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Ensuring Quality in Primary Education

Policy Recommendations Made by Centre for Education Development Action and Research (CEDAR)

To
The High Level Committee to Draft
The State Educational Policy for Tamilnadu

(Based On a Series of Consultations and Focus Group Discussions)






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15th oct 2022

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Recommendations for Consideration by the Committee on State Educational Policy

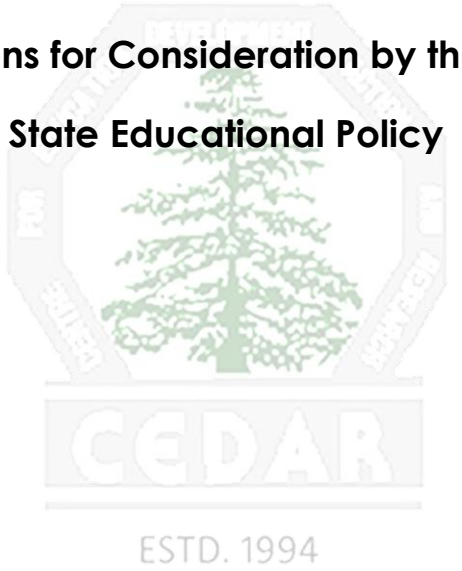


Table of Contents

	Page
A Development Paradox: Quantity Vs Quality	4
Poor-Quality Education Can Undo Everything	5
Did we not have Meaningful Policies on Quality in the Past?	6
What do We Understand as the Core of these Policies?	7
Activity Based Learning Programme (ABL) and its cohorts	8
Did ABL Reforms Strengthen the Foundational Skills	9
Did ABL/ALM Pedagogy in What Other Manner help children?	11
Repositioning of the Teacher as Facilitator: Did it Happen?	12
Failure of the Repositioning of the Teacher as Facilitator	13
Return of the Old: Classroom in the Eyes of the Children	14
Holding on to Tradition: Teacher's perception	16
School, Home, and Private Tuition	18
Rote Learning and Examinations	20
Language Learning: Tamil and English	21
The Extra-Curricular: Arts, Sports, and Games: The Periphery	24
Child Rights, Child Protection and Child Safeguarding	27
For the Consideration of the Committee: Recommendations	29
Appendix: Profile of the Participants	36

Paradigm Shift Called for…

From Right to Education as Fundamental Right of the Child

To

<u>Total Quality Education</u> as Fundamental Right of the Child

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A Development Paradox: Quantity VS Quality

The Government of Tamil Nadu in its recent School Education Department Policy Note (2022-2023) claims: "Tamil Nadu has achieved universal access to schooling at all levels." It also cites the Government of India, Ministry of Education's Performance Grading Index (PGI: 2019-2020) to say that Tamil Nadu has 'secured the second place overall in the country.' This is supported by economists who defend Dravidian Model of Development.

However, the same policy note in the very next sentence admits that Tamil Nadu has secured only the 23rd place in 'Learning Outcomes and Quality' in the list of 37 states/UTs. This ranking is done, based on the National Achievement Survey 2021.

A state which has done extremely well in terms of quantitative measurements namely 1. Access, 2. Infrastructure and Facilities, 3. Equity and 4. Governance and Processes, ultimately goes to deliver bad quality education. It is a painful irony. This has prompted many critiques to debunk the Dravidian Model of Development.

This Quantity VS Quality paradox needs immediate attention.

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Poor-Quality Education can Undo Everything

It is true that Tamil Nadu is in an enviable position when it comes to equity and inclusiveness in education. This has been made possible through well engineered reservation policies and other welfare measures. Now, there is the imminent danger of all these being lost through poor quality education.

Given the statistics, quality in education is unfavourably distributed in the system. This will hit the socio-economically disadvantaged groups, very hard.

The middle, upper-middle and the rich classes will always have the financial resources to access quality education.

The socio-economically disadvantaged groups (SEDGs), without choice go through schools offering poor quality education. In this process, they become the residual population. This means, poor quality education turns them into the **poorly skilled**, **the skill redundant** and **the unemployable**. They join the lowest rungs of the economy.

