

Educational Development in the Dravidian Model and Current Issues in Education



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Abstract:

Education is much needed for a society to develop culturally, economically and politically. Leaders from the Justice Party, Periyar, Anna and the Dravidian Movement in general, have contributed to the model of Education during their respective periods to develop Wholesome Education in Tamil Nadu. That has progressively evolved as Dravidian Model as of today. Many schemes were introduced under this model for the sake of students and their needs.

Tamil Nadu tops in educational development in the areas of: Access to Education, Infrastructure and other Developmental Schemes, yet lacks in the measurement of the overall learning outcome. This needs to be discussed and addressed to solve the current problems in the educational system. When the overall learning outcome is measured and managed, the ultimate aim of Dravidian Model will be achieved and realized.

Keywords:

Education, Periyar, Dravidian Model, Mother Tongue, Tamil Nadu.

Essay:

Nelson Mandela once said that, "Education is the most powerful weapon which you can use to change the world". Education is also the sharpest weapon. When a society gets that weapon, it conquers most fields of the world. But, without a proper leader with a vision and political support for developing the system of education, it is not possible for the society to leverage with that weapon of Education. Tamil Nadu is a land of great leaders who developed the system of education in the state. Due to the efforts of Periyar & Anna, Tamil Nadu has always focused to maintain social justice by providing for access to education, so that all people from all sections of the society can learn.

"The Education that man needs is, only to make him fit to live his life in freedom. Only education, self-respect and rational qualities will uplift the downtrodden. The people of a land should first of all be educated if they are to seek progress, to lead a good and cultured life, and to gain a proper understanding in the spheres of politics, economics and industry. It is not temples

that we need today, but schools. Knowledge can bring about many miracles. Therefore, we do need today, schools that will be the basis for imparting knowledge. It is essential that education in our country should have two cardinal aims. Firstly, education should foster rationality and feelings of self-respect. Secondly, it should be conducive to lead a better life through a job or trade". (1)

Periyar has clearly explained in the above passage on what is education, how it is important for the downtrodden people to develop themselves culturally, economically and politically, and what is the ultimate aim of education. The rulers of Tamil Nadu clearly understood Periyar's view of education. That's why they have implemented a lot of educational schemes for the benefit of students in the state.

Journey of Educational Development in Tamil Nadu:

Development of Education in Tamil Nadu began with the efforts of the Justice Party. In response to representations by the Justice Party leader P. Theagaraya (Chetty), the Justice Party government allotted one anna per student to provide a noon meal scheme in selected schools in Chennai Corporation through a G.O in 1922.

Schemes like scholarships and financial aid for oppressed caste students were introduced, in addition to providing hostels for them. Natesa (Mudaliar), a founder member of the Justice Party, who ran the Dravidian Home, a hostel for students from the non-brahmin communities pursuing education in Chennai. (2)

Nowadays, lot of foreign countries and other states of India are introducing midday meal schemes in Schools, but the Justice

Party's P. Theagaraya (Chetty) introduced it way back in 1922 and it continues even now in Tamil Nadu. **This was the early success of the Dravidian Model. Justice Party played a huge role in social reforms and it is the pioneer of educational development in Tamil Nadu.**

Even today, we see that a few youngsters in rural areas miss their education and pointlessly engage in caste fights in village festivals. Imagine those olden days when caste fights were the order of the day and how cruel would it have been. Due to the hostel scheme by Natesa (Mudaliar) a lot of non-brahmin youngsters went away from their rural wandering and developed themselves in education and attained a good position in the society.

After Justice Party's rule in Tamil Nadu, Periyar's good friend - Kamarajar's period saw a major role in the development of primary education in Tamil Nadu.

