the knowledge of the students is nurtured through activities. The students are trained in certain skills, through which they acquire knowledge. 'Jaivam' programme is one such that promotes organic farming, where organic vegetables are produced by the students, and gives training to the students in agricultural practices. The vegetables produced by the students are used in the school itself for preparing breakfast or mid-day meal. Agricultural activities are done by the students both in schools and homes, if sizeable or suitable land is not be available in school. Experts in agricultural practices and farming from outside are invited to the school in order to train the students. Taking lessons from the training, the students engage in agricultural practices. The students are divided into many groups, and each group is placed under each teacher, who monitor their progress. It provides the students' knowledge about agricultural practices, plants and plant varieties. This is not text book-oriented knowledge but one gained through practice, and 'learning by doing'.

5.3.10 Environmental Education

The KCF 2007 says that "[a] comprehensive awareness on the need to protect the environment is the need of the hour. Keeping in mind the vision of sustianable development, we need to develop an attitude in our learners to see meaning in all developmental activities in tune with the environment. They should also develop a sense in preserving all available resources in nature and to utilise them judiciously". Many of the educational programmes in Kerala are designed in tune with the above-mentioned observation and the suggestion made by the KCF 2007.

These programmes are intended make the students aware of the importance of environmental protection, ecology, and biodiversity. Activities of nature clubs or eco clubs, operation of bio-diversity park etc. help them to be aware of environmental and ecological issues. Cleaning activities in the school, plastic banning, and such other programmes deserve special mention in this regard. The agricultural activities and programmes like *Jaivam* also help them to come into contact with nature and the environment.

5.3.11 Project Works

There are small research programmes for students in secondary and higher secondary classes. There is a one year project for the students from 9th and 10th classes. The works should be done jointly by the students throughout the year. But each student has to submit a separate report individually at the end of the year. Students from 11th and 12th classes have to do their research projects under the teachers who act as guides to them. Innovative topics are promoted for science projects. The project reports and its findings should be useful to the people in their practical life.

5.3.12 Promoting Traditional Knowledge and Culture

There are certain programmes aimed at protecting traditions of indigenous and local knowledge in agriculture, water and land use, arts and crafts etc. Engaging in agricultural activities and cultivation, operation of bio-diversity park etc. help the students to get exposed to such things. Many of the schools invite agricultural experts to interact with students and to familiarise them with traditional agricultural practices. The programmes that pay respects to farmers help the students to develop concern towards farming and agricultural work and its importance.

5.3.13 Learning through Innovative Activities

The process of learning can be helped and assisted by formulating and implementing a variety of activities. Some of them are purely academic and exclusively for the purpose of learning. Some others help the students in getting knowledge from practice. In a nutshell, all of them, irrespective of the difference between academic and non-academic programmes, help the students learning and acquiring knowledge.

- The programme like *Padanothsavam* serves both purposessimultaneously. This programme was launched on Jan 26th 2019 and 7000 primary schools are now part of it. It helps the students to express both their learning excellence and non-academic capabilities.

- The programmes like *Mikavothsavam* provide the opportunity to exhibit the achievements of the School through the campaign.

- *Pradeshika Prathibha Kendrangal* (Centreof Regional Talents) under each BRC help the students in acquiring both academic and non-academic capabilities by conducting programmes of both kinds. It encourages the students from the marginalised background and those who have learning problems. It is also aimed at personality development and enhancing the employability of students. This programme also covers yoga, art form production, physical training, sculpture, music, theatre, drama, painting etc.

- School 'Get together Programme' is another occasion in which the achievements of a school are shared with others. Also, it gives an opportunity for both teachers and students to share their learning and social experience. 500 schools are included in this programme.

The following programmes can be considered as purely academic and are directly linked toknowledge accumulation.

- *Meeting eminent personalities in the region*: It provides an opportunity for students to meet and have discussions with intellectuals or experts in any field from the region or locality where their school is located. This programme is conducted on Children's day.

- *Local Historians*: This programme explicates the importance of local history and the knowledge concerning their region to the students. Through this, it also sensitisesthe students to the importance of localhistory.

- *Sargga Vidyaalayam*: This is a programme proposed by the academic masterplan, and 28 aided/government schools are included in it. Through this programme, the students are familiarised with investigative, new,

and relevant activities. It helps themto find solutions to various academic problems, and the teachers to prepare new models.

- *Talent Lab*: It is a programme that seeks to uncoverthe special talents of the students.

- *Documentation and dissemination of best practices*: through this programme the best practices in schools are exhibited in the library, archives etc, so that future generation of the students can learn from this. In this sense, it is a dissemination of knowledge also.

- *Dhrishya Paadam* (Visual Lesson): Under this programme communication in the classrooms is done with the help of visuals.

- *Oorjja Padam* (Lesson on energy): This programme makes the students aware of energy consumption and the need and importance of energy conservation.

The following programmes are not exclusively for learning and knowledge accumulation, but help the students to learn through arts and other means of creative expressions.

- *Chithra Vandi*: This programme gives training to students in painting, and it prepares them to be familiar with the art field. Paintings and painters are introduced to the students.

- *Dhwani*: It is a film festival for girls, introducing visual arts to girls and familiarising them with various aspects of visual culture.

- *Jwala*: It is Girls' theatre. Gender issues and the problems faced by women are also addressed through this programme. It also helps them to build creativity, confidence, and leadership capacity.

- *Kerala Thaalam*: It is a programme through which the percussion art forms of Kerala are propagated, and they are made familiar to the students.

- *Kids' athletics- Kalikkoottam*: It gives physical training to the students and make the students aware of physical training and health.

- *Pink Box*: It is a programme for ensuring the security of girls. It sensitises the girls about personal safety and security and prepares them to face and deal with problems.

- *Student- Self Entrepreneurship*: It is a programme designed for secondary school students. It nurture entrepreneurial skills and establishes a link between the curriculum and employability. Self-entrepreneurship is made the part of the curriculum here.

5.3.14 Programmes Designed by the Schools

Apart from programmes designed from above at the government level, many programmes are independently designed by the schools. Some of them are academic, and some others are oriented towards activities or work experience. The schools are free to design and implement their own programmes, and through this, they can enrich the curriculum and mould the children and take part in their character building. Such programmes can be included in the school-masterplan also. Many of the schools have taken their own efforts in designing and implementing such programmes.

GHSS Ramapuram, Kottayam District, has developed about 26 programmes. One of its programmes is known as 'Nellikka Project' (Project Gooseberry), and it has been designed and implemented as per the school masterplan. As part of this project students get the opportunity to meet and have discussions with experienced and aged people who will share their personal experiences with the students. The project got its name from a Malayalam saying, 'what the aged people say is like gooseberry, at first bitter but sweet later on'. Though these kinds of programmes are independently designed, they are related to or based on the lessons from the textbook. In the case of the above-mentioned project, an old woman, from a lower caste was invited to the school and she spoke to the children about the caste discrimination she faced during her childhood in school. It was for the first time the students came to know about such kind of caste practices. There was a lesson in the textbook about the caste system and casteism, but the information given in the textbook on caste and caste-related practices had a certain limitation in giving a detailed picture of caste. In such a context, the narration of the said old woman from the lower caste helped the students to understand what caste is.

Apart from this, experts in different fields, for example, farmers, agriculturists etc., are invited to the school, and they take classes and train the students in various fields. As part of giving employability skill, students are trained in food and nutrition courses, hotel management, beautification course, etc. English and computer coaching classes are also conducted. Though Hindi is not a subject for the LPS students, they are trained in Hindi. They are not taught alphabets or writing, but words and names of certain things. The students are trained in screenplay writing, choreography etc. also

Government Model HSS, Thycaud, Thiruvananthapuram, also has its own initiatives that enable and encourage the students learning more and develop their abilities. One such step is to prepare the students to publish a handwritten magazine for each class. There are magazines for all the divisions of classes from 5th to 10th. The students can contribute their essays, stories, poems, drawings etc. to the magazines, and this, in turn, increases their creativity in writing. Students are the editors, and teachers take only the role of advisors. In the class libraries,only students are appointed as librarians.

Government Higher Secondary School, Kampallur, East Elery Panchayat of Kasargod District, during vacation, conducts different programmes for their students. Coaching for football and swimming, training for drama, communicative English classes etc. are some of them. The students who are interested are selected for such programmes, and they are eager to come to the school and participate in the programmes. This kind of programmes enable them to pursue their interests and aptitudes. The tastes and preferences of students are given prominence here.

Source: Fieldwork

Class assemblies are also conducted in the school apart from the school general assembly. The point to be noted here is that the class assemblies are conducted by the students. It is conducted twice a week. At the class assemblies, the students read newspapers, a task which is assigned to different students.

Government UPS Muttuchira, Kottayam district, apart from Jaivam programme, has taken up paddy cultivation in the School. Three kinds of paddies are cultivated. The students are trained by an expert agriculturalist. A small poultry farm is also functioning in the school. Apart from this, life skill classes are conducted for the students. There is the art group functioning for the school students, where students are trained for drama competition. There is a library which is expected to be developed

as a public library from where people from outside can also borrow books.

Muttuchira UPS and Ramapuram HS have launchedprogrammes which inculcate humanistvalues such as love, compassion and social responsibility among the students. Paying visits to old age homes is an activity in this direction. Both students and teachers visit the old age homes with food once in a year and spend a day with them sharing the food and time. The students meet the inhabitants, and they share their experiences; teachers and students also perform cultural programmes for the inhabitants.

Another innovative programme is related to reading and library, where reading groups are formed under the auspices of the school. These reading groups are associated with five libraries located near the school. This library group is called 'Vayanakkoottam' (ReadingGroup), and the programme is called 'Mathruka Gramam Vayanayiloode' (The Model Village through Reading) since it is useful for all the people. The programmeis not exclusively for the students, and is meant for the general public also.

At the time of the schoolassembly, students read major news reports. Oneach day, scientists and other important personalities are introduced by the students. Different students perform their duties each day, and thus the school general assembly itself becomes a site for knowledge dissemination.

River cleaning is another programme that makes the students aware of the importance of protecting our environment, ecology, and natural resources. Every second Saturday is reserved for the palliative work, when studentsspend their time with those who are suffering from various problems and difficulties.

Government High School Gudarle, Devikulam, Idukki district, also has designed certain programmes to encourage reading habit. The students are advised to start 'home library' in their homes by collecting books. Almost all students have started a 'home library' as per this programme, they can also bring those books to the school and share them with others. Teachers help the students to collect books and maintain their 'home library'. Apart from this, the teachers make sure that the students read these books. There are WhatsApp groups for the programme,

and the teachers are its administrators, and all the students are group members. The reading group will be active through this WhatsApp group, and the students share their reading experience in the group. Even during the time of vacation and holidays such programmes are kept on active mode.

5.3.15 Inculcating the values of social justice and social concern

The programmes like visiting old age home provide them with opportunities to meet the people who are helpless and poor, and develop concern and feelings such as love and sympathy towards others. It helps to create in their mind the thought of sharing and distributing the resources among all. Observation of days like *Bhinnasheshi Varacharanam*(Observation of the Week for the Differently Abled) allows them to be familiar with and at the same time, be aware of the problems faced by differently-abled students.

5.3.16 How these Programmes Mould Children?

The various programmes mentioned above have multiple and far-reaching impacts upon the learning process of the children.Through these, students are shaped and moulded in different ways. In this sense, the impact of the Rejuvenation Campaign and its programmes cannot be confined to the learning process alone. Apart from that, it has a significant role in the character building of the students also. It helps the children to be responsible individuals and citizens who are aware of human rights. It encourages them to extend helping hands to the marginalised and needy and to express their concern and sympathy towards others. It inculcates the values of democracy and secularism and prepares them to be gender-sensitive. It helps them to develop the organisational skills and leadership qualities. By inculcating scientific temper, logic, and reasoning, it helps them to develop critical consciousness and engage in critical dialogue.

5.3.17 Making responsible citizens

These socio-cultural and outreach programmes provide opportunities to the students for better individuation. As part of this, they are made aware of the importance of human rights and the values of secularism and democracy. The programme like *Naithikam* helps them to be aware of socio-political rights and fundamental rights of

citizens of the country. Through this programme, the 70th anniversary of the Indian Constitution is celebrated. International Human Rights Day is observed in this regard. Some programmes help them to be aware of women's and child rights also. The launching of the Right to Education Programme has facilitated the preparation of the ward education register, and for preparing this, there is a specific mobile application. The programme is held in cooperation with the Local Self Government Department, and Ernakulam District Panchayat has a success story to say in this regard. All these help them to be good citizens responsible to society and the State. These programmes organised as part of the Rejuvenation Campaign help students to be independent thinkers and responsible citizens .

5.3.18 Making Students Gender Sensitive

The curriculum has been rearranged in a way in which the students are made aware of gender issues and gender equality. Programmes have also been designed towards this end. There are programmes which make the girls aware of the problems faced by women. Kothari Commission has already made recommendations for the empowerment of women through women education. The contents, language, and the presentation of the textbooks are in a way that reflects gender equality. *Jwala* is a theatre group for the girls, and this is expected to enable the girls to respond in situations of crises. It conducts counselling camps through art forms and not in traditional ways. It has conducted 30 days camp for girls at the State level. 430 girls participated in the camp. A theatre workshop at the State level for 7th, 8th, and 9th class students was conducted in Malappuram district in 2019, and 2-3 girls participated in it from each BRC.

The Rejuvenation Campaign clearly says that there should not be a difference between boys and girls in the case of the curriculum. Special care and attention are given to the education of girls. Actions have been taken against discrimination in the study, employment etc. Leadership training is provided to them with a view to instil better self-esteem and thereby empower them. Arrangements for the counselling have been made for them if they require it.