Next comes, the general economic consequence. Bad quality education creates a vicious cycle. Children showing poor learning outcomes, ultimately go to make the poor college students, and later 'poor everything.' In other words, it causes a not-easily-reversible **Human Resource Regression**. This can sap the generative potential of the economy. This in turn would mercilessly cripple individual livelihood options

Finally, it is **culture**. Education is expected to reproduce one's culture reflexively and creatively. Poor quality education once gets institutionalized, breaks the intellectual quest for inventing something new and original- in science, in art, in literature and in politics and governance. Bad quality education will breed shallowness of thinking, populism, smugness, and frustration and different forms of conflicts and alienation.

Did we not have Meaningful Policies on Quality Education in the Past?

We did have policies that called for radical reforms for promoting quality, especially in primary education (Std I to VIII).

We need the backstory.

There is no state policy of education in place yet in Tamil Nadu. Till now, the educational practices have been broadly guided by the national policy. However, the state using some leeway, could always draw its own specific policies and operational plans. These are in the form of 'Policy Notes' placed before the State Legislature year after year, by the Minister for School/Higher Education.

Revisiting these policy notes from1999-2000 to 2022-2023, we see certain continuity exercised by the state over the past two decades addressing quality.

"Imparting quality education to all is of paramount importance and concern to this Government," says School Education Department Policy Note: 2007-2008.

Again, we read, "The Government has taken continuous efforts towards improving quality in schools." (SEDPN:2009-2010).

Then comes a more revealing statement: "This Government realizes that merely adding infrastructure in the form of buildings and teachers alone will not achieve the noble objective of making the children of Tamil Nadu compete at the national and international level. Keeping this in mind the Government has taken many initiatives to improve the quality of education." (SEDPN: 2012-2013).

"Quality improvement in education is the prime goal of the State, for which it provides adequate learning opportunities in every school. The State has initiated a series of interventions…." (SEPN: 2014-2015).

What do We Understand as the Core of these Policies in the Name of Quality Primary Education?

- **Child centric** reorganization of physical classroom
- Radical repositioning of the teacher as **facilitator**
- Learning through **activities**
- Allowing the child to learn at its **own phase**
- **Process of learning** to find precedence over method
- Helping the child to interpret its individual personal **experience**
- Early inculcation of habits of **critical thinking**, **problem solving** and **creative self-expression**
- Collaboration and **co-creation** through peer learning
- **Joyful participation** in the classroom activities
- Continuous and **comprehensive evaluation** of both scholastic and co-scholastic achievement, i.e., the holistic development of the child.

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Activity Based Learning Programme (ABL) and its Cohorts to Usher in Child Centered Pedagogy and Quality

1. Activity Based Learning- ABL (2003 Pilot Project)
2. Active Learning Methodology ALM (2010- 2012)
3. Simplified Activity Based Learning- SABL (2012-2013)
4. Simplified Active Learning Methodology SALM (2012- 2013)
5. Continuous Comprehensive Evaluation- CCE (2012-2013)
6. Trimester (2012-2013)
7. Mathematics Lab (2013-2014)
8. Innovative Teaching in English (2013-2014)
9. Capacity Building for Mathematics and English Teachers (2013-2014)
10. Science Exhibition (2013-2014)
11. Project Based Learning- (2018-2019)
12. Learning Enhancement Programme (2018-2019)

Substantial investments in terms of money, training and effort have been made to implement these programmes/ schemes. Some of them have survived till this day, in some form or other.

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Did ABL Reforms Strengthen Foundational Literacy and Numeracy?

No. It failed to address the literacy-numeracy issue then, and now.

ABL was introduced in 2003 in 12 Government Schools in Chennai as a pilot project. Even at that point, there was the issue of lack of foundational skills in children in terms literacy and numeracy. The fact is that this problem doggedly refused to respond to ABL, ALM, and their cohorts. But it did not receive the required attention of the state, and its educational bureaucracy till 2021.

Take for instance Annual Status of Education Report:2005 (**ASER:2005**). In the year 2005, 70.1% of children studying in Standard II to V in Tamil Nadu, could not read sentences of Std-2 level. The figure for VI to VIII students was, 32.2%.

Coming to numeracy, 84% of the children studying in Standard II to V, could not do simple divisions. (3 digit divided by 1 digit). The figure for VI to VIII group was 53.8%. (ASER: 2005)

Let us now see how the problem continued subsequently over a decade or more.