In 1954, Kamaraj not only reopened the closed schools (which were closed by C. Rajagopalachari aka Rajaji), but also started new schools in rural and remote areas, increasing the percentage of school-going children of 6-11 years from 45% to 75%, in a span of seven years. The midday meal scheme was reintroduced by the Congress government in 1956 under the Chief Minister Kamaraj, who also hailed from an oppressed caste background. (3)

Kamarajar was the savior of primary school students in those days, because he not only opened the closed schools, but also thousands of new schools for students in areas nearby to them. He not only opened these schools, but also encouraged the student's family to send the children to schools, by providing midday meal for the

students. This period laid a strong foundation for primary education in Tamil Nadu. That's why Kamarajar is called as kalvi kaN thiRantha Kamarajar & also by the honorific perunthalaivar (great leader).

After Kamarajar, Arignar Anna led the Dravidian Party - DMK to victory in 1967, and one of the major poll-promises they fulfilled was: to waive the tuition fees for poor students of all castes in the pre-university and pre-technical courses. They also opened up hostels for SCs and OBCs. Free education up to P.U.C was one among the many notable schemes introduced for the poor people by the DMK. (4)

Arignar Anna's major scheme of providing free education up to Pre-University Course for the poor, lifted Tamil Nadu to greater heights in Education. It was a major leap from Kamaraj to Anna, from Primary to Higher Education.

After the DMK rule, during the period of ADMK in 1982, the then Chief Minister M.G. Ramachandran reformatted the midday meal scheme to nutritious noon meal scheme. By this scheme lot of poor students benefited and as a result enrollment of students in primary schools gradually increased.

Kalaignar M. Karunanidhi when he took over as Chief Minister again, introduced the EVR Nagammaiar Ninaivu Free Education Scheme during 1989-1990 during the DMK rule. It provided free college education for girls whose annual family income was less than Rs. 12,000.

This was again a major leap from Anna to Kalaignar, as it opened up female literacy in Tamil Nadu to record heights.

Kalaignar again reformatted the nutritious noon meal scheme with supply of eggs

along with nutritious meals, and this modified scheme was introduced by the DMK from 1998 onwards. In addition, Free supply of text books and note books to the children of widows was also introduced during the DMK rule. An average of 4000 children benefited under this scheme.

To encourage students from rural background in professional studies, the DMK government under Kalaignar Karunanidhi introduced 15% reservation.

'Vazhvoli thittam' in schools was introduced by Kalaignar Karunanidhi, in 1999-2000 during DMK's rule. This scheme was implemented in government and government-aided schools. As a first step, medical checkup was conducted for 59 lakh students free of cost and 29 lakh of them were provided proper medical attention. **Health is Wealth and only in a sound body can exist a sound mind. Students for the first time in Tamil Nadu, gained free access to Healthcare along with Education.**

To encourage student performance in the SSLC and Higher Secondary classes, the DMK also introduced a scheme for helping poor students. According to this plan, granting scholarships in Higher Education for the first three rank-holders in state and district levels in the SSLC and Higher Secondary Examinations was introduced. This scheme was implemented in 1996. Large number of poor students in various districts got benefited by this scheme.

The DMK Government under Kalaignar was also very proactive to introduce Computer Training scheme for government college students during the early 2000s itself, in anticipation of the software boom. This opened up enormous opportunities for students to seek their

career in software and even go overseas and take up a lifelong career in reputed global organizations.

A Free bus pass scheme for students was also introduced by the DMK government to subsidize their travel costs to schools & colleges. Tamil Nadu Samacheer School Education Legislation - 2010 was enacted to implement an equitable education system through Tamil Nadu. (5)

After Kamarajar & Arignar Anna, Kalaingar Karunanidhi played a huge role in the development of education in the state of Tamil Nadu. It put the students of Tamil Nadu on a strong footing in Education.

Free laptop scheme for government and government-aided higher secondary school students was introduced by the ADMK government in 2011. It also introduced free bicycle scheme, Free uniform, school bags & school supplies like pencils, geometry box and atlas. Special cash incentive scheme for government and government-aided school students who pursue class 10th, 11th and 12th were awarded Rs. 1500, 2000 and 5000 respectively. (6) In the ADMK, after Mr. M.G.Ramachandran, Ms. Jayalalitha also played a role in the development of education in Tamil Nadu.