5.3.19 Inculcating the Values of Democracy and Secularism

It views the educational institutions as the prime agency of the early political

socialisation process. The stress is on the need for organising the school parliament as an initiative that underscores the aspect of the democratisation process. In practice, the school parliament does an ineluctable role in inculcating democratic etiquettes such as mutual respect, concern for the public good, belief in gender equality and secularism, and respect for humanist values, etc. It also does some other vital functions like assisting the School Management Committee (SMC) representatives, coordinating the activities of National Cadet Corps (NCC), National Service Scheme (NSS), Student Police Cadet (SPC).

5.3.20 Developing Organisational and Leadership Qualities

The students are made office bearers for all the programmes which are designed for them. They hold positions like secretary, president, treasurer etc. for various clubs and organisations. They are made librarians also for classroom libraries. They are given participative roles in organising school assembly, arts-sports-science fests, anniversaries, community campaigns, observation of special days etc. School parliament and Class Sabha provide ample opportunities to the students in this regard. They only prepare and keep the records and minutes of the meetings, programmes etc. In all these cases, teachers take only the role of mentors or advisors. This helps them to develop organisational and leadership qualities. All students should be considered while giving responsibilities for various programmes and events. One student should get at least one chance in a year.

5.3.21 The Rejuvenation Campaign, Curriculum Revision, and Social Justice

As it has already been seen, social justice is also a major concern of the Rejuvenation Campaign. Apart from all the aforementioned programmes, there are certain other programmes (including LEP) that ensure social justice in the field of education. These programmes have been designed and are being implemented to extend a helping hand towards those who are the marginalised and the needy, thus making students aware of social issues. There are programmes for inclusive education and the empowerment of girls. Counselling facilities have been ensured for those who need it. Apart from them, students are made aware of the problems related to the misuse of alcohol, drugs, and tobacco.

5.3.22 Programmes for Inclusive Education

The Rejuvenation Campaign, through its various enhancement programmes and the adaptation of the curriculum, makes school education an inclusive one. The curriculum, which has been adapted through various enhancement programmes, has the potential to address the issues of the students from the marginalised. Efforts are being made for uplifting the students who are (a) socially and economically disadvantaged, (b) differently-abled, and (c) backward in learning. Apart from all these, there are programmes for empowering girls also.

5.3.23 The Issues of Tribal Students

The question of social justice becomes important in the context of the disadvantaged like Scheduled Castes, Scheduled Tribes, and other socially and economically backward sections. There are several reasons for their educational backwardness. Besides economic problems, other causes such as family issues, the feeling of otherness, and cultural alienation, etc. have a close link with the problems of their backwardness. The major reason behind this is that they are alienated from school. Tribal students from certain tribal groups in certain areas may not be able to cope with the school system. School and its atmosphere may be an alienated space for them. This may lead them to drop out of their studies. For example, tribal students from Paniayas and Kattunaickers in Wayanad district hesitate to come to the school and attend the classes regularly. Sometimes the language system in the school may not be familiar for the tribal students.

Each tribe has its own ethnic language, culture, and folk literature. They express themselves quite confidently within their community. But when their children join school, they do not feel at ease with the new culture. The language too is unfamiliar to them. This sense of alienation leads to many tribal children dropping out of school.

Programme Officer of the Wayanad unit of SSK, (The Hindu 26/05/2017)

In order to address this issue, the reasons behind their drop out and the backwardness have to be identified first. Efforts have been made to identify the dropout students and re-enroll them back to the school. Efforts in this kind have been taken by the Rejuvenation Campaign in cooperation with Samagra Shiksha in the districts of Palakkad, Wayanad, Idukki, and Thiruvananthapuram.

Ooruvidyakendrangal and *Pradeshika Prathibha Kendram* are the mechanisms for extending support to the dropout students from the tribal groups to continue their education. There are initiatives for extending educational support of volunteers to the tribal students through Public Libraries also. Initiatives have been taken to teach the tribal students in their own language. Bridge materials in this regard have been developed by the Department. Special teachers are also there to support this effort. *Selime Kala* is an example of textbooks that have been prepared for the tribal students from Attappady in Palakkad.

Apart from this, there is a scheme called *'Gothrabandhu'* in the State. The Tribal Development Department launches the scheme in association with the Education Department, District Institute of Education and Training, and the Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan[2] (The Hindu 26/05/2017). The scheme is aimed at ensuring proper education for tribal children. It is a programme for engaging tribal teachers in primary schools. Under this plan, a tribal youth, preferably with TTC/B.Ed. level of qualification from the same locality with knowledge in tribal dialect and Malayalam is selected and trained to function as teachers/education facilitator in all primary schools according to the strength of tribal students. They are entrusted to deal with the issues of tribal children concerning their language, dropout, enrolment etc. They wanted to give intensive coaching to the tribal children, take care of them, and act as a social worker and facilitator for tribal children. Apart from all these, they liaise between the community and the educational institutions.

The teachers from Wayanad district says that these tribal youth are active in their duty and take a good role in uplifting the tribal students in the school. If the students do not come to the school these teachers cum facilitators visit their *ooru*, pick the children, and bring them back to the school. They have a good rapport with the parents of the tribal children.

5.3.24 The Issues of Differently-Abled Students

Differently-abled students are getting special attention and care. There are resource teachers for them, and those teachers in their learning support them. A yearly medical survey is conducted for them. Shoes, specs, hearing equipment

---

2. Now it is known as Samagra Shiksha Kerala

through medical camp etc. are distributed among them. Autism centres are there for autism students. In each district, around 60-70 students are there. Sports and arts programmes are also conducted for them. Almost all educational institutions and government offices in the State have been made accessible for differently-abled children. Besides this, SSK conducts medical camps at the beginning of every academic year to identify the medical requirements of the students. And by November every year, medical aids and other necessary equipment are provided to the children free of cost. Wheelchairs, hearing aids, spectacles etc are some of the equipment provided as part of the campaign. Sports meet and arts fest is conducted annually to ensure the participation of differently-abled students in extra-curricular activities. About 100 Block Resource Centres (BRC) spreading across the State offer care and support to autistic children and extend to them the opportunity for education. At present, around 2,600 teachers have been employed to serve this purpose. These centres ensure that facilities such as physiotherapy are provided to the students. The BRCs have exhibited exemplary performance in ensuring the inclusiveness of autistic children as part of the Rejuvenation Campaign.

5.3.25 The Issues of Slow Learners

All students are not equal in their capabilities of learning. Also, due to a variety of reasons related to our education system, slow learners find it difficult to achieve what they are expected to achieve. Two kinds of issues can be found here. The first one is related to the students and the second one is related to the education system. Both of them should be addressed, and the ways towards this end have to be devised. In the first case, the capabilities and tastes and preferences of the students in various subjects have to be identified as a first step. The ways towards addressing the limitations of the students have to be designed as a second step. There are special programmes for students who are backward in learning.

5.3.26 The Rejuvenation Campaign against Alcohol, Drugs, and Tobacco

The teachers report that in certain areas, the students tend to start using alcohol, tobacco etc. Using such stuff affects not only the poor or the marginalized students but also those from affluent sections. Such cases and drop outs are increasingly

found among the socially and economically marginalized communities. Such problems should be identified and addressed. The present education system aims at preparing a new generation free from drug abuse, and are aware of its dangers. Observation of World No-Tobacco Day is an example in this regard. While attending such programmes or participating in it, they actually get the opportunity to be part of the anti-drugs campaign.

5.3.27 Opportunities for Counselling

The new education system offers access to counselling that helps the students to manage their mental stress. Such stress may be due to family issues, lack of self-defensive potential for overcoming crises, unhealthy competitiveness in studies, improper knowledge about sexuality, and so on. Counselling helps to give confidence to and shape the personality of the students. The counselling camp conducted through art forms by Samagra Shiksha, Kerala, in Malappuram district as part of its pilot study is particularly noteworthy. This is an innovative method, worth emulating in other schools too. The improved counselling mechanism of the SSK has garnered appreciation and great acceptance as well. This has propelled SSK to extend this new counselling mechanism to other districts as well.

5.4 Concluding Remarks

The Public Education Rejuvenation Campaign has a broad visionof education. From the list of programmes and interventions mentioned above, it is clear that, apart from academics, it covers social, political, ethical, psychological, and cultural realms. It has made an immense influence on the curriculum, pedagogy, and the learning process. It has transformed the textbook-oriented learning process into a learner-centred one. Under the Rejuvenation Campaign, education is not merely an academic activity, but more than that, since the learning and teaching processes go beyond classroom teaching based on textbooks. Activities that trigger physical and mental wellbeing are considered as parts of the modern education system. Hence, the Rejuvenation Campaign makes arrangements of things and facilities required for the development of societal, scientific, sportive, and artistic skills of students in the school, for they too, come under the purview of the broader framework of education. It formulates programmes for the promotion of sports and arts and

literary skills of the students and conducts events towards that end. In this sense, the Rejuvenation Campaign aims to transform public educational institutions of the States into the centres for all-round development of the students. It envisages the students to be good citizens responsible to the society upholding the values of social justice, democracy, and secularism. In this sense, education under the Rejuvenation Campaign is expected to engage in the processes of development and citizenship building.

Chapter 6
The Impact of Public Education Rejuvenation Campaign Among Students in Public Educational Institutions

6.1 Introduction

One of the fundamental goals of the Rejuvenation Campaign is the comprehensive development of students. To realise that goal, the Rejuvenation Campaign brought about several changes in schools' current learning and teaching processes. It also emphasised enriching and facilitating students' extracurricular activities and improving the existing infrastructural facilities in schools. All these have added a new vigour in enhancing the standards of academic and non-academic activities. This called for a hands-on approach from the teachers in the learning process, whose role was radically transformed from a classroom/textbook-based approach to a mentor and guide.

This chapter presents the student community's response regarding the changes

brought about by the Rejuvenation Campaign in public educational institutions in the State. The analysis is based on extensive fieldwork amongst the student community, in which a total of 680 students participated. The students were interviewed using structured [or close-ended] questionnaires. Regarding the method of sampling, a minimum of four students from each BRC in fourteen districts in the State were randomly selected. Of these 680 students, majority of them were female (60 per cent), and the rest is male (40 per cent). Moreover, the process of sample selection also tried to include students in schools located in different locations, like urban, rural, tribal, and coastal areas.

Graph 6.1 On Students' Gender
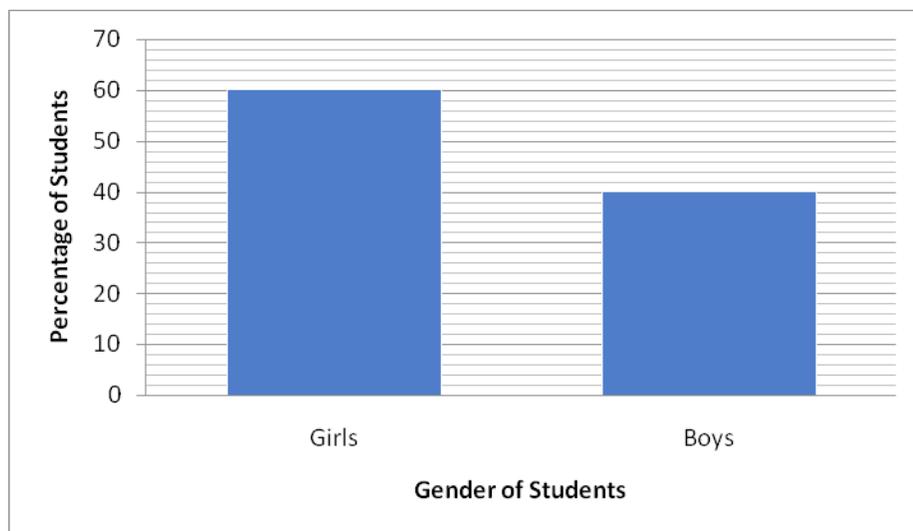
Source: Fieldwork

Amongst the total number of students who participated in the field survey, 80 percent belonged to regions that come under the Panchayaths, and the remaining 20 per cent from areas belonged to municipalities and corporations. In addition to this, the schools that are located in tribal or minority concentrated areas were also included in the field survey. Thus, the respondent's stratification in the field survey has a regional balance, for it includes students from the rural area and urban areas, and those who belong to economically, socially, and educationally backward categories.

Graph 6.2 Location of Students
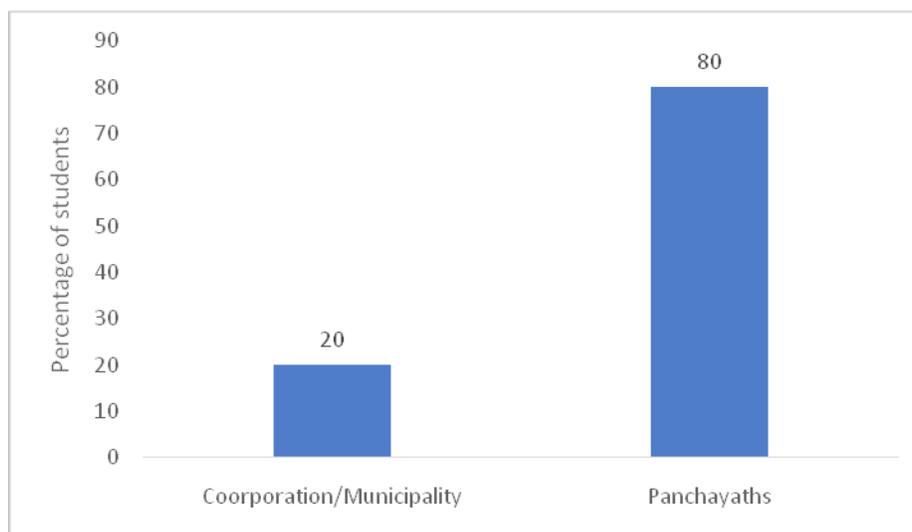
Source: Fieldwork

6.2 Changes in Learning Environment

The Rejuvenation Campaign brought about radical changes in the learning environment of students. Apart from improving the infrastructural facilities of schools, the Rejuvenation Campaign created a positive academic atmosphere conducive for learning, which helps each student to discover and enrich their multi-faceted talents. To enable the students to improve their talents, the transformation of existing learning environment is a pre-requisite. For example, with the implementation of the Rejuvenation Campaign, the learning process has become exciting and self-exploratory. It also gave emphasis on physical fitness, art education, and environmental consciousness making them part of learning process. It, thereby refashioned the traditional definition of learning, which revolved around textbooks and classroom activities within the school compound. With the introduction of the Rejuvenation Campaign, the larger society itself became an integral part of the learning environment. According to the Campaign, if the students want to learn about caste/class/gender system in Kerala's society and the tacit power relations inherent to it, in the first place, they have to be sensitive to the society they live in. The definition of the learning environment in this context demands ability for analytical use of empirical-sensory observation

and rational thinking for learning social concepts or phenomena like gender roles, class dynamics, and caste ordering, etc. Thus, the kind of learning environment that the Rejuvenation Campaign seeks to create in today's educational system is intended to promote the culture of critical thinking.

