

## **State, Class and Critical Framework of Praxis: The Missing Link in Indian Educational Debates**

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The efficacy of the capitalist machinery of knowledge production from within the conceptual framework promoted and naturalized by the State is reflected in our day-to-day engagements. These engagements reveal the way critical spaces get marginalised or are quite ingeniously manipulated to maintain the status quo. What can reveal it more starkly than the debates on education in India? While the inequality in education and the institutionalisation of this inequality by the State in India (Kumar and Paul, 2006) has been established beyond doubt, the analysis of the situation does not consider the crisis in Indian education as a consequence of the intentions and designs of capital. While the political formations on the Left pay a mere lip-service to education, if at all, in their political programmes the glamorous 'progressivism' of certain sections looks for radical changes within the framework of the existing State. There is an evident fear among them to challenge the status quo, even say that the solutions to the educational crisis lie in the larger working class struggle to defeat the agenda of capital. This fear is not because of a repressive State but emanates out of the understanding and perspective about educational crisis.

Consequences of such a tradition of fear, which results in looking at state institutions as agencies of change, are present before us – since independence in 1947 numerous committees constituted by the State have failed to make any impact on the education policy. The reasons are also evident. Even if some serious commitment went into the working of such committees there has been hardly any political mobilization to complement those efforts forcing the State to at least make provisions for equal educational opportunities through high quality state run schools. Instead, the State has persisted with its policy of not only giving the private capital a free hand in education but has also designed a multi-layered state run schools – the Kendriya Vidyalayas, Navodaya Vidyalayas, etc., managed by the Central government cater to a few select

elite of the society whereas the poor are left at the mercy of normal government schools which have deficient infrastructure and constitute low priority on government agenda. Between all this the issue of control and manipulation of knowledge formation in schools emerged very sharply with the rise of right wing Bharatiya Janata Party's (BJP) ascendance to power in early 1990s. The textbooks, curriculum and 'progressive' intellectuals all were changed/thrown out and a sectarian policy was sought to be put in place. When the United Progressive Alliance (UPA) government came to power<sup>2</sup> with the Congress Party at helm of affairs with the crucial support of the Left these things were addressed immediately but what has been scuttled is the larger agenda of equity. Within this background of Indian education's history an effort is made here to look at some of the contemporary debates and tendencies in Indian educational discourse. This paper does not provide an extensive review of how educationists look at the educational crisis (it can be found in Kumar, 2006) but it seeks to address the larger common thread running through their ideas, of evading the location of education in the political economy of capitalism.

### **A Brief Overview of Contemporary Educational Debates**

Educational debates in India during the last decade need to be located in: (1) the context of rise of right wing politics; and (2) in the context of concerns for persistent illiteracy.<sup>3</sup> While the former was characterized by BJP playing a pro-active role in changing curriculum, providing textbooks an overtly Hindu nationalist and pro-globalization overtone and controlling the academic institutions through appointing right wing academics, the latter debate is grounded in overall context of neo-liberal policy implications which denies the poor and deprived population of formal schooling in the name of literacy and target oriented programs. The Left-Centre combine opposed the BJP policies in the first debate on grounds that it amounted to institutionalized spread of hatred and communal fascism while the latter debate involves an overwhelming support for neo-liberal agenda due to absence of an effective educational agenda taken up by the Indian Left and the opposition camp constituting of only a miniscule section of intellectuals. When general elections put Congress Party, with indispensable support of Left, in power the 'progressive, democratic and secular' (which is a much widely used class neutral nomenclature

representing the anti-BJP forces) intellectuals rejoiced with joy, sliding gradually into a state of contentment, at the victory.

After the new United Progressive Alliance (UPA) government ascended to power, education again acquired tremendous significance. In the context of first debate, academic institutions saw new bosses, Central Advisory Board on Education (CABE)<sup>4</sup>, the highest advisory body in education in India, was constituted, and curriculum reversal process began. In the context of the second debate, things remained largely unchanged, with most of the intellectuals belonging to miniscule group getting either co-opted into state apparatuses or being marginalized by the State or their own ex-comrades in arms. What concerns us here is primarily this second debate, with references to the first one as well because it is impossible to fragment the two and see them as isolated constructs as is generally done.

Without going into the detailed history of debates in Indian education one may conclude that the debates sharpened in post-liberalization era, when private capital became pro-active and state was relegated into the process of being a secondary player in social sector. It is never a direct policy statement that brings such a major decision into force but it is rather a process that puts these ideological moorings into action. The process can be better understood if the trajectory of Indian State and private capital is explored critically. The recent demands for the reinstatement of the welfarist traits of State have, however, failed to locate their demands as well as the changes that the Indian State experienced within a historico-structural framework of analysis. This analysis needs to take into consideration how the State in India has evolved, especially in the post-independent phase and how the character of the ruling class has also altered in due course. It is interesting to look at this trajectory of Indian State – from the days when the Indian bourgeoisie in its initial stages, immediately after Independence in 1947, drew up the Bombay Plan that asked the State to manage the heavy industries, contain foreign finance and leave those industries to the private sector which they could manage (see Mukherjee 2000). We find the increasing pressure from the Indian bourgeoisie mounting by 1980 to open up the economy, easy many restrictions and provide much greater freedom to operate (see Kumar, 2006a).

The developments in education need to be understood in the same manner (for a brief overview of India's educational history (see Kumar 2006b). It was the 'historic'

Kothari Commission (or Education Commission 1964-1966) that recommended the Common School System<sup>5</sup> (but without any significant recommendation to curb the private schools). The education policy or the government documents after that reiterated the need to have a Common School System till the National Policy on Education (NPE), 1986. Thereafter, the concept has occasionally been paid lip service. Now the education system is highly tilted against the poor and in favour of those who can afford to buy it. There are layers of schools within the government schooling system such as the schools with best facilities, like the chain of Kendriya Vidyalayas and Navodaya Vidyalayas, and the schools with worst facilities the chain of normal formal as well as non-formal education centres and schools. In this extremely strenuous and long trajectory we stand at a critical juncture where the private capital not only co-opts the voices of dissent but also transforms this dissent into a within-system-reform-seeker.