Literacy Level in Tamil Nadu Schools as Assessed by ASER

Year of Assessment	Standard III students who can read Std II Level Text	Standard V students who can read Std II Level Text	Standard VIII students who can read Std II Level Text
2010	23.2%	45.2%	71%
2016	6.9%	30.6%	69.%%

The above table shows five years later, in 2010, when ASER only 23.2% of the children studying in III std could read II standard level text. The same text could be read only by 45.2% of the students studying in V standard, and by 71% studying in VIII standard. After six years in 2016, the respective figures are 6.9%, 30.6% and 69.5%.

Numeracy Level of Tamil Nadu Schools as Measured by ASER

Year of Assessment	Standard III who could divide a three digit with a single digit	Standard V who could divide a three digit with a single digit	Standard VIII who could divide a three digit with a single digit
2010	13.4%	15%	48%
2016	1.7%	21.4%	44.8%

Coming to numeracy, in the year 2010, only 3.4% of students studying in III standard could do simple division. !5% of the students studying in V standard could do the same level division. And 48.2% studying in VIII standard, could do the same division. The respective figures for 2016 are 1.7%, 21.4% and 44.8% respectively.

ASER apart, there are other independent indication too. "Programme for **International Student Assessment (OECD 2010) Survey** which showed **India second last among 73 countries**, Tamil Nadu was one of two states which took part, based on the rationale that it was a show piece of India's educational success." (Nidhi Singala et.al. :2017).

The writing on the wall was clear. Since the turn of the second millennium, we had serious deficiencies in literacy and numeracy in our children. But one is puzzled why ABL/ALM cohorts were not tweaker or suitably modified to pedagogically address the issue.

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Did ABL/ALM Pedagogy in What Other Manner Help Children?

On the cognitive side (which includes learning literacy and numeracy) as we have stated in the previous pages, it didn't.

But on the non-cognitive learning side, it has done reasonably well. One of the well-established research studies, takes the following position: "… children in ABL schools [are found] to be **less reliant on their teachers**, **more likely to seek help from peers** and had **more faith in their abilities to solve difficult questions themselves** as compared to non-ABL setting." (Nidhi Singala et. al.: 2017, Emphasis added). This is no mean achievement either.

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Repositioning of the Teacher's Role as Facilitator: Did it Happen?

The chief mandate of ABL reform was the repositioning of the **teacher as facilitator.**

Tacitly to some extent, this did happen first, then it **reversed back** to the traditional mould.

Teachers in the first place very well understood the theory and principles involved, in constructing a student-centered classroom. This happened through intense trainings. But they tacitly allowed their old self to takeover. The **resistance manifested** in the following:

1. Continued Manifestation of the traditional idea of **'discipline and control'**

In a study most of the well trained ABL teachers professing true practice of ABL pedagogy did the following:

After the physical re-organization of the classroom and sitting on par with the children on the floor ABL teachers were still bent upon regulating them. They spent more of the class time on task-management and less on attending to the 'process of learning.'

2. Continued Manifestation of the belief in the **'Authority of the Text'**

The majority of the ABL teachers believed more in the ABL material and cards than helping children to recognize and reflect on their 'personal experience in learning.'

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3. Continued Manifestation of the belief that **the child does not have the 'right' answer** but the 'Teacher' or the 'Book'

In interacting with the children, ABL teachers showed tendencies to ask 'how' and 'what' more frequently to children rather than 'why.'

4.Continued Manifestation of the Notion **'general standards' are more important than the 'individual idiosyncrasies in learning'.** The right path to knowledge is **'discipline first'** and the primary role of a teacher is **to 'discipline'**

In the ABL classroom, the much-preferred pathway for many teachers were, to give group instructions or interact in groups rather than spend more time paying attention to individual child, and creatively engage her or him.

Once the emphasis on the practice of ABL pedagogy was gone, the whole community of ABL trained teachers reversed back to their traditional mode.

Failure of the Repositioning of the Teacher as Facilitator

Had it happened, we would have had path breaking changes in our Primary Education. Unfortunately, it didn't'.

The reason is that the state supported project authorities could not make a strategic **difference between** a **'radical pedagogical reform** and' a **'radical restructuring of the classroom'**. The latter alone can allow any repositioning of the teacher's role. But it was much beyond the scope of **a project based pedagogical-change management**. Mere teacher trainings cannot help.

This can be explained further. The classroom is a social construction with power equations embedded in it. It is rationalized and justified by deep-rooted cultural ideas.

The classroom operates across four independent **vectors of power**:

i. **Teacher-School and Government Authority,**
ii. **Teacher- Parent,**
iii. **Teacher- Child**
iv. **Teacher-cultural self** (or identity).