6.2.1 ICT-Enabled Classroom: Another noticeable change brought by the Rejuvenation Campaign in the learning environment is the focus on ICT-enabled education. Not only has it changed the traditional learning environment of public schools, but it also brought about considerable improvement in the quality of learning. At present, the ICT-enabled education is an indispensable part of the learning environment, and it has made the learning process student-friendly, where students can also update themselves about various disciplines. Moreover, ICT-education, besides enhancing the quality learning of the students, has elevated the learning environment in public educational institutions in the State to international standards. The students have very positively responded towards the introduction of ICT education in the classroom as an instrument of study.

6.2.2 Confidence Building: The changes in the academic environment have created a new confidence and vigour in the minds of students and parents. The increasing number of student enrolment in public schools and the migration of the students from private-unaided schools to public schools are the evidences of this confidence.[1] The student being confident and fearless is important in the process of school education. Prior to the inception of the Rejuvenation Campaign only one student out of five participated in the mainstream school activities. But since the operationalisation of the Rejuvenation Campaign, the ratio of students participating in mainstream school activities witnessed aconsiderable improvement, which hasreached a ratio of three out of five.[2] Under the Campaign, the students feel that their issues will be addressed and considered in genuine spirit. As a result,

---

1.   This analysis is based on the qualitative evaluation of the personal interviews of both teachers and PTA members, for according to their opinion, the confidence of parents and schools' functionaries has been improved, witnessing the ongoingimprovements such as the physical infrastructure of the schools, raising educational standard of students and their migration from private-unaided schools to the public educational institutions in the State. Source: Fieldworks data of teachers, PTA,and the students.

2.   Source: Fieldwork Interviews of Teachers and Headmasters

the feeling of exclusion has reduced through continuous intervention of the community, including parents, or in some cases, the proactive involvement of the neighbourhood. Hence, students have gained some level of confidence, realising that either the parents orthe community-neighbourhood are ready to help them in case they have any serious problems related to schooling.

6.2.3 Involvement in Extracurricular Activities: There are several programmes under the Rejuvenation Campaign for promoting extracurricular activities of the students. For all the schools, the implementation of such extracurricular programmes is mandatory. These extracurricular programmes are designed separately for each level, such as LPS, UPS, or for both, High Schools, and Higher Secondary Schools. The fieldwork observation reveals that the participation of students in the extracurricular activities has improved and for the most part, the extracurricular programmes at the school level function as a platform for students to express their talents.

6.2.4 Distribution of Textbook: Timely availability and distribution of textbooks is a worthwhile achievement of the Rejuvenation Campaign. In the years preceding to the Rejuvenation Campaign, majority of textbooks of different subjects were distributed in the middle of the academic year, adversely affecting academic activities of students as well as schools. For that reason, the students had to depend on photocopies of textbooks for their study, which imposed an additional financial burden on their parents. Such untimely distribution of textbooks in the past had also triggered several protests led by various students' organisations. However, during the time of the Rejuvenation Campaign, a peaceful academic environment has been maintained due to the proper distribution of the textbooks. The graph below shows that 96.8 per cent of students were satisfied withthe timely distribution of textbooks, an issue on which the Rejuvenation Campaign pays serious attention.

6.2.5 Working Days: According to the KER, the minimum number of working days of public schools is fixed at 220 days in an academic year. Despite such regulation, the schools were not able to achieve even 200 working days in an academic year, and generally, it was less than 160 in a year. The Rejuvenation Campaign has aimed to increase the number of working days, and in doing so, it has tried to fulfil the working-days-target mentioned in the KER. As a result, the number of working days

has reached around 170-180 in an academic year, which is a positive outcome of the Rejuvenation Campaign and besides,this has also helped the school to increase the number of the minimum working days in a year.[3] Moreover, the increased number of school days has given an opportunity tothe students to avail the benefits of mid-day meal scheme, which is a great service to students belonging to lower-income families. If the school is not working, then the parents, especially the daily wage workers, are worried about the food and care of their children. The increased working days have, therefore, reduced such burden on them. Also, in previous years, the teachers training were conducted on working days, and it affected the working hours of schools. The Rejuvenation Campaign has changed the nature and the time-schedule of the training programmes and Refresher Courses for teachers. For it has insisted that the training and refresher course will have to be conducted only during holidays. Besides this, the initiative was taken to avoid unnecessary holidays and the habit of conducting classes on holidays in order to compensate for the lost working days.

6.2.6 Environmental Awareness: The study of the ecosystem is very relevant to education at the school level. The attention of students is drawn to the soil and climate, the flora and fauna in their surroundings. Biodiversity Parks are also established in many schools to help students to learn directly from nature and the environment. The government has allotted funds for setting up Biodiversity Park and for implementing programmes for increasing environmental awareness amongststudents. The graph below shows that 77.4 per cent of students studying in the public educational institutions in the State are aware about matters related to environmental issues; such improvement inawareness is reflected in the establishment of many Nature/Eco clubs in schools. These clubs help the students to get close to nature and acquire awareness and knowledge directly from the environment. In the school compound, students have taken the initiative for agricultural activities like paddy and vegetable cultivation. The astronomical observation and star-gazing are also organised in the schools, attracting active participation and enthusiasm of students. Likewise, the campaign against the use of plastic and its proper disposal has received wide acceptance from the students.

---

3. Ibid.

Graph 6.3 Distribution of Textbooks, Improvement of Working Days and Programmes designed for Students' Environmental Awareness
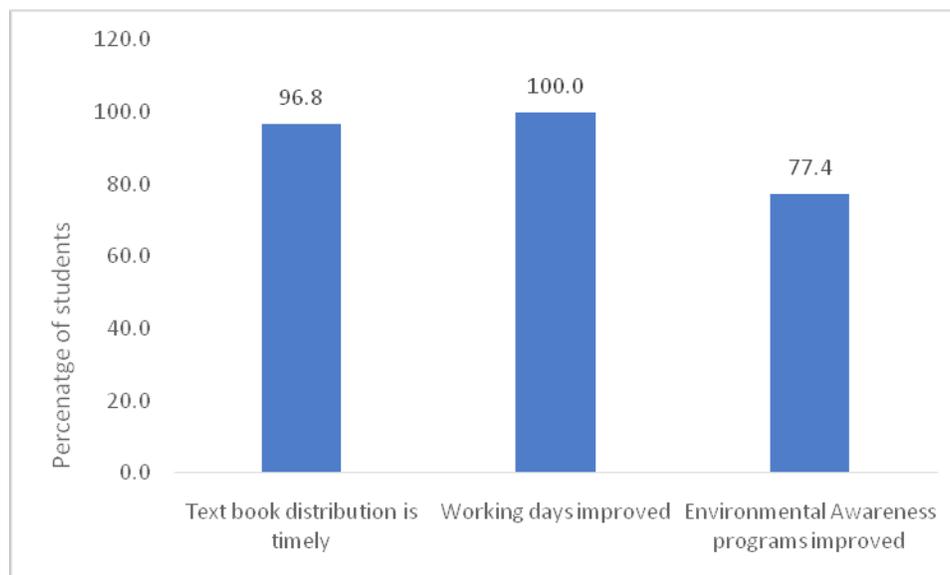
Source: Fieldwork

6.2.7 Student-Friendliness: The Rejuvenation Campaign changed the learning environment in the public schools. Unlike in the past, the learning process of students is now comprised of a wide variety of pedagogic modes and teaching programmes. The Rejuvenation Campaign also permits schools to design their own programmes and implement them as part of the learning process, lending flexibility and creativity to the academic environment. In many schools, students also have the opportunity to manage the infrastructure and study tools and to act as its custodians.

6.2.8 Inclusiveness: The spirit of the Rejuvenation Campaign is to ensure quality education for all and not for a few. Emphasising inclusiveness, instructions were given under the Rejuvenation Campaign to the Education Department to assure the same kind of treatment to each and every student. Special programmes like *Gothra Bandhu* have been organised for the development of tribal students in schools nurturing inclusiveness in the education system. In some schools, the authorities have adopted peer teaching strategies like learning witha peer group comprised of five or six students. One of the students will take up the responsibility of teaching the others on a rotation basis. The strategy of studying through teaching will greatly

help the students to improve their standard of comprehension. The parents of the students in the peer group sit with them and listen to the discussions.

6.2.9 Parents Resource Bank: In some schools, a parents' resource bank has been instituted in a very commendable manner. The details of parents, including their educational qualification have been collected and a data bank created in the school. According to the needs of the school and the willingness of the parents, they have the opportunity to share their knowledge with the students. This mechanism has strengthened the bond between the parents and school, and it automatically reflects upon the quality of education imparted. In some schools, the staff councils have conducted training programmes for the parents, and the schools have provided rooms and other facilities to carry this out.

6.2.10   Counsellor: Some schools have constituted *Vidyalaya Jagratha Samithi,*(School Vigilance Committee) and a women teacher has been appointed as a counsellor of the students. In Kozhikode district, various schools have utilised the system in very effective manner. It has provided an opportunity forthe students to share their problems and issues. The caring attitude of the teachers will give confidence to the students to share everything with teachers, paving the way for the creation ofa vibrant student-teacher relationship.

6.2.11   Leadership Skills: The Rejuvenation Campaign has promoted the managerial and leadership skills of the students. The 'Class Sabha' is a unique experience in the schools, and it has provided the opportunity for students to promote their organisational skills. In some schools, once in a fortnight, all classes in High School section conduct the 'Class Sabha', where the students elect their Chief minister and Ministers and discuss issues related to the school. The report of the discussion is submitted to the HM for initiating action, if necessary.

6.3 Student-Teacher Relationship

It is an irrefutable fact that with the Rejuvenation Campaign, the student-teacher relationship has considerably improved. The following points highlight this fact further by examining various aspects of such improvement in the student-teacher relationship.

6.3.1 Teachers in the Campaign: The Rejuvenation Campaign has brought unprecedented improvement in the existing student-teacher relationship through a paradigm shift in the area of teaching. Earlier all students in the classroom were considered as a single unit. The Rejuvenation Campaign aimed at giving individual level attention toe very student in the classroom by considering each student as individual units. This sort of paradigmatic shift 'from general to particular' (from the whole class to each student as a single unit) bestows a new direction to the method of teaching, stressing the point that the teacher needs to give individual attention to each student in the classroom, which not only helps the teacher to develop a healthy rapport with students at the individual level but also helps the teacher to identify the students' vulnerabilities and hidden talents.

6.3.2 Students in the Campaign: The livelihood and habitat differ from student to student. Therefore, the teacher should be sensitive to the differences in culture and language with regard to the interaction between the teachers and students and amongst students themselves. It has been observed in fieldwork that the Rejuvenation Campaign has created an individual bond between students and teachers, which in turn has helped the students to improve their rapport with teachers. A healthy student-teacher relationship is an inevitable precondition for the better academic performance of students, and it also functions as a catalyst for improving the students' non-academic interests as well.

6.3.3 Teacher's Visit to Student's House: The visit of teachers to students' houses is the most effective way to strengthen the relationship between teachers and students, and it has further cemented the personal ties between them. In many schools in the primary section, teachers have visited the houses of all the students. The data from a school in a tribal majority area revealed that the teachers have visited the houses of the students in the school twice every month during the academic year. However, while such activities are conducted very energetically at the primary level,the frequency of the teachers' visit to students' houses is found comparatively less at the secondary level. In some schools, teachers have made a note on their house visit, and it has been placed in the staff council meeting. The report covers their first-hand experience concerning the problems of the students, leading to assistance and urgent interventions. According to the discussions, the council has approved a budget and money thus collected is kept as a reserve for

any contingencies. Further, in each and every class, one teacher has been appointed as special tutor, who keeps a detailed note of the problems which students are facing, such as problems related to their family background, lack of infrastructural facilities in their house etc. Such personal level involvements were very effective in nurturing robust student-teacher relationship in public educational institutions.