The education debate today comprises, on one hand, of weak and sporadic voices against neo-liberal assault, while on the other hand of the overwhelming state apparatuses and intellectuals-activists supported by private capital which sees education as enhancement of human capital. Recent years have seen state adopting an apparently 'ad hoc policy' of meeting targets in education sector, as part of a global strategy of neo-liberal capital to bring education more under strict control. The formal government schools are being neglected and delegitimized on grounds of being ineffective and "redundant" (Dalmia: 2005). In Uttar Pradesh, Bihar and Rajasthan<sup>6</sup> no new government school has been set up in the decade of 1990s in the urban areas, thus giving space to private capital to flourish in education sector even if quality of education is poor (De, Noronha & Samson: 2002). The teachers' unionization is being targeted and government school teachers are being abhorred for their absenteeism (EFA 2005 Report; Lancaster: 2004, also see Bajpai, and Goyal: 2004 on issue of teacher absenteeism responsible for absence of functional literacy in children attending schools) and the State is shrugging off its responsibility in name of financial crunch, which has been often challenged (Sadgopal: 2004: 50-52). The idea of public-private partnership appears as the most conspicuous method of inducing full-fledged privatization in education as outlined by many government documents (Government of India: 2001a: 39, para 2.2.70; Government of India: 2004). Thus we find

overwhelming emphasis on ‘alternative methods’ of education (which is in fact an attractive nomenclature for poor quality parallel streams of education).

There is a vast majority of population which faces discrimination and is not in position to scale up the ladder of educational attainment like the rich sections. Among such sections we have poor dalits (Nambissan: 1995; Nambissan 2006) and girl child from rural areas and poor households (Nambissan: 2004). We find that the poor, seen as those who cannot afford to purchase education (see Table 1), are getting deprived of education more and more as they cannot afford it. The National Family and Health Survey (NFHS) clearly shows how many children (and more so in the case of girls) drop out of schools due to economic reasons (IIPS and ORC-Macro, 2000). It has been argued by many that despite the government’s declaration that the education is free it is not really so (Tilak 1996; Kumar 2006c).

**Table 1: Percentage Distribution of persons aged 7 and above by level of education and MPCE Class (Rural and Urban)**

**Rural India**

			Level of Education Among Literate					
MPCE* Class (Rs)	not literate	Literate	Literate below primary	Primary	Middle	Secondary	Higher secondary	Graduate and above
0-225	65.1	34.9	52.1	24.6	16.3	4.9	1.4	0.6
225-255	60.4	39.6	50.0	26.3	16.2	4.8	2.3	0.8
255-300	57.3	42.7	48.0	26.0	16.6	6.3	2.1	0.9
300-340	52.9	47.1	44.6	24.2	19.7	7.6	2.5	1.1
340-380	49.2	50.8	42.3	25.6	20.1	7.9	2.8	1.6
380-420	46.8	53.2	39.8	24.6	21.4	9.0	3.6	1.5
420-470	43.0	57.0	37.0	25.8	22.3	9.6	3.7	1.6
470-525	40.5	59.5	33.1	25.2	23.7	11.3	4.7	2.0
525-615	37.2	62.8	30.9	24.4	24.2	12.6	5.4	2.7
615-775	32.2	67.8	25.2	23.6	25.2	14.7	6.9	4.3
775-950	27.6	72.4	21.7	20.9	24.9	18.4	8.1	5.9
950+	21.0	79.0	15.9	18.2	22.3	20.5	12.2	11.0
all	44.0	56.0	34.6	24.1	22.0	11.4	5.0	3.0

**Urban India**

			Level of Education Among Literate					
MPCE Class (Rs)	not literate	Literate	Literate below primary	Primary	Middle	Secondary	Higher secondary	Graduate and above
0-300	48.5	51.5	38.8	25.8	22.1	8.2	4.1	1.2
300-350	44.4	55.6	40.5	27.0	20.3	7.6	3.1	1.6
350-425	36.0	64.0	35.5	24.5	22.0	10.6	4.2	3.3
425-500	30.2	69.8	31.2	24.5	23.5	12.3	5.3	3.2
500-575	26.2	73.8	26.4	22.9	24.4	14.9	6.9	4.2
575-665	20.3	79.7	22.3	22.7	24.1	15.9	8.4	6.4
665-775	15.7	84.3	19.3	19.6	24.3	18.3	10.1	8.4
775-915	13.8	86.2	16.5	17.9	22.4	20.6	12.1	10.7
915-1120	10.1	89.9	13.3	15.9	20.5	20.7	13.9	15.6
1120-1500	7.1	92.9	11.1	11.9	17.1	21.9	16.0	22.0
1500-1925	4.0	96.0	8.5	9.7	14.3	19.0	16.7	31.8
1925+	3.1	96.9	7.0	7.3	10.0	15.7	16.1	43.9
all	202.0	79.8	20.2	18.4	20.7	16.9	10.7	13.2

\*MPCE: Monthly Per Capita Expenditure

Source: NSSO (2001: 18-19)

The 'alternative' non-formal education has appeared as panacea of all educational ills in such a situation. The Government of India, which had begun the much critiqued District Primary Education Programme of multi-grade teaching<sup>8</sup> (Kumar, Priyam & Saxena: 2001a; Kumar, Priyam & Saxena: 2001b), launched the Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan (SSA) to operationalize the commitment that it has made through 86<sup>th</sup> Constitutional Amendment to make education a fundamental right<sup>7</sup>. However, this operationalization has been plagued with problems that will have long-term effects because the teachers are poorly paid and are appointed on contract (Government of India: 2000), and even the infrastructural facilities are deficient. Instead of regularizing the government schools, new schools for the drop outs were opened up, thereby sustaining the distinction between those who can afford to purchase education

and those who cannot. This reveals the direct link between education and the market forces.

These conditions have sharpened the contradictions in Indian education debate. However, those who critique the education policies and state withdrawal are very few and a larger brigade of intellectuals-activists are seen going along with the system in name of 'viability' 'do-ability' or 'something is better than nothing'. Those who have been arguing for state control and management of social sector demand complete state control and funding of a common, uniform pattern of education of equitable quality for all, while those who go along the system have been supporting the parallel systems of education for poor and girl child on grounds of resource crunch. Hence, what we have is a dissenting camp which calls for reinstatement of a welfarist state invoking the Kothari Commission<sup>9</sup> and pre-independence Sargent Committee<sup>10</sup> reports but with many modifications such as bringing private schools as well within the ambit of Common Schools etc. Though even this camp does not directly and sharply question the character of the state, the other camp goes all out in support of neo-liberal state. The former group of intellectual-activists differentiate themselves by (a) questioning the current system; and (b) creating spaces for dissent. However, even their 'struggle' gets limited to being a within-system call for certain reforms. The significance of their call lies in the challenge that they momentarily pose to neo-liberal capital. This challenge lacks an anti-systemic basis, consequently becoming a collective enterprise that oscillates between two forms of capitalism - welfare state and a neoliberal state. They play on the rhetoric of multiple subjectivities (such as caste, race, religion, tribe, gender etc.), thereby committing the same mistake of ignoring the social classes-education correlation. Here it becomes essential to posit that the social relation, the interaction amongst social classes, is determined by the location of each social class in the production process and it is this placement that explains the relationship between them and education. This hierarchical location determines the relationship of these classes with the commodified economy within which schools, as a commodity, are placed.