Currently, our Hon'ble Chief Minister M.K. Stalin from the DMK, has announced the provision of nutritious breakfast in the morning, to students of classes 1-5 in all government schools on all working days, in addition to the nutritious meals in the noon. He also announced an upgrade 25 higher secondary government schools to Model Schools to emulate the standard in the National Capital – New Delhi. He has also announced a monthly stipend of Rs. 1000 for girl students who pursue higher education in government schools.

Thus, we saw in the quick journey of the above paragraphs, how Educational Development in Tamil Nadu from Justice Party to the current DMK, has been vigorously pursued under the Dravidian Model. Tamil Nadu has always excelled in nurturing education and upliftment of the students. The state of Tamil Nadu has a much higher Index in Education, than many other states of North India.

Educational Outcomes in Tamil Nadu:

Let us examine some metrics & data in this section and quantify the benefits of education through various schemes under the Dravidian Model that we saw in the last section. According to the 2017-2018 report of the All-India Survey on Higher Education (AISHE), 48.6% of Tamil Nadu's youth in the age group of 18-23 years, are engaged in some form of higher education or the other, which is one of nation's highest. Access to tertiary education is also relatively inclusive, with 42% of youth among the oppressed castes & SCs are being enrolled in higher education, as against 21.8% at the all-India level.

The average pupil-teacher ratio and pupil-classroom ratio is also far better in Tamil Nadu as compared to the all-India average. The NITI (National Institution for Transforming India) Aayog's school education quality index (SEQI) for the year 2016-17 classifies Tamil Nadu and Kerala as the best in school education in India.

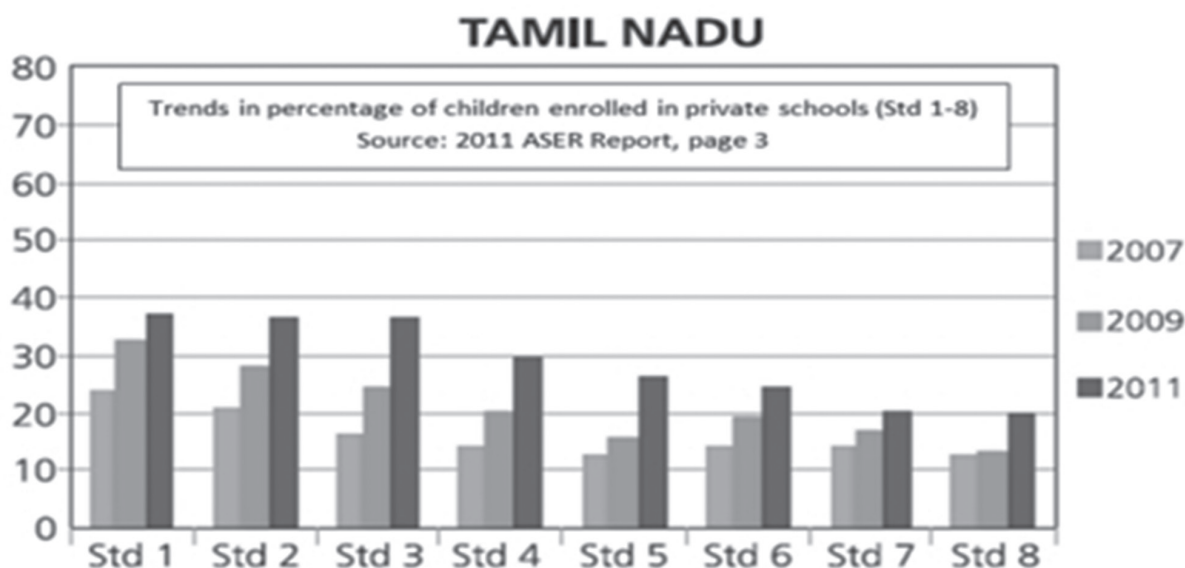
As per the National Sample Survey (NSS) 71st round (2014), the average expenditure of a higher secondary student in a government school in Tamil Nadu is Rs. 2862 which is less than half the all-India average of Rs. 6916.