Graph 6. 4 Student's House Visit Conducted by Teachers
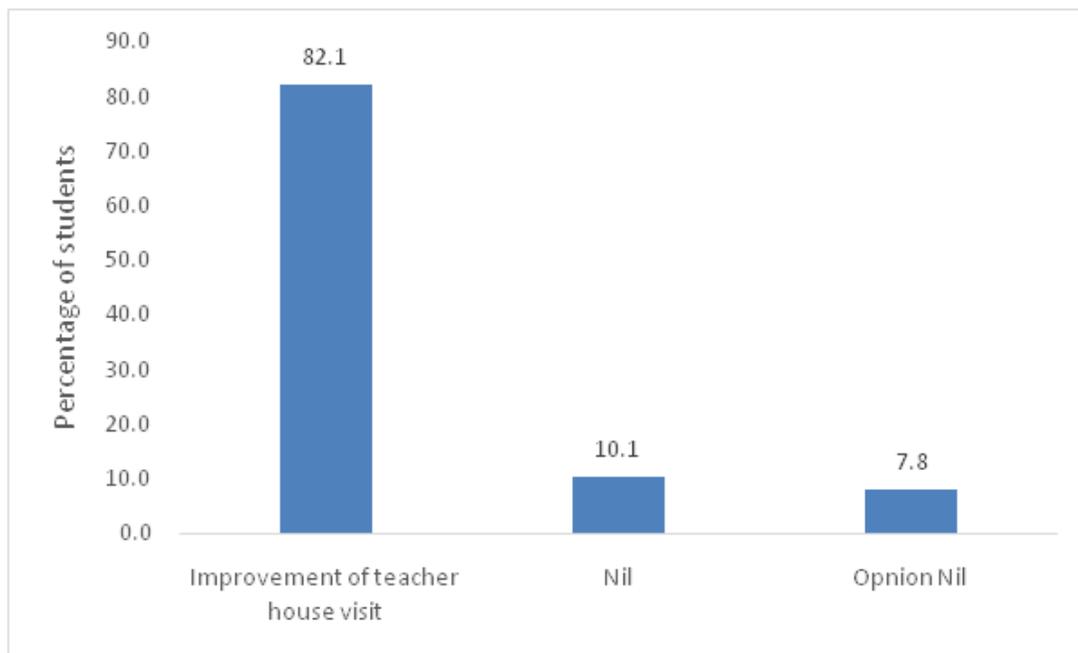
Source: Fieldwork

6.3.4 Cluster PTA/ Corner PTA: It is essential to mention the Cluster PTA/ Corner PTA in this context, for it helps to strengthen the student-teacher bond and contributes to the improvement of the same in schools. The Cluster or Corner PTA means an informal arrangementby school authority for an assembly of parents in the locality. The students in a school may be coming from different localities, and the school authority conducts the meeting of parents from different localities. Though it is not strictly an official body, it can effectively intervene in many issues related to students in the specific area. Furthermore, the Cluster PTA/ Corner PTA also helps the teachers and parents to identify the familial, social and other problems faced by students Besides this, in tribal-dominated areas *Ooru* PTA has been formed, in whose meetings, the teachers in the school, parents and students attend. The

Corner PTA has arranged a person as a companion of the students at the time of their travel between the house and the school, and their common travel facility. The meeting and the discussion in the Corner PTAs have helped the teacher to understand the specific locality and the learning environment of students. A teacher belongs to tribal majority school said that the *Ooru* PTA has helped them to create awareness among the students on the importance of education. Some students suffered from alcohol addiction and abuse from their parents. Such issues were addressed by the *Ooru* PTA and teachers together, and it has helped the students in various ways. The *Ayalpakka* PTA is another notable initiative which also promotes more organic involvement of the parents. The meeting of the Ayalpakka PTA is held with the participation of parents, teachers, students, people's representatives, learned persons, well-wishers of the school and students. The informal discussions in the meeting will help the teachers to know their students which will further strengthen their relationship with them. The activities of Mother PTA and Class PTA have paved the way for strong ties between the stakeholders of the school and further improved the joint activities.

Graph. 6.5   Cluster PTA/ Corner PTA/ Ayalkkootam PTA 2019
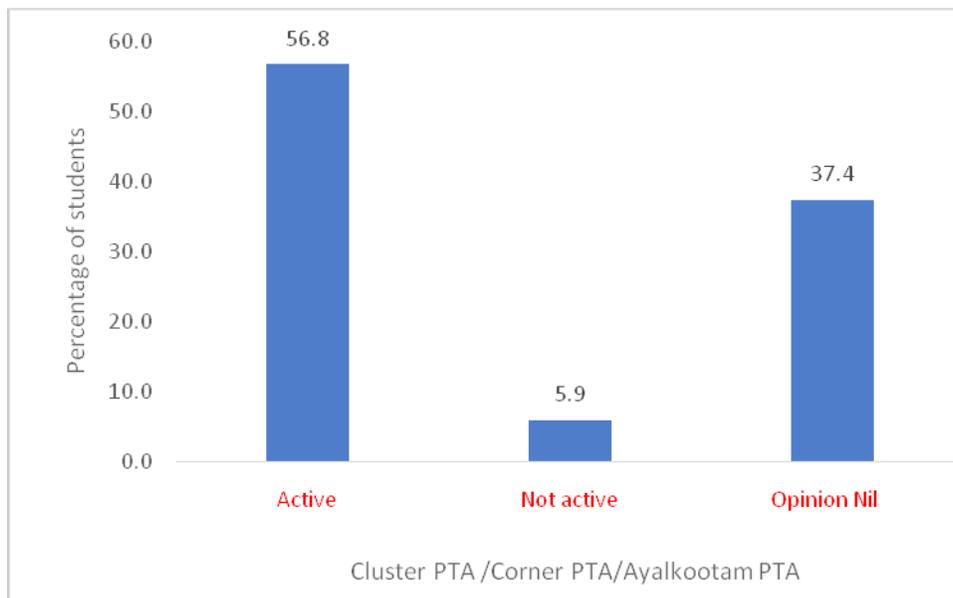
Source: Fieldwork

The graph above shows that in 56.8 per cent of schools, the operation of Cluster or

Corner PTA is active. At the same time, it is worthwhile to note that 37.4 per cent of schools participated in the field survey have not registered any opinion regarding the functioning of Cluster or Corner PTA, perhaps because such schools have yet to constitute the same— what is interesting here is that Cluster or Corner PTA is an informal body so much so that the constitution of the same is purely a matter of discretion of the schools, that is, it is their choice that whether they should set up the same or not. Despite this, only in 5.9 per cent of schools, the functioning of Cluster or Corner PTA does not seem to be active. The study, therefore, suggests the government to look seriously into this matter and takes necessary steps to pronounce an official directive every school should set up Cluster or Corner PTA.

6.3.5 Difficulties in Relationship

The following issues are identified as the major constraints in the improvement of the relationship between students and teachers:

6.3.5.1 Linguistic Gap: Language, being an instrument of communication, often creates difficulties in the relationship between teachers and students. In most cases, tribal students are victims of the linguistic divide as each tribe has its own spoken language with which the teachers have no unawareness. Such lack of understanding of teachers about the language of students coming from certain social strata creates problems as it affects effective and fruitful communication between students and teachers. Most importantly, the linguistic gap can also lead to mental stress among students, which may ultimately result in dropping out. Thus, teachers working in schools in tribal-concentrated areas must at least have rudimentary knowledge of the colloquial language of the students not only to prevent linguistic alienation but also to foster a better relationship with students.

6.3.5.2 Pupil-Teacher Ratio (PTR): Various studies and reports on the education sector in India highlight the problem of Pupil-Teacher Ratio. For various Indian states have not only failed to fulfil the norms and criteria mentioned in the Right to Education Act (RTE) but also have low Pupil-Teacher Ratio in schools. For example, in the level of secondary and higher secondary education in some northern states like Bihar, Jharkhand, and UP, the Pupil-Teacher Ratio is poor.[4] However, Kerala

---

4. See, Global Education Monitoring report 2020.

has fulfilled the directions on PTR mentioned in the RTE, and the performance of the State is undoubtedly far better than the majority of their counterparts.The ratio of students and teachers is one of the main indicators of the relationship between students and teachers. In India, the maximum level of the Pupil-Teacher Ratio (PTR) had been fixed by the Right to Education (RTE) act— the maximum PTR for classes I to V is 1:30 and for classes VI to VIII is I:35. In Kerala, the government has upheld the RTE Act in letter and spirit by appointing the exact number of teachers. Nonetheless, it is observed that the class-wise number of students mentioned in the RTE Act is found to be very high. This creates practical level difficulties in making personal interaction and relationship between the teacher and students. While, in some schools, there is a mismatch in the declared students' strength and the real students' strength in the classroom because of the lack of ample classroom-space. Yet, Kerala's situation on PTR is better than other states in India. But when we consider Kerala's case in comparison with some other countries like Sweden, Cuba, and Iceland, we have seen an interesting thing that the PTR is below ten in primary in those countries. So, it is a matter to be discussed seriously by the Kerala society.

6.3.5.3 Primary School with Secondary Section: It is found that students in independent primary school get more attention from the teachers than the students in the primary section in a secondary school. Generally, independent primary schools conduct different academic programmes,where as the primary section working in a secondary school does not have the upper hand in designing and conducting specific programmes addressing its own needs. And the working days of the primary section in secondary school is less compared tothe working days of an independent primary school. This means that the primary section in secondary school has been losing its working days in comparison to the independent primary school. In secondary schools, the annual examinations are conducted in March. During these days, the school declares holidays to the primary section, but it does not happen in the independent primary school. Besides, in an independent primary school, a separate teacher is available for holding the position of HM. However, the primary section in a secondary school is not able to have a separate teacher for looking after the matters in the primary section.

6.3.5.4 Economic Barrier: The effects of economic inequality in society naturally reflect in all educational institutions. In contemporary India, people have been witnessing the problem of growing economic issues, particularly the growing divide between the haves and the have-nots. For any ordinary family, the education of their child is a matter of great concern, which depends on their economic wherewithal. In most cases, such situation would push the family to depend on child labour, forcing their children to drop out of schools to engage in some forms of manual labour. In Kerala, the cases of child labour are hard to find due to effective intervention of the government and civil society. , But during fieldwork it was identified that a very minute number of children from lower-income families are engaged in some form of manual labour. The study, therefore,demands urgent attention and intervention of the government to this problem so that no child shall be deprived of his/her education due to the families' economic backwardness. The house visit of teachers and their regular contact with the students' families deserve great appreciation in tracking down problems like child labour, and some teachers even lend economic support to students who face such problems regarding the completion of education. Moreover, the house visit of students conducted by teachers also acted as a moral boost resulting in better rapport between students and teachers and better performance of students.

6.3.5.5 Dropout: The positive intervention of the teachers in the personal problems of the student and their supportive attitude will create an ideal situation in any educational institution.The strong bond between teacher and student will reduce the dropout of the students. If the teachers are not ready to address personal issues of students like food, housing, books etc., they tend to drop out. Sometimes, the physical presence of the student maybe there in the classroom, but mental dropout happens, gradually leading to absenteeism and, eventually physical dropout.

6.3.5.6 Awareness about Child rights: Some teachers are not aware of child rights and its implications. They use the old and outdated modes of teaching resorting to physical punishment and harsh words, which could have a negative impact on the child. The Rejuvenation Campaign has taken the initiative to protect the rights of the child and to stop such practices. But some schools have not provided the facility for registering the opinion of the students. In many cases, the empathetic attitude of teachers led to positive changes.

6.3.5.7 Discriminations: In India, caste, skin colour, physical structure, height, weight, gender, socio-economic status, geographical location, and age etc. are used to discriminate students. The act of bullying, demoralising, and teasing etc. based on the aforementioned factors is a common practice amongst the students. However, Kerala has a different story to tell, where the spirit of struggle against all forms of social, economic, cultural, and political discrimination and casteism has been an integral part of its history of social reforms. However, during fieldwork, it was observed that a small section of students from tribal communities have encountered bitter experiences from their non-tribal counterparts. Society as well as the education system has to be vigilant against such discriminations.

6.4 Infrastructure

A detailed discussion has already been made in the previous chapters about the changes brought by the Rejuvenation Campaign in both general and academic infrastructural facilities in public educational institutions across the State. Given this context, it is essential to look at how students respond to those changes brought by the Rejuvenation Campaign. The physical infrastructure is the vital element that influences the quality of education being imparted inthe educational institutions and function as the catalyst for increasing enrolment of students. For example, citing the DPI statistics, the previous chapters have already provided a detailed informationon this aspect. It is to be noted that the enrolment of students from private-unaided schools to public schools in the State has witnessed a dramatic increase in the years after the introduction of the Campaign, and one of the primary reasons for such migration is undoubtedly the phased improvement of the infrastructural facilities in the public educational institutions. From the students' perspective, infrastructural improvement is a crucial factor that, apart from academic facilities and environment, creates a sense of self-esteem amongst the student community as well.

Graph 6.7 Students' Perceptions of Infrastructure
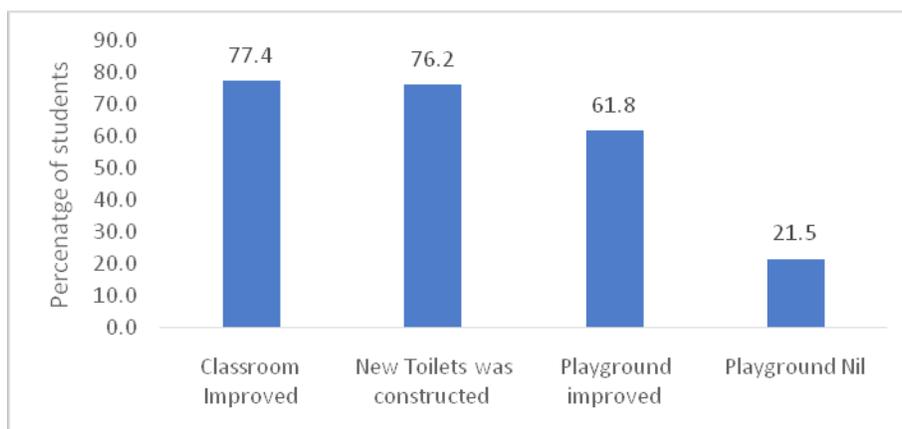
Source: Fieldwork

6.4.1 Change of Perception: No doubt, better infrastructural facilities can change the perception of the parents towards the school. Earlier, many parents used to think that only private-unaided schools can provide better infrastructural facilities for students. But with the Rejuvenation Campaign, that perception has changed. The enhanced educational standards and academic performance of students due to the modernisation of school labs and libraries under the Rejuvenation Campaign is the main reason in this regard. During fieldwork, a vast majority of students opined that they feel satisfied with the ongoing infrastructural transformation of their schools. Moreover, the infrastructural improvement of schools provides students witha positive learning environment for the enrichment of both curricular and extracurricular activities.