At this juncture, critical educationists represent a major break in analysis when they argue that "education plays a key role in the perpetuation of the capital relation..." (Allman, McLaren and Rikowski: 2003). Their analysis becomes more so relevant to

us to understand the Indian situation. Looking at education as an effective instrument against exploitation they argue that

...education is an aspect of the class relation; it is involved in generating the living commodity, labour-power whose consumption in the labour process is a necessary condition for the social existence of the class relation between labour and capital in contemporary capitalism. This is tragic, but also yields educators a special sort of social power...

because education has the potential to initiate a process of radical transformation.

In this way, education can be foundation of a politics of human resistance to the capitalization of humanity and also one of the forces playing a key role in the development of forms of labour *not* tied to the value-form (Ibid: 2003).

### **Educational Transformation or the Politics of Co-option and Triumph of Capital**

When UPA government took over, only one of the two debates mentioned above saw resolution as the communal Hindu religious content in curriculum were questioned and deleted. The neo-liberal principles of state withdrawal continued and, in fact, Arjun Singh, the Human Resource Minister, asked the provinces to speed up their SSA<sup>11</sup> programs. Any demand which could have improved the educational status of the poor classes and Dalits (the Scheduled Castes constitute the lowest rung of caste hierarchy), who lack the purchasing power to survive in the market, has been scuttled quite assiduously. There was no change in policy as far as neglecting government schools was concerned and the principle of private capital dictation continued unabated. There were some initiatives to hand over the non-performing government schools to private bodies in states such as Punjab where the Congress Party government decided to hand over management of government schools to private bodies (Dogra: 2005: 22) and in Delhi where the Municipal Corporation of Delhi started working on a policy to hand over management of its schools to transnational capital (Jha, 2005). Many schools are being seen as possible venues of a shopping mall, with one floor for school (Jha, 2004). Though the State is quite apprehensive about the possible opposition to such projects, which has in fact delayed the process, but it has been moving ahead with its agenda of providing more space to private capital in different ways. For instance, the draft Approach Paper for the 11<sup>th</sup> Five Year Plan talks about implementing voucher system because it “can help promote both equity and quality in schooling in areas where adequate private supply exists,

provided that this is combined with strict requirements on private schools to give freeships to students in economic need” (GOI, 2006a: 48).

*A more direct understanding and commitment of Government of India to private capital, argued in position paper on allowing private companies in secondary education, was revealed when it said that “education has therefore become a commercial activity and it is time to recognize it as such. Profit making is after all not entirely undesirable. The common Indian today is willing to pay for quality education” (Position paper forwarded to CABE committee for consideration on 22.2.2005 by the Under Secretary, MHRD, Government of India).* This unrelenting support to private capital need not be a cause of astonishment because it merely indicates the direction in which capitalism moves – from a welfarist regime to a neo-liberal state, which is acting as the most efficient agent of private capital. And if the development of the character of Indian State is looked at as a process one finds a linear progressive trajectory of capitalism.

The analysis of Indian State has been not very convincing among the Indian educationists. The problems raised have not been located as emerging out of the particular form of State that we have. Their ‘hopes’ are generally from the ‘governments’, i.e., the executive, which comes into existence every five years after Parliamentary elections. They are yet to realise that “the power of the state is a permanent power” (Mandel, 1969) as reflected in the unchanged institutions that remain always at the same place in a cosmetically altered way, if at all. The absence of such an understanding not only results into the absence of identifying capitalism as the enemy but it also generates a false hope that things can improve if the government desires. Methodologically, this also, knowingly or unknowingly, strengthens the TINA argument that ‘There is no Alternative to capitalism’. While this limitation gets manifested in lamentations such as

It is a matter of serious concern that the CMP<sup>12</sup> of the UPA government also continues to suffer from several of the lacunae and contradictions that have afflicted policy formulation since independence (Sadgopal 2006: 127);

it also results in understanding which rejects the need itself to question the intentions of the State as Krishna Kumar does when he writes:

We may well ask why the state does not fulfil its constitutional obligation. To ask such a question is to get caught in a language game. Isn't the state an expression of the mind of the society it serves? To distinguish between state and government invites a similar fallacy. Indeed, so long as we analyse the problem mainly by searching for the culprit, we won't get very far (Kumar, 2006d).

Those who have been asking not to engage with the issue of the character of State and its linkages with the policies lack the basic perceptible knowledge about how the government has been treating the social sector when it decides about its expenditure. It has been the ignored sector as the figures below explain. Despite the education cess of 2% that the government levied on every tax payer the money for education sector has been declining (see Table 2) leave aside the question of where is the cess collected going. One needs to ask the basic questions: why is social sector accorded such a low priority when we all know that the poor cannot afford the market in this neo-liberal age?

Table 2: Trends of social sector expenditure by General Govt. (Centre and State Govt. combined)

Items	2000-01	2001-02	2002-03	2003-04	2004-05	2005-06
	Actual	Actual	Actual	Actual	RE	BE
As a proportion of GDP:	(In percent)					
Total Expenditure	28.05	28.26	28.77	32.27	28.97	27.76
Expenditure on social sector	6.25	6.04	5.92	5.68	5.98	5.81
Education	3.17	2.98	2.95	2.78	2.87	2.81
Health	1.32	1.25	1.28	1.26	1.32	1.35
Others	1.74	1.8	1.68	1.63	1.78	1.64

Source: GOI (2006b)

The government figures have pointed out how impossible it has been for people lacking purchasing power to buy this commodity called education. But those figures are seldom referred to by the experts (even the dissenting voices) to show that poverty and education are directly related (Government of India: 2001b). Poverty is merely one among many subjectivities, cited by critics, as responsible for lack of educational opportunities. Perhaps, the problem emerges from the larger question of absence of class as a category of analysis.

When Government of India enlivened the educational debate in country much to the chagrin of many critics it was nothing but a simple example of farcical debates that are launched by the system in order to create spaces for co-option of dissent as well as to create consensus. Formation of seven committees under CAGE to look at the most basic tenets of education in the country generated a hope about some profound changes that the government wished to initiate. Hopes were also generated because many of the new social movement representatives as well as many others who have been considered 'secular and progressive' were nominated to these committees. Many organizations and 'concerned' individuals began interacting with these committees, arguing to include elements of equal educational opportunity for all Indians. Constituted towards the end of 2004 these committees have already submitted their reports and recommendations.