Tamil Nadu does well in most other educational indicators as well. It ranks first in terms of GER (gross enrollment ratio) in middle school and third in terms of the composite index of elementary education. As per the last educational development index (composite index of averages with many variables like access, infrastructure, teachers and outcomes) computed by the National University of Educational Planning

and Administration (NUEPA), Tamil Nadu tops among the major states in India.

The latest report of the Ministry of Human Resource Development (MHRD) also places Tamil Nadu at the top, in terms of access & equity and fifth place in infrastructure. Let us see some graphic – charts & data in the following section, that will demonstrate the development indices of Tamil Nadu.

Graphic 1: Percentage of Children enrolled in Private Schools



(Source: <https://prayatna.typepad.com/education/datastatistics>)

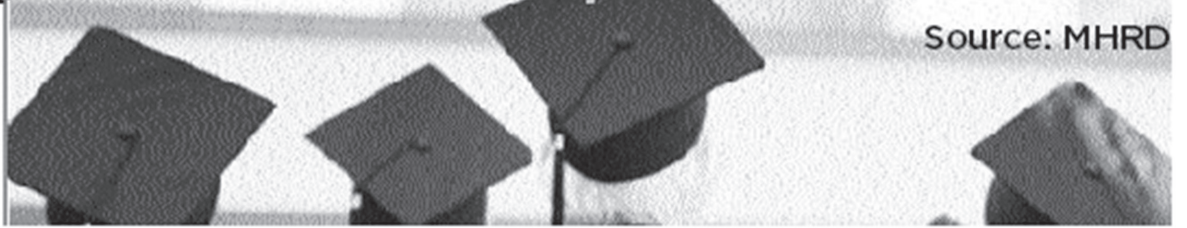
Graphic 2: Basic Infrastructure in Primary Schools (2015)

States	Percentage of Schools with				
	Kitchen Shed for Cooking	Drinking Water	Urinal for Boys	Separate Toilet for girls	Schools having electricity
Andhra Pradesh	55.6	93.9	99.6	99.6	91.7
Karnataka	94.8	100	98.9	99.5	96.8
Kerala	92.9	99.5	96.9	98.5	95.6
Gujarat	96.1	100	99.9	99.9	99.2
Maharashtra	90.2	99.6	98.8	99.1	90.6
Tamilnadu	96.6	100	99.6	99.8	98.6
India	79.8	95.8	96.5	97.0	52.4

(Source :The Dravidian Model ,Cambridge University Press, United Kingdom pp-58)

Graphic 3: Expenditure on Higher Education per Capita)