6.4.2 Planning: The development of infrastructural facilities in the school that students greatly appreciated was accomplished through elaborate planning that was conducted with the participation of the general public in the locality including the students. The masterplan of the construction of the new building of the school has ensured provision of proper area dimensions for the classrooms apart from library, kitchen, dining hall, and playground— all of which were planned by the school authority in consultation with stakeholders and experts.

6.4.3 Toilet: Earlier, planning for toilets in schools and its construction depended on the availability of space and funds. Generally, the basic facilities like toilets,

washroom, and restroom for girls had not been top priority. However, the Rejuvenation Campaign has taken this subject into the forefront of the discussions, though students have often raised demands for neat toilet and washroom facilities. At present, the authorities have planned these facilities on the concept of one toilet for 40 boys and one toilet for 25 girls. The Rejuvenation Campaign has promoted the concept of child-friendly toilets. It has also suggested architectural changes and suggested the paintings, pictures of birds, butterflies, and dragonflies on the walls of the toilet. These changes have been received with great interest by the students. In some schools, the students reported that the cleaning, maintenance, and facilities in the teachers' toilets are better than that for the students. Therefore, the students have suggested common toilets for the use of both teachers and students. The Rejuvenation Campaign also attempted to strengthen community involvement including that of PTA and people's representatives in ensuring a hygienic and healthy school environment. To ensure water supply, rainwater harvesting storage system was promoted by the schools with the assistance of LSGD.

6.5 Hi-tech Classrooms

6.5.1 Enhancing Standard: Hi-tech classrooms play an essential role in enhancing the standard of education. The Hi-tech classrooms will have internet facility, video conferencing, projector for presentations, and are intended to create new enthusiasm amongst the students in learning and to help them cope with tools of up-to-date modes of learning such as eBooks, online study repositories, and educational portals. The response collected from students across the State testifies the fact that learning has become an audio-visual experience which helps them to understand the subjects quickly and comprehensively, in an interactive atmosphere. Consequently, the very process of learning has now become an effortless task for students. With the Rejuvenation Campaign, the majority of schools in the State have Hi-tech classrooms facilities. It was noticed during fieldwork that the creation of Hi-tech classrooms has increased the academic interest and performance of the students.

6.5.2 ICT-Enabled Classrooms: The data shows that a good number of students have operated the ICT instruments in the classroom. In some schools, the majority of the students have seen the instruments for the first time in their life. Smart-class room was mainly arranged in the secondary section of the school. The ICT-enabled

instruments in class have been used for reducing the difficulty level of the subjects like Maths, English and Hindi.

6.5.3 Internet and Communication: The data has shown that 100 percent of the secondary schools in the State have electricity, internet connectivity and communication facilities.[5] But some limitations exist. The availability of the data of internet connectivity has depended upon the geographical nature of the locality. The mobile phone, WhatsApp and other communication facilities are being used by the students and teachers.

6.6 School Libraries

6.6.1 Democratic Space: The Rejuvenation Campaign stresses the modernisation of school libraries for improving the quality and standard of the public education system. The school libraries foster the culture of critical thinking and reading amongst the students. The response of the students about the functioning of school libraries in general and classroom libraries, in particular, is a valid testimony to the same. For instance, in the opinion of students, school libraries nowadays have a good collection of journals, magazines, newspapers, and periodicals, in addition to books. The data shows that the intervention of the students in the activities of the library has also increased. The Campaign has changed the function of the library in a school and a radical change has been introduced. Generally, school libraries have functioned in a centralised manner, however, during this period decentralisation was introduced. The concept of classroom library has been popularised and the students have taken the prime responsibility in therunning of the library. The government has given money to libraries. In many schools, students, teachers and PTA have contributed to support of the public in the locality.

6.6.2 Newspaper, Journals, Magazines: The improvement of the library is reflected in the availability of newspapers, magazines and journals. The social organisations, political parties, youth and students' organisations have very actively intervened and contributed to strengthening the libraries. In many schools, infrastructural constituents like shelve, racks and reading tables have been contributed by such organisations.

---

5. Source: Fieldwork Data

6.6.3 Managerial Experience: Another noticeable development is the managerial experience acquired by the students through their work as librarians. The Campaign envisages that each classroom creates its own library through collective effort. It should be managed by the students themselves. Apart from creating a culture of reading and critical thinking amongst the students, the classroom library enables the students to undertake some managerial responsibilities, such as the role of the librarian.

6.6.4 Library and Poor students: The response from some students is that the book from the library has not been taken by them because they do not have the facility to keep the book in their house. A group of students has revealed that they are unable to read the book in the house because of the abusive domestic environment.

Graph 6.8 On improvements in Library, 2019
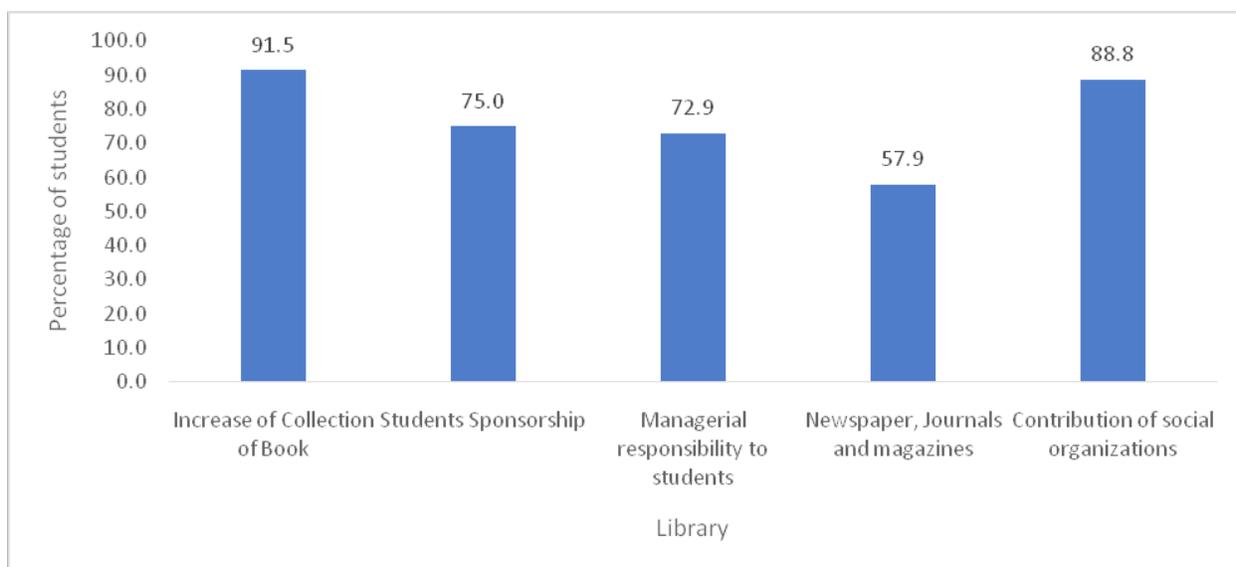
Source: Fieldwork

6.7 School labs

6.7.1 Scientific Temper: The school labs play a vital role in fostering the spirit of scientific enquiry and scientific temper amongst students. Besides, lab facilities have also improved learning-standards in science-related disciplines. The students opined that the current facilities in school labs have improved, and innovative programmes

like *Lab on Wheels* help them in experimentation, observation, model building, particularly in the case of students from schools that do not have well-equipped lab facilities. In fact, a lot of work is taking place towards the improvement of school labs under the Rejuvenation Campaign. The response of the students' community in this regard is positive. The allocation of necessary equipment and enough space for the laboratory is important for the smooth functioning of the school. But some aided schools have not given any attention to the laboratory functioning for the students.

6.7.2 Student's Perspective: In the years before the Rejuvenation Campaign, library and lab facilities in schools in the rural area did not receive adequate attention from the authorities. The Rejuvenation Campaign has resulted in considerable improvement in school labs and libraries, especially in schools that are located in rural areas. This is indeed a good sign, for it gives immense opportunity for students studying in rural schools to access lab facilities as enjoyed by their urban counterparts. This has reduced the existing rural-urban divide in the field of education to some extent. Moreover, the programmes related to the promotion of science education have immensely helped the students. However, the expectation level of the students is much higher and therefore, it should be addressed by the Education department.

6.8 Playgrounds

6.8.1 Physical Education: With the implementation of the Rejuvenation Campaign, the subject of physical education has come to the centre stage of the learning process, and school playgrounds constitute its indispensable part. The Rejuvenation Campaign has brought the subject of physical education to the limelight of the current discourse on education.

6.8.2 Promotion of Indigenous Games: The Rejuvenation Campaign promotes indigenous sport/games that are on the brink of extinction, and it also institutes a cluster-system for sports and games. For instance, some public educational institutions in the State provide swimming training to students.

6.8.3 Playgrounds: As we know, students are generally fun-loving, and would like to get involved in some kinds of play/games. The Rejuvenation Campaign has noticed that, in many schools, proper playground facilities are still not available,

and the majority of the grounds are not in use in the rainy season because of the lack of planning and engineering defects. Therefore, the renovation works of old playgrounds are going on in several schools with the financial aid of the government. In the view of students, every school needs to have a playground, and this reminds the officials that more focus needs to be given for setting up the playgrounds and physical education in schools.

It has to be noted that both the school PTA and the Panchayath authorities have shown keen interest in either renovating or constructing playground facilities for the students studying in several schools. This is one of the positive results of the Rejuvenation Campaign. Field data reveals the fact that many schools have got financial assistance from the public fund in connection with the renovation of school playgrounds.

In some schools, the response of the general public and the local community is praiseworthy, for they have taken the initiative of purchasing land for the school playground. Whereas in some areas, individuals and groups have donated their land to schools for constructing playgrounds. In some schools, the fund allocation of Panchayaths and the government has been utilised for purchasing land with the assistance of various stakeholders of the school. The Rejuvenation Campaign, therefore, considers all these issues and suggests the urgent intervention of the government in this regard by placing the issue of playground as one of the key agendas in the ongoing infrastructural improvement of schools.

One exemplary case is that of Government higher secondary school Pala, Iritty taluk has purchased 1.5-acre land for the playground with the utilisation of funds from various sources including public contribution. It was the result of the committed intervention of the teachers, parents, the local self-government, and people's representatives. In contrast, a very negative stand has been taken by some aided schools. One of the examples is that of an aided primary school, Naravoor LPS, Thalasseri Thaluk, which is working in a few cents of land. On the record, it has only six cents but in fact, the real usable land is below three cents. The classrooms, office room, Biodiversity Park, agricultural land, playground, laboratory, kitchen, dining hall, and toilets are necessary for the students in the school, but in such places, there is no space for playgrounds.

Majority of the students are not satisfied with their playground because of the lack of space for games and athletics. The number of students in public school has increased but the availability of land in the schools is stagnant. After the inclusion of higher secondary students in the high school, the building was constructed without the extension of land. According to the data, the calculation of space per student reveals a decreasing trend of per capita space. One major factor has been the construction of various buildings under different schemes as separate units within the school compound, as a result of which most of the school premises is filled with buildings with no space available for playgrounds. Care has to be taken, at least in the future, to plan the buildings vertically so that space is left free for sports and other activities.

Another matter raised by the students is that a large number of teachers are using their private vehicle for travelling to school and they have used the playground as a parking space of their vehicles which capture the major portion of the ground. The students are unable to protest against it. Therefore, the sharp and extensive intervention for ensuring land for the playground is immensely important.

6.9 Differently-Abled Students

The fieldwork observation shows that there are differently-abled students in every school. Proper attention is very much necessary for such students for their all-round development. The Rejuvenation Campaign has noticed the lack of attention and facilities to them. The field experience has shown that during the Campaign period, a positive development has taken place in the approach of the teachers and fellow students towards the differently-abled students. In majority of schools, a teacher has been appointed especially for the affairs of such students and they are given special care. The teachers have conducted special visits to such students' houses. These initiatives have helped enhance the confidence of differently-abled and mentally challenged students in public schools.

The Rejuvenation Campaign has influenced the infrastructural designing of the school and promoted construction that are friendly to the differently-abled. Parallel to the staircase, a ramp with 1.5-meter width for smooth movement of the students and a bathroom exclusively for differently-abled students on the ground floor of the building are insisted. Besides, the additional toilets for differently-abled

were constructed along with the common toilet. In the masterplan, the classroom, dining hall and reading space in the library have been designed with a special concern of them. Some schools have also appointed physiotherapists to help such students. The differently-abled students are facing a lot of difficulties at the time of travelling to school and therefore some schools have been conducting training for using mechanised wheelchairs. The differently-abled-child-friendly playground with necessary infrastructure is not available in most of the public schools. This is an issue that needs to be addressed.

6.10 Gender Equality

The data shows the girl students are very active and they have taken a leading role in each and every area of school activity.

6.10.1 Leadership skill: The majority of the class leaders in the school are girls and they have taken good initiative for the program which organised in the school.

6.11 Students from SC-ST

The problems which are faced by the Adivasi students have been addressed in the Rejuvenation Campaign. Some of the teachers have met the limitations to understand and appreciate the nuances of the indigenous culture of the students. The Rejuvenation Campaign has insisted that teachers need to take note of the cultural differences of students. The response from the Bavali Government Upper Primary school, which is working in a tribal-dominated area, reveals the impact of such programmes. In the school, there are students from different communities using more than five languages. The teachers here took the initiative to translate the study texts into the five languages that the students speak and are conversant with. If they have used the word 'house' then the students would write it along with equivalent in their own language. In Kerala, 37 tribal groups are reported to be existing, such as Panniyar, Adiyar, Kurichyar, Kurumar, Kattunaikar etc who have their own languages.