Right from the beginning contradictions persisted within the government. For instance, while on one hand committees were looking at the issue of common school system, inclusive education and education of girls as well as to frame a Free and Compulsory Education Bill, there were strong directions from the MHRD (Ministry of Human Resource Development) to increase the pace of SSA implementation. Similarly, two simultaneous exercises of CAGE committees and National Curriculum Framework by NCERT (National Council for Educational Research and Training)<sup>13</sup> were underway despite that they were dealing with overlapping issues such as that of textbooks, culture education, girl education, inclusive education etc. Higher education had a similar experience when the Government of India called a meeting of state education ministers in Bangalore on 10-11 January 2005, to discuss issue of Foreign Universities while there were two higher education committees on autonomy and financing working on their recommendations in CAGE. In brief, State has been quite forthright in its agenda. It has been pursuing it without any consideration while instituting committees to serve as eyewash. Ultimately, when the reports came out they were endorsed in CAGE meeting except the Free and Compulsory Education Bill, which was stalled because some members of the CAGE opposed its content and objected to the procedure followed by the Chairperson of the Committee<sup>14</sup> (The Hindustan Times: 2005; The Indian Express: 2005; The Hindu: 2005).

These reports do not suggest any clear cut radical change from the existing pattern. There is no commitment to universalize secondary education, make Common School System a reality, create mechanisms to tackle issues of textbook controversy etc. Their contribution is limited to suggestions for more institutions of control. The enhancement of democratic capacities or engagement with people of all classes at all levels for a more effective and enriched educational process, which becomes more effective as an instrument of control during times of communal fascism (i.e., the right wing upsurge which bases itself on religious hatred and sectarianism), is nowhere suggested. The expectations went down with a big thud when the HRD Minister reminded towards the end of the meet that CABE is just an advisory body, therefore, as a subtext, not binding on the government. Thus, we are back at square one. The function has been fulfilled with many voices of dissent becoming part of the state apparatuses and the zeal of popular mobilization subdued for some more time. This subdued possibility of mobilization is attributable to the idea that changes in basic state structures (equality in education implies that) are myopically sought to be achieved through a fight on the terrain of well entrenched capitalist state structures.

The exercise of committees and the desire to effect long-term changes through state apparatuses goes against the logic of control and domination exercised by capitalist state through such apparatuses. After all, the state will never allow its bodies to act against its larger mandate of facilitating private sector penetration in profit making sectors. Even if the argument is made about the possible advantages of such 'opportunities' when the balance of class forces is tilted against the State, the situation, currently in India, is clearly not such. The booming economy with the fast pace of economic growth, the expanding riches of the Indian private capital and the expansion of earning opportunities for the middle class through BPOs<sup>15</sup> (Business Process Outsourcing) has not allowed any crisis to confront the State. Thousands of slum dwellers are evicted from Delhi, Calcutta, Bombay and other cities, public sector undertakings are being privatised, cost of living is becoming more and more expensive, informalisation of work force is the order of the day, pensions are being done away with and yet there is no movement. Even the Left, on whose support rests the Central Government, is becoming a part of it and then one recalls how Engels cautioned against joining governments with the bourgeoisie because even if the communist parties think otherwise (though many people would say that they no

longer think ‘otherwise’) they become partners in whatever the bourgeoisie does as part of the government (Engels, 1894). Though, there are signs of distress at the increasing gap between the rich and the poor it is yet to produce a crisis of such a large magnitude that would threaten the existence of private capital.

Hence, what we have seen historically is that even if some committee reports have been radical for a government to digest it has tried to delegitimize them by instituting a review committee or by ignoring it, as in the case of Ramamurthy Committee. Interestingly, there is an inbuilt contradiction in the whole exercise of committees – it decides policies about people without allowing their participation in the process. (Even if it allows participation it is limited to the select regular crowd in the metros and state capitals. *It is interesting to recall in this context that participation is seldom seen as mobilization in development discourse. The development discourse in India looks at overcoming conflicts, which include class conflict or conflicts generated as result of the inequitable social relations that capitalism produces. Hence, even if mobilizations occur on issues of educational or health issues they try to ‘bridge’ these conflicts and work on agenda of harmony and peace.*) And the most serious flaw with this exercise is that it entices us into mistaking a small section of self-appointed intellectuals as ‘people’. There has to be a process by way of which people – the workers and peasants – get involved in the process of policy making. But this will be a difficult proposition for a system that bases itself on the ideas of a centralized power (the consolidated power of capital) exercising its whims and fancies through different mechanisms, veiling its hegemonic agenda, dexterously enough to be taken as “progressive” and “democratic”, while subtly pushing the agenda of dominance of private capital.

Participation is essentially about engagements at *horizontal level*, a dialogue that does not *deliver* but which gives rise to opinions, views and actions. This horizontality is to be built in the interests of a class, though, if necessary, drawing in support from other classes as well. With such a vision, it would dissolve hierarchies, create working class unity, pressurise the State and may even compel it to decommodify vital components of social sector. It is a contest that bases itself in the material condition of the participants and so the responses are more vivid. This also entails whether the initiating agencies have a reach to the diverse sections of population or not. For

instance, the debates which have ensued on National Curriculum Framework (NCF) do not have a design to reach the landless agricultural workers, the most affected by the rapaciously aggressive private capital and its education policies. As the debate fails to emerge from diverse socio-economic and geographical locations, for which not only the state (due to its character) but also agencies claiming to be their representatives are responsible, the voice of the class which accesses the instruments of info-power at various levels becomes the voice of people. For instance, when asked whether debates are generated on issues of such vital importance such as Right to Education, the State says yes because it is put on the website and has been circulated to the different state governments and departments. But what actually happens is something else – the majority of Indians lack access to internet and secondly, the proposals such as the Draft Free and Compulsory Education Bill (FCEB) remains within the confines of a small group of administrators or of educationists who have access to the documents. Those who have access to information exercise the power (but not all having this access act because the fate of FCEB does not affect them as they operate in market and can purchase education for their children) and decide the framework of the kind of education that India should have through NCF or FCEB. Hence, the apparent façade of a democratised exercise becomes not only conceptually but also practically problematic. Participation in the process set in motion by the State, hence, is reduced to a miniscule section which is already represented and is largely in tune with capital's expansion plan due to its aspirations and *aspiration driven actions*. If mobilization is to be seen as tool for ensuring participation and enhancing democratic capacities of people, it cannot be implemented by a neo-liberal state. If, at all, people arguing for 'within system radical initiatives' believe that radical changes can be brought about using the state apparatuses, their effort will be futile unless accompanied by larger popular mobilization, which will represent the aspirations and demands of a larger population in a democratic polity. If followed with sincerity, it will culminate into a *horizontal dialogue* instead of current practice of a *vertical dialogue*, which, despite all hullabaloo, the demand for putting the reports of CIBE or NCERT for debate will not be able to achieve because of lack of any such framework.