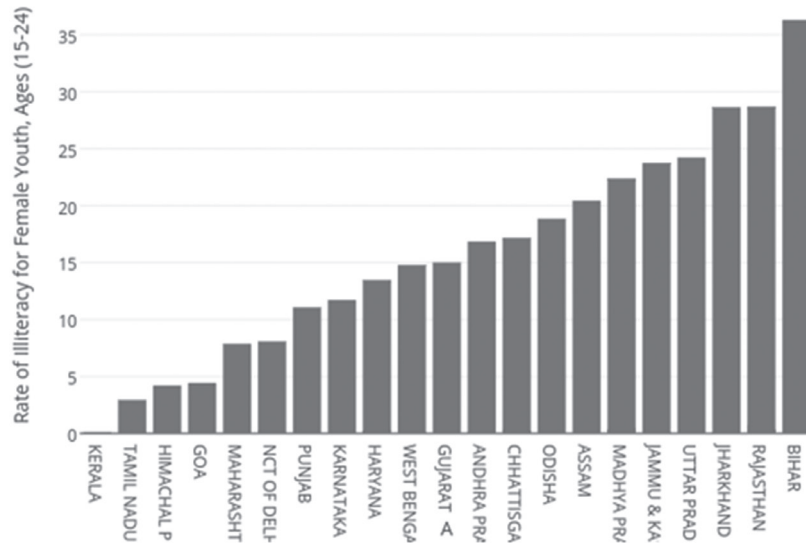
State	Expenditure on Higher Education as % of GSDP	Per Capita Expenditure on Higher Education (18-23 years)	Salary expenditure as a % of total expenditure
Tamil Nadu	1.50%	13,104	90%
Andhra Pradesh	0.85%	5,892	75%
Kerala	0.68%	6,639	95%
Bihar	0.55%	1,221	87%
Gujarat	0.39%	2,958	84%
Karnataka	0.21%	1,410	88%
Maharashtra	0.14%	1,091	92%



(Source: DECCAN CHRONICLE March31,2019)

Graphic 4: Female Illiteracy

Female Youth (15-24) Illiteracy Rate, by State



(Source: <https://thewire.in/education/why-tamil-nadu-doesnt-need-more-schools>)

Graphic 5: Tamil Nadu Report Card – Class 10

Tamil Nadu Report Card				CLASS 10
Overall Achievement Score				
National Average (Percentage)			37.8	
S.No.	District Name	Mean (Percentages)	Percentage of children at basic and below basic level	Percentage of children at proficient and advance level
1	PERAMBALUR	39.4	75.0	25.0
2	ERODE	38.8	77.7	22.3
3	COIMBATORE	37.3	79.3	20.7
4	SIVAGANGAI	36.4	81.5	18.5
5	MADURAI	36.3	82.3	17.7
6	DINDIGUL	36.2	82.3	17.7
7	TIRUPPUR	35.8	84.1	15.9
8	TIRUNELVELI	35.8	82.6	17.4
9	TIRUCHIRAPPALLI	35.8	82.8	17.2
10	KRISHNAGIRI	35.6	82.7	17.3
11	NAMAKKAL	35.2	83.7	16.3
12	THANJAVUR	34.9	84.5	15.5
13	THOOTHUKKUDI	34.7	86.1	13.9
14	VIRUDHUNAGAR	34.5	85.3	14.7
15	KARUR	34.3	84.1	15.9
16	RAMANATHAPURAM	34.1	85.6	14.4
17	DHARMAPURI	33.5	86.5	13.5
18	NAGAPATTINAM	33.3	86.3	13.7
19	ARIYALUR	33.3	86.6	13.4
20	TIRUVARUR	33.2	88.0	12.0
21	PUDUKKOTTAI	33.0	88.5	11.5
22	THENI	32.8	88.4	11.6
State/UT Average		35.4	83.8	16.2

(Source: National Achievement Survey 2021)

Graphic 6: Tamil Nadu Report Card – Class 8

Tamil Nadu Report Card				CLASS 8
Overall Achievement Score				
National Average (Percentage)			41.9	
S.No.	District Name	Mean (Percentages)	Percentage of children at basic and below basic level	Percentage of children at proficient and advance level
1	COIMBATORE	39.7	79.0	21.0
2	ERODE	38.7	83.6	16.4
3	PERAMBALUR	38.4	81.1	18.9
4	DINDIGUL	37.8	83.3	16.7
5	TIRUNELVELI	37.2	84.1	15.9
6	THANJAVUR	36.9	83.0	17.0
7	TIRUCHIRAPPALLI	36.1	85.9	14.1
8	TIRUPPUR	35.7	88.3	11.7
9	KRISHNAGIRI	35.7	86.4	13.6
10	MADURAI	35.5	86.9	13.1
11	THOOTHUKKUDI	35.4	87.0	13.0
12	SIVAGANGAI	35.3	88.9	11.1
13	VIRUDHUNAGAR	35.0	88.7	11.3
14	RAMANATHAPURAM	34.8	90.2	9.8
15	ARIYALUR	34.8	88.4	11.6
16	NAMAKKAL	34.1	91.2	8.8
17	KARUR	34.0	91.3	8.7
18	NAGAPATTINAM	33.5	91.2	8.8
19	TIRUVARUR	33.2	91.2	8.8
20	PUDUKKOTTAI	32.3	93.9	6.1
21	THENI	32.1	93.3	6.7
State/UT Average		35.9	87.5	12.5