6.12 Student Camps: The student camps during vacation time have been organised outside the school locality and it has promoted the joint activities and togetherness among the students. The camps and programmes have promoted the activities

of eco-protection and agricultural activities in the region. The camp has been conducted by the assistance of SCERT and cultural exchanges happen through the camp. It helps to improve not only the relationship amongst the students but also fosters the relationship between students and teachers.

6.13 First Generation Smart Students: Many of the tribal students have seen computers for the first time in their life. The Rejuvenation Campaign has made a significant beginning in creating the first generation of smart students. But a consistent follow upis necessary in this regard, if this initiative is to sustain. The students in the tribal area know a variety of folk songs and rhythms; however, the present pedagogy had not acknowledged them properly in previous years. Therefore, it has been noted and the variety of folk items were introduced and performed in the school through the Rejuvenation Campaign.

6.14 Concluding Observations

In the opinion of the students, the Rejuvenation Campaign has improved the learning atmosphere in schools by improving infrastructure and strengthening the bond of students with their teachers and schools. It reiterates the principle that education is a Fundamental Right of the child and not a private commodity for a few. It is interesting to note that the overall response of the students' community about the functioning of the Rejuvenation Campaign in general and the various programmes it has brought to the domain of school education, in particular, is satisfactory. Besides, the students also gained a higher level of confidence in expressing their talents and feel incredibly proud of their schools, for they consider that the school contributes to their individual and collective development. The students find that the learning process is easy and exciting. Besides, the students have developed a friendly rapport with teachers, and they are getting the opportunity to learn things that exist outside the textbooks.

The overall response of the students towards the changes brought by the Rejuvenation Campaign in the State's public educational institutions is positive. For instance, a considerable number of students opined that the new Learning Enhancement Programmes (LEP) implemented as part of the Rejuvenation Campaign has made the learning process easy and helped them to create a deep understanding of the subjects taught at classrooms. Likewise, the ongoing improvement of infrastructural

facilities has produced a sense of pride within the student community studying in public schools. Moreover, the new learning environment has influenced the student constructively, making them capable of understanding that education, being a process, synthesises both textual and experiential knowledge. All these indicate that the student community, in general, feels satisfied with the kind of changes brought by the Rejuvenation Campaign in public educational institutions.

Chapter 7

Conclusion

The Public Education Rejuvenation Campaign (*Pothu Vidhyabhyasa Samrakshana Yajnjam*) is an ongoing action-oriented programme, launched by the Government of Kerala in 2016, and the present study intends to evaluate its impact so far on the ground.The operation of the Rejuvenation Campaign covers a wide range of domains such as academics, social, political, ethical, psychological, and cultural. As yet, the Rejuvenation Campaign has gained considerable recognition from the schools' functionaries and the general public alike. No doubt, any government programme or policy implementation turns out to bethe success only when it generates a constructive response and collective participation of the people living the society. The Rejuvenation Campaign, in that sense, is a tremendous success and the following observations underscore this fact further.

- Unlike the preceding policies that worked for the improvement of the public education system, the Rejuvenation Campaign made direct contact with the society, people, and the functionaries of the schools by taking recourse to the robust LocalSelf-Government Institutions in the State.This indicates the people-centricand participatory nature of the Rejuvenation Campaign.

- The Rejuvenation Campaign proposes a route map for the resuscitation of the State's public education system, which encompasses several activities such as improvement of schools' physical and academic infrastructure, restructuring of curriculum and pedagogy, getting connected with the Local Self-Government Institutions concerning the implementation of schemes and projects, etc.These are the several dimensions that attribute the movement character to the Rejuvenation Campaign.

- The Rejuvenation Campaign has created a new social consciousness amongst the general public concerning the public educational institutions in the State, which views the public educational institutions as a crucial social asset to be protected for the wellbeing of the secular, democratic society. In one way or the other, this social consciousness seeks to re-establish the lost link between society and schools, which is also one of the crucial impacts brought by the Rejuvenation Campaign inthe domain of public education, leading to a transformation in the perception of the general public about the public educational institutions in Kerala.

The reasons cited above attest that the Public Education Rejuvenation Campaign, being a policy intervention of the governmenthas fulfilled the promises and expectations of the people, for ithas the capacity to bring several constructive and creative changes either in their life-world of the people or in their social understanding towards the prevailing education system. The unprecedented increase in the enrolment rate of students in public education institutions after the implementation of the Rejuvenation Campaign is a good example underlining its success— the DPI statistics states, 5.05 lakh students have newly enrolled in public educational institutions during 2017-2018 to 2019-2020 due to the successful implementation of the Rejuvenation Campaign. Therefore, the ensuing pages of this chapter make a comprehensive evaluation of the impacts of the Rejuvenation Campaign in various domains of State's public education system.

7.1 Impact on Society

Apart from creating far-reaching impacts in the fields of academic and infrastructural development of the public educational institutions in the State, the Rejuvenation Campaignhas also produced some vital changes at the societal level. Following are some of the major impacts of the Rejuvenation Campaign at the societal level.

- *Public Perception about Public Schools:*The operation of the Rejuvenation Campaign, in many ways, has prompted thegeneral public to reflect upon their perception of the public educational institutions in the State, and as a result, they nowstart thinking that public educational institutions have the potential to bethe centres of high-quality learning.

- *Collective Engagement, Engagement of the Collective:*Through its proactive engagement, the Rejuvenation Campaign succeeded in gaining the trust of the schools' functionaries, ordinary people, and entities working in the sphere ofcivil society sphere.This led to the collective participation of the general public and civil society actors in activities related to the comprehensive development of schools, whether it is the case of financial contribution for infrastructural improvement, or the public participation in national and regional festivals like Republic Day, *Kerala Piravi,* and *Praveshanolsavam,* etc. This signifies the emergence of a new social consciousness brought by the Rejuvenation Campaignthat the success of the public educational institution depends squarely on the result of a collective/joint effort of both people and the government.

- *Social Commitment:* The Rejuvenation Campaign carries a genuine social commitment within itself; that is, everyone ought to get equal opportunity to avail of better quality education as long as education remains a Fundamental Right. Besides, such social commitment of the Rejuvenation Campaign has a lot to do with the application of constitutional valueson the ground, albeit it remains unnoticed, for the most part.

- *Changing Public Mindset:* By providing better-quality infrastructural facilities to all students in the public educational institutions free of the cost, the Rejuvenation Campaign has rectified the misconception of the middle-

class and upper-middle-class sections about public educational institutions in Kerala. This is the reason why many students from the private-owned unaided schools start coming to the public educational institutions in the State.

- *Concern for the Differently Abled and those with Learning Disabilities:* The Rejuvenation Campaign strives to address the issues of students from (a) the marginalised sections of society, (b) differently-abled, and (c) students who are backward in learning through specific programmes and schemes. This shows the social commitment of the Rejuvenation Campaign— *Ooruvidya Kendrangal* and *Pradeshika Prathibha Kendram* are the mechanisms for extending support to the dropout students from the marginalised sections like tribes.

- *Learning in One's Own Language:* Under the Rejuvenation Campaign, initiatives have been taken to teach the tribal students in their own language. Bridgematerials in this regard have developed to address the issue of linguistic alienation of tribal students. And special teachers are also there to support this effort. All these attempts have a lot to do with the promotion of inclusiveness education and the upholding of the principles of social justice in education.

- *Gender Sensitive:* The Rejuvenation Campaign empowers the girls and makes the students aware of the problems triggered by gender. The contents, language, and presentation of the textbooks are, in a way, upheld the idea of gender equality. Besides, the Rejuvenation Campaign also designed programmes for the empowerment of differently-abled students.

7.2 Impact on Infrastructure

Since the beginning of the Rejuvenation Campaign in 2016, the general infrastructure of the public educational institutions in Kerala is undergoing a dramatic transformation. The predominant force that made such transformation possible was the proactive roles played by the coordinated efforts of the Rejuvenation Campaign with Local Self-Government Institutions (LSGIs), elected representatives, civil society organisations and the general public. So far from being

a policy formulation of the government, the Rejuvenation Campaign has turned itself into a peoples' movement committed to bringing social transformation in the State's public education sector. The study has a special focus on the impact of the Rejuvenation Campaign in the improvement of the physical infrastructure as well as the academic standard of public educational institutions.

Following are some of the major developments that happened due the Rejuvenation Campaign:

- *State-of-the-Art Infrastructure:* There have been significant and positive changes in the domain of the general/physical infrastructural facilities of the schools since the introduction of the Rejuvenation Campaign.

- *Better Learning Environment:* The improvement of general/physical infrastructure has an inextricable connectionwith the Rejuvenation Campaign's objective of making the phased upgradation of the public educational institutions in the State. The reason for this is that on the one, the improvement of general/physical infrastructure becomes an essential requirement for the public educational institutions in the State to attain the international standard and on the other, such infrastructural advancements have a lot to do with the successful operationalisation of curriculum revision suggested by the Rejuvenation Campaign for providing better quality education to all children in the State.

- *Increase in Enrollment:*From the study, it is revealed that the improvement in the general/physical infrastructural facilities has acted as the catalyst for increasing students' enrolment in public schools.

- *Better Learning/Teaching Environment:*Moreover, the improvement of the schools' general/physical infrastructure has also created a more vibrant and constructive learning/teaching environment for the students.

- *Active Alumni:* The proactive involvementof the Alumni Associations has contributed to the improvement of the physical infrastructure of schools; besides, they also functioned as a force for bringing the general public closer to the schools.

- *Changing Public Perception:* With the implementation of the Rejuvenation Campaign, condition and quality of infrastructure in government schools have been improving steadily. The improvement of the physical infrastructural facilities leading to the increase in annual enrolment rate has been instrumental in influencing the perception of the general public towards public education system in the State.

Still, there are problems that persist in the area of infrastructural improvement of schools in the public sector, mainly due to the procedural delays in the administrative system. As in most cases, the process of the fund allocation of the government gets delayed due to cumbersome the administrative and bureaucratic procedures.

- *Procedural Delays:* The procedural delay has been affecting the government activities in the public education sector in India, and various reports have noted such experience. However, the state of Kerala is far better than the majority of the States in the country. In spite of that, the study suggests that the government of Kerala needs to take essential measures to reduce procedural delays in process of fund allocation for the improvement of schools' infrastructure. Besides this, priority needs to be given to government-owned schools in the allocation of funds for infrastructural improvement. Further, more focus and allocation should be given for infrastructural improvements of schools that are located in areas with higher population of tribal communities and fishermen, considering the degree of educational backwardness and social alienation of the children from these communities.

7.3 Impact on Academic infrastructure

In the traditional curriculum and pedagogy, domain of academic infrastructure received less priority. However, with the Rejuvenation Campaign, old perceptions started changing, and areas like academic infrastructure began to receive increasing attention and focus in the discussions on education. This is, indeed, one of the most significant impacts that Rejuvenation Campaign had with regard to the delivery of education. The term academic infrastructure refers to facilitiessuch as Hi-tech classrooms, modernisation and digitalisation of libraries, ICT instrument, and also, renovation of playground facilitiesfor physical education.

The following are some of the major development happened in academic infrastructure.

- *ICT-Empowered, ICT-Enabled:* With the Rejuvenation Campaign, the then ICT-enabled education programme was given further acceleration as well as an organisedand institutional form, as a result of which the students in the public educational institutions are now able to acquire a deep understanding in the process of learning. In addition, this has also enhanced the level of competency of the students in public educational institutions.

- *Improved Quality of Education:* The Hi-tech school programme has installed various ICT equipment in almost all schools as part of the Rejuvenation Campaign, and this has elevated the quality and standard of education imparting in the schools. For with the introduction of Hi-tech classrooms, the process of learning has become more interactive and exploratory.

- *Transformation in Teaching Modes:* Theinstallation of ICT-enabled tools/ equipment has also transformed in the process of teaching, for it has now become more engaging and entertaining. And this enabled the teachers to easily draw the attention of students in the subjects taught in classrooms.

- *Interactive Modes of Learning:* The Hi-tech classrooms in the public educational institutions are equipped with interactive textbooks, digital content, online and offline resource portals, evaluation mechanisms, multimedia projectors, internet accessibility, and library facilities. All these have changed the face of the public educational institutions in the State.

- *Changed Role of Teachers:* Another noteworthy impact of the Rejuvenation Campaign is the transformation of the role of teachers, that they become a mentor rather than a mere instructor.

- *IT Literacy:* Rejuvenation Campaign helped in extending IT literacy amongst both the students and the teachers.

- *Modernised Library Facilities:* With the improvement of academic infrastructure, the task of modernising libraries and school labs comes to the forefront of the Rejuvenation Campaign. The modernisation of school libraries cultivates the culture of critical thinking amongst the students. One of the outcomes of the library modernisation project is the evolution of a new system called 'classroom library' whose operationalisation lies in the collective effort of students, parents, and teachers.

- *Computer Literacy:* Similarly, the establishment of computer labs in all public educational institutions enabled the children to be computer-literates from the early stage of education. It helped the students in the Language Acquisition Programmes (LAP) and also gave an academic advantage to students in the area of Information Communication Technology.

Despite these productive changes, the Rejuvenation Campaign also faces some problems in the domain of improvement of academic infrastructure of schools. Given below are some of the major problems that persist in this domain and suggestions to address the same.