The committees, for instance those appointed by NCERT to make a New Curriculum Framework and those appointed by CIBE to look into the most fundamental aspects

of Indian education, became a major source of *hope* and *inspiration*, especially in the age of decline of social movements as sources of alternatives. This decline is about the marginalisation of movements that argue against the system, capitalism, and seek to ground their understanding and action in a profound critique of nature of capitalist system. We are being witness to momentous and ‘cutting-across-class’ mobilisations (many a times seen as (and literally) ‘celebrations’ in form of World Social Forum, Asian Social Forum etc. The sense of ‘hope’, generally touted as popular expression, represents the sentiment of a section of intelligentsia and political leaders who fail to act as mediators between the deprived sections and state so that the popular mobilisation gets crystallised and can evolve effectively. The demands emerge from this *middle ground* which assumes the role of ‘wise’, sensitive representatives of people. The business of delegitimization and legitimization is undertaken by these bodies. What is knowledge and what comprises knowledge is decided sitting in committees, which further crystallizes the process of alienating the actual producers of knowledge from their own product. This alienation is part of the strategy of ruling elite to create structures of hegemony, the most apparent being the division between those who appropriate knowledge, as the ruling elite, and those who create it. Hence, the issue of any measure being made a Fundamental Right that would empower the actual producers of knowledge is a distant possibility. Similarly, the processes of democratization within capitalism also have logic. The process of democratization, created through nomenclatures of ‘decentralization’ and ‘participation’, are limited and limiting. They are always designed in such a way that the benefits of democratization can at best be availed by the local elite. In the case of India over past one decade or so there has been devolution of power from the centralised elite at the ‘centre’ to the localised elites, all being linked and part of the larger scheme of things. It is relevant to examine the way power is structured and manifested in societies. That is one of the reasons why the discourses on participation and decentralization do not dwell on questions of class contradictions within a community which is rather portrayed as a homogenous collective.

The concerns being raised about why the committees were not considering the principles which are laid down in the constitution or why is it trying to give further credence to the 86<sup>th</sup> Amendment, despite many of its drawbacks, are better explained if a historico-structural analysis of capitalist development and education policy in

India is undertaken. But, quite contrarily, the tendency has been to look at the different aspects of everyday life as distinct, fragmented parts of the reality. The approach can be termed an offshoot of 'functionalist' typology. Functionalism focuses on maintaining "Stability in societies" and does not talk about structural change even if certain elements become dysfunctional, which can be corrected. Every element is seen as having a role to play (Hill & Cole 2004: 145). But functionalism also entails autonomy of different elements which otherwise integrate to sustain a social system. Hence, it is about, at a much finer level, different parts having distinct functions but aimed at maintaining a particular kind of system. The parts are attributed roles and functions and therefore also a kind of autonomy to effect change, for example education has a role and it is seen as an autonomous element that can lead to transformations in society (but within capitalism and not outside it). It is relevant to reflect on this typology while we try to understand the possibilities of a social movement against the state's anti-people policies. Due to the tendency to look at education as an autonomous unit, divorced from the overarching political economy of the system, we are unable to explain why the State, despite being 'driven' by the 'progressive' and 'democratic' forces active 'within' it, follows an anti-people program in the education sector. The fragmentation hampers unity which is not only important to understand the dynamics of capitalism and education within capitalism but also to foster a strong movement against the system for radical transformation. The majority of Indian educationists do not realise this, for they look at education as outside the labour-capital relationship/conflict. Education has a function, to create consensus in society but it has the capacity to produce the anti-systemic movement as well, and capitalism realises this. Therefore, it fragments the reality and gradually even the oppositional forces come to agree to this fragmentation.

System has its own mechanisms to co-opt and make the voice of dissent its own. And it is extremely difficult to stay away from this systemic impulse. There are nonetheless people who completely denounce the system and try not to 'become a part of it'. But it is too complex a matter to be resolved so easily. The option available is that of maintaining a highly critical and clear approach to participation in the system. Problems arise when our criticality ceases to function and we assume that the system's voice is our voice because we are inside it. And because we are "progressive" and always push for people's agenda, the agenda of the State is also

pro-people. This is what generally happens to people who, due to lack of understanding about education-state-class-labour vs. capital correlation due to their past orientations and material formations and get integrated within the system. For instance, historically class analysis of Indian education policy has been absent. And it is this absence that leads to tendencies of 'middle-path' approach or 'changing the system from within'. It is in this process of co-option that the ideas of 'feasibility' and 'doability' gradually emerge as an excuse for furthering the alternatives that the system offers. Hence, in India, the SSA is taken as the only option because making formal education available to all appears impossible due to its massive cost and other logistical difficulties. The acceptance by the 'progressive' and 'democratic' intelligentsia of the measures by capitalism emerges from their unwillingness to question the system and from their understanding that capitalism, though based on rampant rule of capital, does not pose any threat to welfare state. This group strives for within system reform. Whatever has been happening in the Indian education sector and the educational debate in particular brings us to a fundamental question of whether state can be treated as a terrain of contestation or not.

### **Possibilities of Change and the Misconceptions about a Radical Capitalist State**

Fighting the State from within is an argument forwarded for quite long and only those naïve to the functioning of capitalist state can buy it. Such an argument bases itself on certain understanding of the character of the State, one of them being its (State's) ability to transform radically *even* on issues which run counter to the interest of the private capital such as taking 'education' out of the ambit of market, treating it not as a commodity. One cannot deny the possibility of such a move but it is dependent on a variety of factors such as the nature and extent of political movement pressurising the State to do that as well as the stage of capitalist development. The State in capitalism serves the capitalist ruling class cannot be refuted so easily and Saad-Filho writes that

the reasons are easy to understand. First, the state is *constitutionally* committed to capitalism by custom and law, and state institutions are geared towards, and have been historically shaped by, the development of markets, wage employment and profit-making activities. Second, the staffing and policy priorities of the state institutions are heavily influenced by the interest groups represented in and through them, where capital tends to be hegemonic. Third, the reproduction of the state relies heavily on the fortunes of capital, because state revenue depends upon the profitability of enterprise and the level of employment. Fourth, the

economic and political power of the capitalists, and their influence upon culture, language and habits, is overwhelming, especially in democratic societies (Saad-Filho 2003:10).

Another significant lacuna in such an understanding emanates from the myopic understanding about the way State functions. It uses its various instruments to establish and sustain its hegemony. For instance, as Gramsci writes while dealing with the issue of law,

the State must be conceived of as an “educator”, in as much as it tends precisely to create a new type or level of civilisation. Because one is acting essentially on economic forces, reorganising and developing the apparatus of economic production, creating a new structure, the conclusion must not be drawn that superstructural factors should be left to themselves, to develop spontaneously, to a haphazard and sporadic germination. The State, in this field, too, is an instrument of “rationalisation”, of acceleration and of Taylorisation. It operates according to a plan, urges, incites, solicits, and “punishes”... The Law is the repressive and negative aspect of the entire positive, civilising activity undertaken by the State (Gramsci: 2004:247).