(Source: National Achievement Survey 2021)

However, the learning outcome has been a source of concern. Overall learning outcomes are relatively poor with the ministry report placing the state in the seventeenth position. (7).

On Jun 5 2022, Tamil Nadu held the top position with states of Punjab, Chandigarh and Kerala in Performance Grading Index in School Education. This survey is composed of various parameters including access, infrastructure, equity and learning outcomes. (8). But the National Achievement Survey 2021, places Tamil Nadu students' learning outcome below the national average. (9).

The advances made by the Dravidian Movement in Tamil Nadu's Educational index are solely due to the vision of our leaders of the Dravidian Stock. Gross Enrollment Ratio is an index that Tamil Nadu can proudly attribute to the Dravidian Model.

According to recent surveys, we in Tamil Nadu are also at the top in the infrastructure index, access to education and educational equity, but our learning outcome is relatively low. There is a decline in learning outcome and this must be addressed and discussed sincerely. Only then we can identify the contributing factors to the problem and resolve them.

Problems in Education:

In education, for each and every small thing, you have your point of view and you ought to know about different points of views. People with a lot of learning & knowledge are in the highest positions of office in every field. They achieved phenomenal experience through their formal learning. This is the reason that most of the scientists and leaders prefer to have their education

in their mother tongue like Dr. A.P.J. Abdul Kalam, Dr. Mayilsamy Annadurai and Dr. K. Sivan. These persons develop a great vision, and that comes from their education in their mother tongue. (10).

UNESCO suggests to start teaching a second language to children above 10 years of age or approximately while they are in their 5th class. Kothari Commission (1964-66) said, "The children are well versed in their mother tongue before learning other language". (11).

"The love of one's tongue is the foremost of all loves that are required of the people born in our land. I affirm again and again that the love of the mother tongue is a must for those born in Tamil Nadu", says Periyar EVR. (12)

Mother Tongue plays a major role in building the children's cognitive ability, but unfortunately many of the today's parents are not considering it. Nowadays, people don't live for their true aspirations, but live for other people's expectations. This mindset plays a major role in deciding the medium of instruction for their children. Both the educated and uneducated parents do the same mistake. Because people want to boast to other people that their children are studying in premium schools, they go to the extent of denying their children, the ability to think, read and write in their mother tongue. Most people put their children in English medium schools from the start and some even go to the extent of choosing a foreign language instead of the mother tongue even for the language classes. As a result, children are pushed into a conflict between their observations and cognitions. They struggle

to grasp in the school, because children observe something different in daily lives. They observe their parents talking and doing social things in their mother tongue, but the school medium puts teaching & learning only in English. This leads to confusion & conflict. Children start to memorize words without understanding. It in turn reduces the children's questioning & thinking ability. Though they are getting good marks, they are not able to think on their own. They only commit everything to hard memory. This is a huge disadvantage in the formative years of school study.

Very recently, when the results of the 10th class came out in Tamil Nadu, it shocked everyone. Many students have failed in their mother tongue (Tamil) language examinations. We must address this on a top priority, because it is the mother tongue for most of the students in Tamil Nadu.