- *Roof Ceiling:* The study identifies certain issues pertaining to the installation of ICT-enabled equipment and tools. In many schools, the roof ceiling facility needs improvement, as in most cases, the roof of school buildings is made of roof tiles. This makes it impossible to fix and mount LCD projectors and accessories in classrooms; to mount the same, roof ceiling is a necessary requirement. Likewise, the safety of ICT instruments is also a concern in classrooms that are devoid of the roof ceiling facility. The study, therefore, suggests that the construction of the roof ceiling in all classrooms should be given top priority as part of the infrastructural improvement.

- *Connectivity:* Another issue is related to the inconsistency of internet connectivity, which is most essential for functioning of Hi-tech classrooms. Efforts need to be made to address the problem of internet connectivity in schools— this problem could be addressed better through using the upcoming facility of K Phone internet service.

- *Electric Supply:* In schools located in rural areas, the availability of uninterrupted electricity is a problem for the functioning of Hi-tech classrooms especially in monsoon season. Thus, it is time to rely on renewable energy sources such as solar power, in schools that are facing problems with electricity connections. Gradually solar energy plants can be installed in such schools to meet the needs of electricity.

- *Playgrounds:* Theconstruction of various buildings under different schemes as separate units within the school compound is progressing, as a result of which most of the school premises is filled with buildings with no space available for playgrounds. Therefore, care has to be taken, at least in the future, to plan the buildings vertically so that space is left free for sports and other activities.

- *Use of Open Source Software:* Although the digitalisation of school libraries is projected as one of the vital objectives of the Rejuvenation Campaign, the possibility of any open-source software for cataloguing of books is not yet explored in many school libraries.

- *Library Master Plan:* The library masterplan is found missing in many schools. It is imperative that effective intervention of the government is made to speed up the cataloguing of books in school libraries as part of digitalisation programme mustcommence.

7.4 Impact on Curriculum, Pedagogy, and the Learning Process

The Rejuvenation Campaign brought changes in curriculum and pedagogy, which presupposed technical innovations and modernisation of the schools' academic infrastructure. The change in the curriculum was not directly proposed under the Rejuvenation Campaign but was accelerated by it. According to the present study, substantial changes have occurred in the realms of curriculum and pedagogy of school education.

Following are some of the major development happened in Curriculum, Pedagogy, and the Learning Process:

- *Student-oriented:* The ongoing revision of pedagogy recognises each student, and each student is given due attention. Not only this pedagogical transformation can help the teachers to discover the hidden potentials and capabilities of students, but this can also give ample opportunities for teachers to make the individual level bond with each student in the classroom. The motto of this pedagogical transformation is 'Equal opportunity for equitable education'. Each student is a single unit and an integral part of the classroom.

- *Teacher-oriented:* In the pedagogical changes proposed by the Rejuvenation Campaign, teachers are free to choose their teaching methods which help them to develop a research-oriented mindset. Moreover, the pedagogical changes provide induction courses and ICT-enabled training to newly appointed teachers with less experience, and it suggests constant performance appraisal for the teachers. All these facilitate the retention of the quality of teaching.

- *Curriculum Improvement:* Under the Rejuvenation Campaign, the government took substantive steps to transform the theoretical and conceptual formulations of the curriculum into a practical form. Such transformation of theory into practice itself can be considered a kind of revision since it brings new changes.

- *Integral Methods of Study:* The curriculum revision proposed by the Rejuvenation Campaign emphasises both self-study and group-study as integral methods of learning, and this on the practical ground enables each student to overcome limitations they face in the field of education. As a result, learning becomes a collective effort and goes beyond the traditional curriculum setting.

- *Overall Development of Students:* The study finds that science subjects and the scientific temper are specially promoted under the Rejuvenation Campaign, and so the learning of science is given importance. The possibilities of modern technology are also promoted along with science learning. Besides this, the promotion of arts and sports also help the mental and physical development of the children. Also, special programmes are

designed for improving the linguistic skill of the students, which in the long run will help to acquire a command over languages such as Malayalam, English, and Hindi.

- *Environmental Education:*In the context of global warming and climate change, the environmental issues need to be addressed. Hence, under the prescribed curriculum revision of the Rejuvenation Campaign, the environmental education of the students has a prominent place. Several programmes and platforms have been created, such as nature clubs or ecological clubs, Biodiversity Park, etc to impart education to students on environmental and ecological issues. Also, to familiarise and understand the importance of nature, the Rejuvenation Campaign put forwards programmes for students underlining the importance of organic farming and plastic-free environment.

- *ICT-Enabled & Activity-Oriented:* The new process of learning under the Rejuvenation Campaign is ICT based, and this has enabled the students to be self-learners, which further reduces the dependency of students on teachers— in the new ways of learning, students learn subjects through various kinds of practices and activities such as the meeting of old age people and experts in various fields, study tour and visits, etc. These help the students to know about social issues and customs apart from gaining ground-level experiences leading to the acquisition of knowledge.

- *Employability:* The present curriculum revision enables students to attain employability skills, and in some schools, in their own individual capacity, have designed and implemented special programmes to train the students in acquiring vocational and employability skills. Because the impartation of vocational skills at the school level enables the students to gain preliminary knowledge about employment before the completionof the higher secondary education.

Notwithstanding of the afore-mentioned constructive outcomes, the Rejuvenation Campaign encounters some problems in the domain of Curriculum, Pedagogy, and the Learning Process that demand further notice of the government. Thus, the present study offers some suggestions to address those problems that are mentioned below.

- *Time Schedule for Programmes:*In schools, there are no proper time arrangements for programmes to be held. If the programmes are held in the lunch break, it will affect the free time available to the students. Hence, the study suggests the government to take necessary steps to fix the time frame for the programmes designed as per the curriculum change under the Rejuvenation Campaign. The implementation of the programmes should never affect classroom learning.

- *Paucity of Land:*It is found that for the better operationalisation of environmental education programmes like *Jaivam* requires tract of land for doing organic farming in schools.The study has identified that a number of schools still do not have an adequate size of land to carry out programmes like *Jaivam*, and in such schools, several environmental education programmes do not work the way it expects to be.

- *Orientation to Teachers:*Although the ongoing pedagogical changes do provide ICT training and induction courses to teachers, it alone cannot empowerand enable the teachers to deal with all programmes of the Rejuvenation Campaign. There are differences in the capability of teachers to deal with various programmes related to different subjects. A number of factors contribute to the differences in capacities that exist among the teachers. There is no mechanism to collect feedback, identify, and address such issues. There is an urgent to organise need-based training based on these issues/hurdles.

7.5 Participation of Panchayati Raj Institutions

The study found that the decentralised character of the Rejuvenation Campaign has a crucial role in enhancing the state-public interface. It has also encouraged the general public to actively participate in matters related to the functioning of the schools.The Rejuvenation Campaign brings together the ordinary people, government agencies, PTA, Alumni Associations, and grass-root level governing institutions.

Following observations highlight the significance of grass-root level governing institutions and civil society organisations in the functioning of the Rejuvenation Campaign:

- *Active Involvement:*In most cases, the performance of LSGIs seems effective in bestowing a new vigour to the infrastructural development of public educational institutions. The decentralised model of the Rejuvenation Campaign ensures inclusiveness, public cooperation, and flexibility at the operational level.Further, the decentralised model of the Rejuvenation Campaign is more action-oriented than the previous revitalisation programmes.

- *Participatory Democracy Mode:*The study found that the entry of Panchayati Raj Institutions strengthened the collective character of the Rejuvenation Campaign and transformed it into a democratic initiative.

However, at the same time, bothPanchayati Raj Institutions and civil society organisations also encounter some constraints regarding the fulfilling of their assigned functions under the Rejuvenation Campaign.

- *School Master Plan:*Many Panchayati Raj Institutions still do not give due emphasis to the schoolmasterplan regarding the allotment of money for the improvement of infrastructural facilities.This tends to create unproductive use of public funding and financialmismanagement.

- *Grants in Aid Support:*Grama Panchayat,which keeps continuous contact with the grass-root level and hence, has a betterunderstanding of the condition and needs of high schools/higher secondary schools. The study, therefore, suggests the government to increase the grants-in-aid of the Grama Panchayats and ask them to call for a separate Educational Grama Sabha by inviting the representatives of all schools located within its territorial jurisdiction.

7.6　On the Schools' Alumni Associations

The transformation that has happened in the role and activities of school Alumni Associations after the implementation of Rejuvenation Campaign is obvious. The Alumni Associationshave transformed into potentially significant funding-sources working for theinfrastructural development of schools. In addition, they also function as civil societal agents of change, for they help bringing the common public

closer to the schools. . Apart from this, the Alumni Associations also provide classes for leadership-skill education, personal and career development for students. All these underlines the fact the Rejuvenation Campaign does not view Alumni Associations as mere organisations of former students.

- The study finds that Alumni Associations do not have much social reach and acceptance as compared other mainstreamcivil society organisations. Nonetheless, theAlumni Associations give more financial help to schools concerning the matters related to the improvement of both academic and physical infrastructural facilities.

- *Legal Recognition:*It is interesting to note that the Rejuvenation Campaign legally recognises Alumni Associations, suggesting that each school should form Alumni Association, and should act as the force of change in connection with the future progress of the schools.

- *Alumni Representation:*Despite the active involvement of Alumni Associations in schools' activities, they do not have due representation in either committees or task forces that function at various levels of implementation of the Rejuvenation Campaign. The present study identifies such non-representation of Alumni Associations as a major shortcoming and suggests the government to look seriously into this problem.

- *Not a Universal Solution:*Though Alumni Associations generally generate money for schools'development,economic problems persist— it is impractical for every school to generatemoney through Alumni Associations, for it depends on the class with which themembers of Alumni Associations belong to.

7.7   The Role of PTA, Teachers, and Private Individuals

Under the ongoing projects of the Rejuvenation Campaign on the improvement of schools' academic and physical infrastructure, the PTA, Teachers, and Private Individuals play a vital role.

- The study finds that the financial contribution of private individuals is much higher with regard to theimprovement of schools' infrastructural facilities.

- The Parents-Teachers Association too, has contributed more to the cause of theschools' infrastructural improvement. Now, with theimplementation of the Rejuvenation Campaign, the PTA hastransformed not only as an advisory body in matters related to the functioning of theschools but also as the fund-generator withregard to the schools' infrastructuraldevelopment.

- With the Rejuvenation Campaign, the teachers have realised that they need to put extraeffort in the form of financialcontribution towards the accomplishment of the cause ofimproving the schools' infrastructure.

Yet, the study identifies the following problems on the ground with regard to the function of PTA, Teachers, and Private Individuals in the Rejuvenation Campaign.

- *Religious/Caste Biases:*It is found that despite the private individuals lend financial contributions, some sortof tacit play of religion/caste/class could be inferred in this matter. For example, the financial contribution given by the private individuals for the cause of improving the infrastructural facilities in schools located in the tribal-concentrated pockets is marginal.

- *Economic Disparities:*Many government-owned and government-aided schools do not have students coming from affluent families. So, the PTA in such schools in economically backward regions cannot generate much money for the cause of the schools' infrastructural improvement.

7.8 The Impact of Public Education Rejuvenation Campaign on Students in Public Educational Institutions

It is importantto note that the overall response of the student community about the functioning of Rejuvenation Campaign in general and various programmes it has brought to the domain of school education, in particular, is satisfactory. There is a considerable improvement in student's academic performance, student-teacher relationship, learning atmosphere, and many other aspects after the implementation of the Rejuvenation Campaign.

Following are some of the major impact of the Rejuvenation Campaign in the domain of students' life in the schools:

- *Improved Student-Teacher Relationship:* The Rejuvenation Campaign has brought an astounding improvement in the existing student-teacher relationship. This is due to the change in the paradigm of teaching under the Rejuvenation Campaign; from seeing the classroom as a whole unit, there was a shift to treating each student as a unit.

- *Learning as Audio-visual Experience:* Due to the creation of Hi-tech classrooms,studentsneed not have to memorise concepts or theorems taught by teachers. According to them, the process of learningis now more of an audio-visual experience, which helps them to understand the subjects easily and quickly. Besides, this has also boosted the confidence level of students in the process of learning.

- *More Working Days:* It is found that due to the proactive involvement of the Rejuvenation Campaign, the number of minimum working days of schools has increased considerably. The increase of minimum working days gave more time for both students and teachers to focus on teaching and learning. In parallel to this, the participation of students in the extra curricular activities has improved, which functions as a platform for students to express their talents.

- *Triggers Leadership Skills:* It is observed that the Rejuvenation Campaign has helped the students to acquire leadership skills and enabled them to gain insights about relevant concepts like gender equality, democratic process, and social action.

- *Special Care for Differently Abled:* Another key outcome of the Rejuvenation Campaign is the special care and attention received by differently-abled students from teachers. Moreover, most of the schools' physical infrastructure is now being converted to help the differently-abled students to access allfacilities required for their studies. Many of the ongoing constructions of schools buildings are differently-abled-friendly these days.

- *Timely Distribution of Text Books:* It is observed that students feel satisfied with the distribution of textbooks. It is further identified that that authorities give special attention to the timely revision and distribution of textbooks.

- *Learning in one's own Language:* Rejuvenation Campaign encouraged teachers working in schools located in tribal areas to teach in the language of the tribal students. It also insisted the teachers conduct students' house visits so that they could come to know their problems.

As noted above, the curriculum, pedagogy, and learning process as a whole had undergone significant transformation under the Rejuvenation Campaign. It was made possible through various measures and initiatives at the conceptual, policy, administrative and pedagogic levels, which are still under way.

This being a concurrent study, steps need to be taken to fill the gaps and address the issues in order to make the Rejuvenation Campaign more effective and fruitful.

- *Extending Smart Learning to Primary Level:* In connection with the changing learning environment, the majority of tribal students have come into contact with ICT instruments for the first time in their life. And the Smart-class rooms are mainly arranged in the secondary section of the schools; as a result, students studying in the primary sections will not have the chance of acquiring computer and ICT skills since the early stage of education. The study suggests that the government should take steps to provide ICT-enabled education to tribal students and set up a computer lab in the primary section with a ratio, that is, one computer for at least five students.