One may change the form of capital appropriation, from aggressive to somewhat mild, after pressure generated by substantial public mobilization. Even that is extremely difficult (look at the way Delhi government is showing the way in standing by private capital through privatizing road maintenance, electricity, water and public utilities among other things despite so much of pressure from its own Member of Legislative Assemblies and its partners, the Resident Welfare Associations). Or for that matter everyone knows how subsidies continue to be curtailed, disinvestment continues, privatization of basic necessities such as education, health, electricity and water continues unabated, and labouring conditions and social security remains a mirage despite the pressure put up by ‘progressive’ Left from within the alliance, which is in power. There is a need to realize that at this juncture the side effects of ‘revolt from within’ are quite perceptible and it will lead to nothing more than further bludgeoning of any possible resistance and more deeper co-option into the system.

In fact, in India there is a section of intellectuals-activists committed to anti-liberalization project on grounds that it has brought tremendous immiserization to common people. This collectivity, fragmented at one level, does not owe any ‘political ‘allegiance’ and comprise of people from civil society organizations, members from communist parties, in their individual capacities, and some

independent progressive people. The voices of 'dissent' in education are also 'organized', if at all, on the same lines. A notable characteristic of this collectivity is that its analysis is seldom grounded in class relation because of which it remains a fluid body of 'progressive' people. This dissent has certain noticeable features, such as (1) it does not challenge the State; (2) State is not seen as representing the interests of ruling class, and is, therefore, attributed a 'democratic' and 'impartial' imagery; (3) State is rather seen as a change agent (through its system of committees and commissions), which would imply at a juncture that it would act against the interests of capital; (when committees are expected to make recommendations against privatization and then State is expected to implement them); (4) (hence) it does not see State and market as related; (5) globalization of capital is accepted but with the clause of 'human face' as if capital will give up its aggressively expansionist innate character; and (6) education is seen as an autonomous powerful change agent unaffected by factors such as division of labor or as located outside the labor-capital conflict.

It needs to be realized that "the emergence of the State is a product of the social division of labor" (Mandel, 1969) and in capitalism today it represents the bourgeoisie carrying forward its interests. It has been generally believed by liberal and social democratic intellectuals that State "stands as an impartial arbiter above the selfish contention of classes and deals justly with the respective claims of diverse "interest groups". This exalted notion of a classless state presiding over a pure democracy, based on the consent of the people, rather than engaged in the defence of the property, rights of the ruling class, is the core of bourgeois-democratic ideology" (Novack, 1969). The dangers in the Indian context get manifested in a variety of ways, for instance 'class' as the category of analysing deprivation loses out to the so-called complex realities of multiple subjectivities such as religious, linguistic minorities, castes, tribe, etc. There is a need to acknowledge today that education is available to anybody who can buy it in the market place. The liberal-democratic intellectuals (and voice of the major Left included) forget that 'equality' in capitalism implies war on property relations, building a collective resistance to the whole ideology of reproduction of status quo and organising, at all levels, on the common agenda of anti-capital, anti-market order of things whether it is inside Parliament or outside on streets. And if this is forgotten or ignored and if class struggle would mean not

attacking repression of working class struggle, privatisation of airports, pension, schools, public health system, etc., just in the name of saving India from the more reactionary section of ruling class – the right wing avatar of capital, the Bhartiya Janata Party – then there is a serious need to introspect into the class politics that one claims to practise (for more on see Kumar 2002 & 2004). In the ultimate analysis, “every state is the organized political expression, the instrument of the decisive class in the economy” (ibid).

The State is the biased arbitrator, which, as shown by Gramsci, maintains the status quo through means of coercion and consent. It becomes extremely difficult to treat it as a terrain of contestation with the hope of effecting radical transformations. Unless there is a crisis of capitalism<sup>16</sup> and there are internal contradictions within the ruling class that comes up occasionally, the discourses, debates and dialogues are merely ‘entertained’ by the State, and that also till it not harms the interests of capital accumulation. Hence, there are certain implicit dangers in this strategy. If state is treated as the terrain of contestation it would imply that (1) the character of state is not explored and challenged in ultimate analysis; (2) the ‘dissent’ becomes a part of the discourse initiated by state and it will function within the parameters provided by it and we have ample examples in Indian context wherein the most significant dissenters in education have become part of state bodies such as CIBE or NCERT; and (3) the battle for equality (as in case of education) remains limited to a few selected people located near the power-centre because it is not transformed into a political battle leading to social movements due to absence of its devolution to the affected masses through medium of radical anti-capitalist groups. Instead, what looms large in context of the future of voices of dissent is the fear that McLaren expresses about the fate of critical pedagogy in USA.

Today critical pedagogy is no longer the dangerous critic of free market liberal education that it once was. Rather, it has become so absorbed by the cosmopolitanized liberalism of the postmodernized left that it no longer serves as a trenchant challenge to capital and U.S. economic and military hegemony (McLaren and Jaramillo: 2003: 79).

While some believe in radical changes through state apparatuses, some believe that capturing state power will resolve the problems. They forget that both the methods will be failure unless the effort is supplemented consistently by popular mobilization

on issues and a critical perception of the resistance movements. One of the prime reasons for the failure to weed out communalism in India, apart from its analytical aspects, has been the idea that it can be fought through the State. Unless anti-communalism becomes a part of popular consciousness, which is possible only through popular mobilization, communalism will be used time and again by India's ruling class. Looking at the question of fighting through State Sam Gindin observes that

Conventional wisdom has it that the national state, whether we like it or not, is no longer a relevant site of struggle. At one level, this is true. If our notion of the state is that of an institution which left governments can 'capture' and push in a different direction, experience suggests this will contribute little to social justice. But if our goal is to transform the state into an instrument for popular mobilisation and the development of democratic capacities, to bring our economy under popular control and restructure our relationships to the world economy, then winning state power would manifest the worst nightmares of the corporate world. When we reject strategies based on winning through undercutting others and maintain our fight for dignity and justice nationally, we can inspire others abroad and create new spaces for their own struggles. (Quoted by McLaren and Jaramillo: 2003: 85)

### **Building Contours of a Movement!**

Problems before the education sector in India are massive in magnitude. It is reflected in the way discourses on education have been moving, transforming the knowledge agenda into a suitable instrument of sustaining the rule of capital. It is reflected in the way curriculum is designed and pedagogy as a whole manipulated. Bourdieu demonstrated this when he argued that schooling, or what we generally term as the education process, the concepts that initiate the process of schooling, pedagogy, the curriculum and other components and ideas that go into making of the system, reproduces inequality through enforcing formal equity in schooling as a mere cloak. His analysis penetrates deeper into structures and processes of education when he argues that "even when choices seem to follow simply from taste or vocational sense, they nevertheless indicate the roundabout effects of objective conditions", which are unequal (Bourdieu: 1976). He recognized the way power imposes meanings and makes them 'legitimate' through concealing the power relations, which constitute the basis of 'pedagogic action' that sustains the ruling ideas. He held that

In any given social formation the cultural arbitrary which the power relations between the groups or classes making up that social formation put into the dominant position within the system of cultural arbitraries is the one which most fully, though always indirectly expresses the objective interests (material and symbolic) of the dominant groups or classes (Bourdieu & Passeron: 1990: 9).