The next issue is that many students think that the Mother Language is not needed for higher studies or professional studies. There should be a change in higher studies curriculum and Tamil should be included and taught seriously. Tamil school books should be updated to reflect current & modern technologies. More teachers should be appointed for teaching Tamil or mother tongue in schools.

If a society or country needs to develop well, teachers must be in a good position in that society. In Finland, it takes a full 7 years to complete a teacher training study course. People and Government adore the teaching profession. Salary of the teachers is one of highest in the country. Whereas, a Bachelor of Education study course in Tamil Nadu in the early days was just one year and very

recently upgraded to 2 years. There are lakhs of teacher training graduates in Tamil Nadu.

Also, not many people consider the issues of teachers from the private schools. Both the Government & Private school teachers play a role in the overall learning outcome in education. Many private school teachers are not satisfied, as ultimately the society judges them by their salaries. Private schools do collect a lot of money from students, but they don't pay back their teachers well. After many degree courses that teachers go through, they end up working for a meagre salary, that would not even cover their normal life expenses. Lakhs of teachers are working under such situations in schools. It affects them on a psychological plane and that in turn reflects in their teaching.

In my personal experience, when I was a student in a private school, I had some health issues and when I was trying to explain to my teachers, no one considered it. I can understand now what made them to behave in that manner. They are simply not inspired, but forced into teaching, which they do grudgingly.

If there is no bond between the teacher and the student, only machine-like learning will happen. Many students are affected every day in schools because of this multi-pronged issue. Even a biller in a grocery shop earns a five-digit salary but the private school managements pay a meagre Rs. 3000 - 8000 to their teachers. This affects the morale of the teachers, and it in turn affects the learning outcome of the students. Both the government and private school teachers should be on parity with respect to emoluments. They should also be trained in psychology & counseling, in addition to the

subject knowledge. This helps the teachers to bond with their students and boost their morale during education.

There should also be a continuous upgrade mechanism for teachers to update their subject knowledge and delivery skills. Similarly, for the students, there should be a separate talent test in addition to the regular tests to boost the applied knowledge and individuality of students. Gaps in the teaching - learning process have to be identified and bridged.

There is also a crucial problem in the evaluation system. Students were taught to obtain pass marks all the time, but in reality it is not possible to fully succeed without failing here and there. Teachers should counsel students to accept failures, learn from them and do their best the next time. There should also be good career guidance sessions at schools to expose the students to the realities of the outside professional world. Children should not be forced to fulfill the Parent's dream but to chase their own dreams with passion. Parents should also understand that every child is unique and every child's world is different.

Lately, caste divisions in the society have also become a major issue in schools. Near Cheranmadevi in south Tamil Nadu, a student was fatally attacked by a group of students belonging to another caste. To identify the Caste, colored bands are tied to Students' wrists, which is grossly inhuman and indecent. Sporting bands or ropes in specific colors have led to altercations and verbal abuses. Scuffles were witnessed inside schools and sometimes they have spilled onto the streets too. (13)

Parents should not encourage their children to promote caste, by tying caste-colored ropes on their wrists. It breeds discrimination. Social Volunteer groups like the NSS should create awareness in this area. Caste system is rooted in the young minds of students by the casteist local people in the society. Because of this education in rural areas get degenerated. Parent-Teacher Associations should play a major role to overcome such serious social issues. Parent-Teacher coordination can solve a lot of problems. Developing infrastructures like smart class rooms and other technologies should be employed in schools to further facilitate the cause of Education. There should be separate classes to teach Periyar's Rationality, Self-Respect and Social Justice in schools. Also, classes to teach environmental sciences should be promoted.

If all these issues are addressed seriously and remedial steps taken with constant inputs from teachers, parents, volunteers and the government, the state of Tamil Nadu will lead in the index of overall learning outcome, in addition to the already improved indices like gross enrollment ratio, access and infrastructure. Let's make the Overall Learning Outcome our next focus and achieve the true benefit of Education championed by the Dravidian Model in Tamil Nadu.

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