- *Teaching in the Language of Students:* Amongst the students coming from the tribal-cultural background, there may be a chance of linguistic alienation as different tribes have different language systems for communication. To address this problem, the study suggests the government to impart education to the language in which tribal groups are familiar with. Also, there is a need to appoint as many teachers from the tribal background to handle the education of tribal students so that feeling of linguistic and cultural alienation of tribal students could be sorted out.

- *Child Rights:* It is found that some teachers are not yet aware of the importance of child rights. They use tools and techniques to intimidate the students, which would create a negative impact in the mind of the child and would affect the child's ability to concentrate on studies. The Rejuvenation

Campaign should, therefore, create a mechanism for each child to assess the quality and behaviour of teachers so that the Rejuvenation Campaign can uphold and protect the principle of child rights.

References

Government Reports and Policy Documents

Annual Status of Education Report (Rural) 2018, New Delhi, ASER Centre, 2019

CSES, Evaluation of Alternative Schooling System under DPEP in Kerala, DPEP, 2003

Government of India, Learning without Burden, New Delhi, 1993

Government of India, National Policy of Education 1968, New Delhi, 1986

Government of India, National Policy of Education 1986 (Modified in 1992), New Delhi, 1992

Government of India, Report of the Central Advisory Board of Education (CABE)Committee on Free and Compulsory Education Bill and Other Issues Related to Elementary Education, New Delhi, 2005

Government of Kerala (2006): Circular- Local Governments- Decentralised Planning- Procedure for Planning and Implementation of SSA, Thiruvananthapuram: Department of Local Self Government.

Government of Kerala (2017): *Kerala's General Education Rejuvenation Mission: Roadmap*, Approach Paper, Thiruvananthapuram: Department of General Education.

Government of Kerala (2017a): *Public Education Rejuvenation Campaign: Roadmap - II*, Thiruvananthapuram: Department of Public Education.

Government of Kerala (2019): *Progress Report of Pinarayi Vijayan Government, 24th May 2016 – 23rd May 2019*, Thiruvananthapuram: Information and Public Relations Department.

Kerala Infrastructure and Technology for Education (2016): *Comprehensive Programme for Making Hi-Tech Schools: Approach Paper*, Thiruvananthapuram: Govt of Kerala.

Kerala Infrastructure and Technology for Education (KITE) (nd): *Performa*, Thiruvananthapuram: Govt of Kerala.

Kerala State Planning Board (2016): *Economic Review 2016*, Thiruvananthapuram: Govt of Kerala.

Kerala State Planning Board (2017): *Economic Review 2016*, Thiruvananthapuram: Govt of Kerala.

Kerala State Planning Board (2018): *Economic Review 2018*, Thiruvananthapuram: Govt of Kerala.

Mahatma Gandhi University, 'The Making of Modern Keralam', *Report of the UGC Major Research Project, 1993-96*, Kottayam, School of Social Sciences, 1997

NCERT, National Curriculum Framework 2005, New Delhi: NCERT, 2005

NCERT, Report of the Education Commission, 1964-66 (Vol. I & II), New Delhi: NCERT, 1970

Samagra Shiksha Keralam (2019): *Selime Kaala: Aid Material for Teachers Working in Tribal Education*, Palakkad: BRC Agali.

Samagra Shiksha Keralam, Public Education Rejuvenation Campaign (2019): *Annual Programme Activities, 2018-2019*, Thiruvananthapuram: Govt of Kerala.

State Council of Educational Research and Training (2007): Kerala Curriculum Framework, Thiruvananthapuram: State Council of Educational Research and Training

Personal Interviews

Harikrishnan, K C. *General Secretary: Kerala School Teachers Association*, (2019, November 26). Personal Interview

Kuttykrishnan, A. P., *Director: Samagra Shiksha Kerala*, (2019 November 27). Personal Interview.

Latheesh, C. K., *General Convenor: Government School Parents Forum*, (2019 December 12). Personal Interview.

Maniram, K, *Special Private Secretary: Department of General Education*, (2019 November 27). Personal Interview.

Prasad, J, *Director: SCERT*, (2019, November 27). Personal Interview

Ramakrishnan, C., Member: *SCERT Governing Body*, (2019 December 3). Personal Interview.

Online Resources

https://sametham.kite.kerala.gov.in/

SCERT, *Development of A Strategy for Improving the Communicative Competency in English Language among Secondary School Students of Kerala* (nd): A Paper Submitted to State Council of Educational Research and Training (SCERT): Thiruvananthapuram. Retrieved from

http://www.scert.kerala.gov.in/images/2019/researchstudy/relish%20english_full%20page.pdf

The Official Web Portal of KITE. Retrieved from

https://kite.kerala.gov.in/KITE/index.php/welcome/ict/1

Varma, Prabha (2018): Rejuvenating Public Education in Kerala, *Peoples Democracy*, vol 42, no 30. Retrieved from https://peoplesdemocracy.in/2018/0729_pd/rejuvenating-public-education-kerala

Newspaper Reports

Gothra Bandu to hand hold tribal children, The hindu, 26/05/2017, https://www.google.com/amp/s/www.thehindu.com/news/national/kerala/gothra-bandu-to-hand-hold-tribal-children/article18586428.ece/amp/

Nava Kerala Mission Launched (2016): The Hindu, Thiruvananthapuram, 10th November.

Nava Kerala Mission: Government Sets Project on (2016): Deccan Chronicle, Thiruvananthapuram, 11th November.

Nava Kerala Mission Projects Launched (2016): Mathrubhumi, Thiruvananthapuram, 10th November.

Unpublished Research Theses

Mohan, P. Sanal, *Imagining Equality: Modernity and Social Transformation of Lower Castes in Colonial Kerala*, Kottayam, School of Social Sciences: Mahatma Gandhi University, 2005

Thomas, Stany, 'The Politics of Higher Education in Kerala: A Study of the Policies of Reform (1957-1987)', *Unpublished Ph D Thesis*, Pala, Research and Post Graduate Department of Political Science, St. Thomas College, Kottayam, Mahatma Gandhi University, 1993

Thomas, Sunil Abraham, "Information and Communication Technology Enabled Education and Governance in the State of Kerala", *Unpublished PhD Dissertation*, Aluva: Union Christian College, 2014

Working Paper Series

Dilip, T. R., 'School Educational Attainment in Kerala: Trends and Differentials', *CDS Working Paper*, No. 429, Thiruvananthapuram, CDS, April 2010

George K. K., 'Higher Education in Kerala: How Inclusive is it to Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes?', *Working Paper Series*, Volume 1, Number 4, Ernakulam, Centre for the Study of Social Exclusion and Inclusive Policy: Cochin University of Science and Technology, 2011

George, K. K. and Parvathy Sunaina, 'Dynamics of Change in Kerala's Education System: The Socio-economic and Political Dimensions', *Working Paper*, No. 12, Centre for Socio-economic & Environmental Studies, Edappally, 2005

George, K. K., and Ajith Kumar N., 'What is Wrong with Kerala's Education System?', *Working Paper*, No. 3, Centre for Socio-Economic and Environmental Studies, Edappally, 1999

Books and Articles

Afolabi, F.O. (2002). The school building and its environment: implication on the achievement of functional Universal Basic Education programme in Ondo State. In T. Ajayi, J.O. Fadipe, P.K. Ojedele, & E.E Oluchukwu (Eds.), Planning and Administration of Universal Basic Education in Nigeria. (pp. 101-110). Ondo

Chandrasekhar, C. P.,V. R. Ramachandran and R. Ramkumar (2001): *Issues in School Education in Contemporary Kerala*, A Paper prepared for UNICEF, New Delhi.

Chugh, Sunita (2009): Progress in Literacy and Elementary Education: The Study of Himachal Pradesh, Kerala, and Mizoram, *Social Change*, vol 39, no 2, pp.216-238.

Deasi, Manali (2005): Indirect British Rule, State Formation, and Welfarism in Kerala, India, 1860-1957, *Social Science History*, vol 29, no 3 (Fall), pp. 457-488.

Dreze, Jean and Amartya Sen (1995): *India: Economic Development and Social Opportunity*, (Oxford: Clarendon Press).

Dreze, Jean and Amartya Sen (2002): *India Development and Participation*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press).

Editorial, 'Education in Kerala (1957)', *Economic and Political Weekly*, vol 9, no 3, Retrieved from https://www.epw.in/system/files/pdf/1949_1/2/education_in_kerala.pdf

Elder, Joseph W., 'The Decolonization of Educational Culture: The Case of India' *Comparative Education Review*, Vol. 15, No. 3, Papers from the Comparative and International Education Society Conference, San Diego, California, Oct. 1971, pp. 288-295

Freire, Paulo, *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* (Translated by Myra Bergman Ramos from Portuguese to English),New York & London: Continuum, 2005

Ganesh, K. N., "National Curriculum Framework 2005: A Note", *Social Scientist*, Vol. 33, No. 9/10, 2005, pp. 47-54

Gurukkal, Rajan, 'Development Experience of Colonial Keralam', in M. A. Oommen (ed.), *Rethinking Development: Kerala's Development Experience*, Vol. I, New Delhi, Institute of Social Sciences, 1999

Haseena, V. A. and Ajims P Mohammed, 'Scope of Education and Dropout among Tribal Students in Kerala -A study of Scheduled tribes in Attappady', *International Journal of Scientific and Research Publications*, Volume 4, Issue 1, January 2014

Houtart, Francois and Genevie Lemercinier, 'Socio-Religious Reform Movements in Kerala: A Reaction to the Capitalist Mode of Production' (Part I), Vol. 6, No. 11, June 1978, *Social Scientist*, pp. 3-34

Houtart, Francois and Genevie Lemercinier, 'Socio-Religious Reform Movements in Kerala: A Reaction to the Capitalist Mode of Production' (Part II), Vol. 6, No. 12, July 1978, *Social Scientist*, pp. 25-43

James, K. S., Demographic Transition and Education in Kerala, *Economic and Political Weekly*, Vol. 30, No. 51, 1995, pp. 3274-3276

Jayasoorya, T. S.,K. V. Beena and Dalia C Jose (2016): Prevalence and Correlates of Tobacco Use among Adolescence in Kerala, India, *Indian Journal of Medical Research*, Vol 144, issue 5, pp. 704-711.

Kooiman, Dick, 'The Gospel of Coffee: Mission, Education and Employment in 19th Century Travancore' *Economic and Political Weekly*, Vol. 19, No. 35, Sep. 1, 1984, pp. 1535-1537+1539-1544

KSTA, *Pothuvidyabhyasa Commission Report*, Thiruvananthapuram: KSTA, 2017

Kumar, N. Ajith and K. K. George, 'Kerala's Education System: From Inclusion to Exclusion?' *Economic and Political Weekly*, Vol. 44, No. 41/42, Oct. 10-23, 2009, pp. 55-61

Kurien, John, 'The Kerala Model its Central Tendency and the Outlier', in G. Parayil (ed), *Kerala–The Development Experience,* London: Zed Books, 2000, pp 178-98.

Lieten, Georges Kristoffel, 'Education, Ideology and Politics in Kerala 1957-59' *Social Scientist*, Vol. 6, No. 2, Sep. 1977, pp. 3-21

Mathew, E T, 'Growth of Literacy Rate in Kerala: State Intervention, Missionary Initiatives and Social Movements', *Economic and Political Weekly*, Vol. 34, No. 39, Sep. 25 - Oct. 1, 1999, pp. 2811-2820

Mukundan, Mullikottu-Veettil and Mark Bray, 'The Decentralisation of Education in Kerala State, India: Rhetoric and Reality' *International Review of Education*, Vol. 50, No. 3/4, Jul., 2004, pp. 223-243

Nair, P. R. Gopinathan and A. Abdul Salim (2002): *Educational Development in India: The Kerala Experience,* (New Delhi: Anmol Publications).

Nair, P. R. Gopinathan, 'Education and Socio-Economic Change in Kerala, 1793-1947', *Social Scientist*, Vol. 4, No. 8, Mar. 1976, pp. 28-43

Pandey, Balaji, 'Educational Development among Scheduled Castes', *Social Scientist*, Vol. 14, No. 2/3, Feb. - Mar. 1986, pp. 59-68

Panikkar, K. N., 'Secular and Democratic Education' *Social Scientist*, Vol. 27, No. 9/10, Sep. - Oct. 1999, pp. 70-75

Rajan, S. Irudaya and P. Mohanachandran (1999): Estimating Infant Mortality in Kerala, *Economic and Political Weekly*, vol 34, no 12, pp. 713-716.

Ramachandran, V. K. (1996): Kerala's Development Experience, In Dreze, Jean and Sen, Amartya (eds.), *Indian Development: Selected Regional Perspectives*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press).

Sunny, Yamuna,'Communalisation of Education' *Economic and Political Weekly*, Vol. 45, No. 23, 2010, pp. 21-24

Tharakan, P. K. Michael, 'Socio-Economic Factors in Educational Development: Case of Nineteenth Century Travancore' (part I), *Economic and Political Weekly*, Vol. 19, No. 45, Nov. 10, 1984, pp. 1913-1928

Tharakan, P. K. Michael, 'Socio-Economic Factors in Educational Development: Case of Nineteenth Century Travancore' (Part II), *Economic and Political Weekly*, Vol. 19, No. 46, Nov. 17, 1984, pp. 1959-1967

Venkatanarayanan, S (2015): 'Economic Liberalisation in 1991 and its Impact on Elementary Education in India', Sage Open, Volume 5, Number 2, pp.1-13

**Gulati Institute of
Finance and Taxation**
Thiruvananthapuram, Kerala