What Bourdieu stopped at was clearly identifying the enemy and beginning the battle. Now the question to be addressed is where would the battle begin? Should we just lie back 'branding' some as reformists on the ground that unless changes are systemic in nature there is no relevance of demanding equal educational opportunities for all children? Or should we become part of the efforts of State which uses the 'progressive' voices to generate images of being 'democratic'? Can there be a middle path between these contradictions? I would say no because it would entail looking at State as immutable and would also negate the possibility of struggles for systemic transformation. What needs to be emphasized is that the struggle for equal educational opportunities is the struggle against capitalism in the same way as Saad-Filho considers the struggle for democracy as struggle against capitalism. (Saad-Filho 2003: 21).

The problem has become more acute after the arrival of neoliberal global capital. Commodification has pervaded all aspects of our life. The downfall of welfare state and emergence of a neoliberal agent in the garb of democratic states needs to be countered at every juncture. The path to systemic transformation is a prolonged one and the battles for betterment of lives of oppressed has to continue simultaneously with that protracted war. One such battle can be to de-commodify the sectors such as health and education. A stiff resistance would emerge from capital but depending on the strength of mobilization such battles can be won. The participation in commissions must be undertaken only with this understanding because it would also strengthen the people's movements and also expose the contradictions of the State. Indian history is witness to the fact that till now none of the educational committees/commissions appointed by the State could do that and the reason is ample – those who become part of those bodies do not locate the problems of education in the way highlighted above. If such a thing could not emerge now, when the different state bodies with 'progressives' inside could have acted in harmony with the Left parties (which supports the government) on demands of decommodifying education and health sectors, not much can be expected later. But then, being part of the

instruments devised by the system on grounds that at least it would provide new recommendations for the State to implement an egalitarian education system and therefore provide the popular movements an agenda to pressurize the State, has remained a futile exercise. Even if committees have recommended anything relatively progressive such as the Ramamurti Committee (because Kothari Commission was not a very radical move) the State has just shrugged them off. Simultaneity of different modes of struggle aimed at achieving a common aim is the only possibility in such a situation.

In this scenario, it is essential that the fight against such a system, which co-opts, generates 'hope' and conflict, and creates inequality as well as provides instruments to fight this inequality, is undertaken with much care and understanding. This fight is against the rule of capital and its agent - the state. In order to further the struggle it is important that we learn to historicize. Historicize the trajectory of capital and education policy in India, which will provide answers to questions such as why did Indian State had Common School System as its policy once and why does it want to shrug it off now. It helps establish the vital linkages between *movement of capital* and *changing character of state* and also allows us to understand that the welfarist education policies, though ineffective, represented particular moments of history and they be seen as such.

Struggle is also about engagement with State which can take place simultaneously at many planes. But what is crucial to understand and acknowledge in this struggle is to realize that efforts to transform the state from within is impossible and even if we get space within the state it cannot be utilized unless there are simultaneous mobilizations and expansion of democratic capacity at ground level. This ground is not located elsewhere in the same way as the working class is not located elsewhere. It is everywhere. Class conflict is omnipresent, in form of labor-capital conflict, in a variety of forms, as commodified life systems or as direct forms of conflict in everyday life. The deceptions of not being a working class and construction of social categories such as 'intellectuals' or 'journalists' or management workers not being workers must be broken. Closely related to this is the idea of aspirations giving way to *beliefs* of upward mobility. It is a

myth that it is possible for everyone to move up the ranks on the basis of hard work, fortitude, and perseverance. This justifies the social division of labor and class differentiation and mystifies the agonistic relation among the classes. When we talk about 'white collar' and 'blue collar' workers, we hide the existence of the working class and the fact that this class has common class interests. We hinder the development of a common class-consciousness among fractions within the working class (McLaren and Rikowski: 2001).

Education needs to be located within this larger understanding of state and class, if at all radical changes like Common School System, doing away with privatization, equal educational opportunities of good quality for all etc. are to be achieved. A critical pedagogy that locates education within the context of larger politico-economic analyses can serve as a tool of effective analyses of the concrete situation.

It is axiomatic for the ongoing development of critical pedagogy that it be based upon an alternative vision of human sociality, one that operates outside the social universe of capital, a vision that goes beyond the market, but also one that goes beyond the state. It must reject the false opposition between the market and the state (McLaren and Jaramillo: 2003: 84).

We cannot achieve the goals of equal schooling, which is being denied by the system based on aggressive expansion of profit seeking capital, unless we understand the character of the system and direct our resistance based on it.

## Notes

1. I would like to thank Dave Hill for all encouragements and comments on the paper. The comments from the anonymous reviewer have also helped me sharpen the arguments of this paper.
2. The United Progressive Alliance, an alliance of the Congress Party, two of the major left parties – Communist Party of India and Communist Party of India (Marxist) – and some regional political parties, came to power in 2004 on the agenda of 'secularism' (against the right-wing Hindu sectarian politics of Bharatiya Janata Party). They promised a governance which would counter the tendencies set in by the BJP such as reversal of attempts to communalise the textbooks and institutions as well as to work in the interests of the common masses through adopting better economic policies. While, the former has been overturned through new textbooks (in fact, post-1989 the fight at the Centre and in various states among the BJP and non-BJP forces

has affected the education in more than one way. The change in textbooks have been regular, to such an extent that the de-politicised middle class even started saying as to why was children's future being put at stake) the latter (i.e., the economic policies) have become furthermore anti-poor and have added to the increasing pauperization of the labour force, with simultaneous boom for an expanding middle class through increasing share of service industry in Gross Domestic Product.

3. As per the Census of India statistics only 64.8% persons were literate in 2001. The condition of female literacy is dismally low at 53.7%. in some of the states female literacy is much lower, such as Harayana (49.3%), Rajasthan (37.3%), Uttar Pradesh (36.9%), Bihar (29.6%) etc.

4. The Central Advisory Board of Education (CABE), the highest advisory body in education was established in 1920, dissolved in 1923 and revived in 1935. "The idea of a Central Advisory Board of Education was first put forward by the Calcutta University Commission (1917-19)" (Biswas and Aggrawal, 1994: 72). It constitutes of the ministers of education from different states and some nominated members apart from the officials from the Government of India.

5. Education Commission was appointed under the chairmanship of D.S. Kothari in 1964 (it is also known as the Kothari Commission). It submitted its report in 1966. The Committee still referred to in the Indian educational debates due to its recommendations for a Common School System. According to the report "a Common School System of public education should be evolved in place of the present system which divides the management of schools between a large number of agencies whose functioning is inadequately conditioned" (GOI 1966: 229). It is interesting to note that the concern of the Commission was to tie the different kinds of schools that were under different government bodies or were government aided. It did not want to comment on the privatization of schooling, which has emerged as the biggest challenge.

The Report said that

the main problem before the country is to evolve a common school system of public education which will cover all parts of the country and all the stages of school education and strive to provide equality of access to all children. This

system will include all schools conducted by government and local authorities and all recognized and aided private schools. It should be maintained at an adequate level of quality and efficiency so that no parent would ordinarily feel any need to send his child to the institutions outside the system such as independent or unrecognized schools (ibid: 231).

This should be achieved through a number of steps:

1. the discrimination among teachers of different management – government, local authority and private organizations – should be done away with. They should have “equality of privileges”, similar system of remuneration for teachers with similar qualifications and responsibilities, uniform system of retirement benefits, similar methods of recruitment, similar condition of work and service (231).
2. abolish the tuition fee at the school stage
3. each institution be given minimum conditions for successful functioning by State and they should work with community with adequate freedom and sense of individuality

Regarding the private schools, the Commission says that the government aided schools should be encouraged to improve and gradually asked to abolish fee upto Class X and be brought under CSS after which only two types of private schools will remain: (1) those remaining within CSS and not charging any fee and surviving on the government grant; and (2) those outside the CSS and not getting government grant.

6. These are some of the states/provinces in India out of a total of twenty eight. According the Indian Constitution certain aspects (listed as ‘State List’) are to be looked after the state governments while some (listed as ‘Union List’) are to be looked after by the Central Government. There is still others (listed as ‘Concurrent List’) in which the responsibilities are to be shared by both the Central as well as State governments.

Before 1976, education was exclusively the responsibility of states, the Central Government was only concerned with certain areas like coordination and determination of standards in technical and higher education became a joint responsibility. Decisions regarding the organisation and structure of education are largely the concern of the states. However, the Union Government has a clear responsibility regarding the quality and character of education. In addition to

policy formulation, the Ministry of Human Resource Development, Department of Education shares with the states the responsibility for educational planning (GOI 1998: 48).

7. Multi grade teaching means teaching multiple classes in one classroom. Today across India one finds that primary schools (for Class I-V) have less than five rooms. For instance “there are still around 553, 179 primary schools in the country with less than five teachers” (Kumar, forthcoming, 2006a). The absence of basic facilities such as rooms have been justified by the arguments of multi-grade teaching as supported by the World Bank’s District Primary Education Programme (DPEP) and even UN documents.

8. The Part III of the Indian Constitution provides the Fundamental Rights (Articles 13-35) to Indian citizens, which, if violated, can be brought to the Court, whereas the Part IV of the Constitution has the Directive Principles of the State Policy (DPSP, Articles 36-51), which are only directives to the State. The State cannot be taken to the Court for enforcement of those principles unlike the Fundamental Rights (Dhagamwar 2006: 57-91). The Article 45 of the DPSP said that “The State shall endeavour to provide, within a period of ten years from the commencement of the Constitution, for free and compulsory education for all children until they complete the age of fourteen years”. The Constitution came into force on 26<sup>th</sup> January 1950 but the children up to age of fourteen years were not brought into schools by the 26<sup>th</sup> January 1960. It was only in 2002 that through 86<sup>th</sup> Amendment to the Indian Constitution education was made a fundamental right. But even this Amendment was half-hearted because it did not fix the responsibilities on the State and left everything to be decided. The result is that even four years after that there is no central legislation to put the Amendment into effect.

9. The Kothari Commission as explained in the Endnote1, is always recalled because of its recommendations to enforce equity in schooling, ending the caste and class discrimination etc. It’s recommendation for a Common School System has become one of the demands of the group, which is opposing the increasing intervention of private capital in education. However, the saddest part is that the opposition does not locate this privatization as the process of capitalist development and therefore, sees resolution to iniquitous educational opportunities within capitalism.

10. The CABE Committee of 1944, also known as Sargent Commission, recommended better working conditions for teachers, education for children for more than five years etc.

11. Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan (SSA), funded by World Bank and other international funding by World Bank and other international funding agencies has become Indian government's flagship educational programme. The primary education, unlike difference kinds of schemes earlier managed separately, come under one umbrella of SSA. This policy of the government, as discussed in the paper, is anti-poor and seeks to delegitimise the government schooling structure through curtailing resources flow and making low quality provisions.

12. The Common Minimum Programme (CMP) of the UPA is the document indicating the basic common consensus of all allies on the issue of importance.

13. NCERT is run by the Government of India and it prepares the curriculum guidelines for the schooling going children. It has been in thick of controversies about the writing of history textbooks and altering the textbooks after the right-wing alliance led by the Bharatiya Janata Party came to power.

14. The Chairman of the sub-committee, Kapil Sibbal, happens to be the Science and Technology Minister in the Government of India. He did not incorporate many of the points raised by some of the members in the final version of the Bill. The Bill, also, was being opposed by a section of people because it did not put any control on the private schools and continued to deny, in its proposal, the issue of quality for the poor children, who generally go to the schools.

15. Business process outsourcing (BPO) is the act of giving a third-party the responsibility of running what would otherwise be an internal system or service. For instance, an insurance company might outsource their claims processing program or a bank might outsource their loan processing system. Other common examples of BPO are call centres and payroll outsourcing (source: <http://www.mariosalexandrou.com/definition/business-process-outsourcing.asp>)

16. Gramsci highlighted this crisis of capitalism.

At a certain point in their historical lives, social classes become detached from traditional parties. In other words, the traditional parties in that particular organizational form, with the particular men who constitute, represent, and lead them, are no longer recognized by their class (or fraction of a class) as its expression.

In every country the process is different, although the content is the same. And the content is the crisis of the ruling class's hegemony, which occurs either because the ruling class has failed in some major political undertaking for which it has been requested, or forcibly extracted, the consent of the broad masses (war, for example), or because huge masses (especially of peasants and petit-bourgeois intellectuals) have passed suddenly from a state of political passivity to a certain activity, and put forward demands which taken together, albeit not organically formulated, add up to a revolution. A "crisis of authority" is spoken of this is precisely the crisis of hegemony or general crisis of the state" (Gramsci 2003: 210).

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