Repositioning the role of the teacher, therefore, involves altering this configuration. Only an **educational movement** with a broad vision alone can bring in a permanent transition from **teacher authority** to **teacher as facilitator.**

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Return of the Old: Classroom in the Eyes of the Children

[Following observations/conclusions are based on several FGDs conducted over a period of two years (2020-2022] with the children studying in Government Schools and Government Aided Schools. It was further augmented by discussions held with different groups of children during the month of September 2022, specifically about the proposed State policy on Education. Majority of these children were from remote villages in Thoothukudi District and from Urban Deprived Areas in Madurai City where CEDAR works. They were in the age group 8 to 16].

Children Say:

1. "Some of our teachers come late to the class. "
2. "There are many who do not come prepared for the class."
3. "Very often, teachers read the textbook in the class to us and do not explain much."
4. "Some teachers write the lesson on the blackboard and ask us to read.
5. Majority of the teachers do not demonstrate energy and enthusiasm in the classroom."
6. "Some teachers during the course of the class, pull out the cellphone and talk over it for long durations."
7. "Excepting a few, teachers do not positively encourage us to ask doubts and clarifications in the class."
8. "Majority of the teachers do not want to know about our interest nor our background."
9. "Sitting through 8 periods of 40-minute duration, is very exasperating and boring and tiresome."
10. "Teachers do no show experiments to make us understand our subjects better. Computer and other equipment are mostly kept under lock and key without being used."
11. "Very few are the occasions teachers take us out to show a real-life situation, or for observation and study of nature and its wonders."
12. "Many teachers do not openly demonstrate kindness. But they do demonstrate anger more frequently and without restraint."
13. "Teachers scold us very often. Sometimes they verbally abuse using front of others and deeply hurt them."
14. "Some teachers punish us by beating us even for small mistakes."
15. "Some do not beat often but keep a cane or stick in their hands to instill fear."

16. "Some do a lot of name-calling of us. This encourages other children to adversely brand and tease their peers."
17. "Teachers scold or punish us if they talk to friends sitting next to us in the class specially when the teacher is speaking."
18. "Majority of the teachers exaggerate the mistake committed by a child or a group of children in the class and use it as an excuse to brand the entire class as bad."
19. "Teachers make unfavorable comparisons of children on the basis of marks or behavior."
20. "Techers make children run errand for them during class hours specially to buy snacks and tea."
21. "Teachers show favors based on caste, kinship, and willingness to run errand."
22. "Teachers give a lot of homework every day which makes us unhappy."

Return of the Traditional Classroom

The above description of the teachers and classroom dynamics by children is nothing surprising. They are specific manifestations deeply embedded in the traditional beliefs and norms that define a teacher.

- Teacher is the **absolute authority** in the classroom
- **Knowledge** resides in the teacher and the text
- Teacher- student relationship is strictly **hierarchical**
- **Discipline** is the pre-condition for acquiring knowledge
- Teacher's primary duty is to maintain the **general standard** of the class
- There is **no 'agency'** in the child and the child can't take charge of himself/herself
- Teacher has the **moral right to punish** the child

Holding on to Tradition: Techer's Perception as to Why They Could Not Assure Quality

[This is based on a day-long discussion with teachers representing both Government schools and Government aided schools. Following are reasons/ explanations they gave why they are not able to create quality outcomes]

1. "The traditional **authority** and autonomy we enjoyed have considerably eroded."
2. "Now we are there in the schools to simply **carry out the instructions** of the educational bureaucracy and the school authorities."
3. "There is **no discipline** in children, and we can no longer enforce discipline. Some schools and classrooms borderline unruliness."
4. "The composition of classrooms has vastly changed in terms of the **socio-economic background** of the children who enter."
5. "These classrooms throw up extreme variations in terms of children's ability to learn. If a class is graded in terms of learning difficulties of children, there can be **three or four grades of children** within each class especially up to standard V. There is no scope for maintaining the **general standard** of the class."
6. **Present day parents** neither help/ supervise the studies of the children nor cooperate with the school or teachers.
7. "We are compelled by the educational authorities to award marks/grades to create **a narrative that everything is alright with government policies** and their outcomes. We can illustrate this by this example. Even children who are very irregular to schools are made to be shown as 'regular' on record. This is to statistically reduce the dropout rate. There is no detention of children up to standard VIII, and these children are automatically put on an escalator to go up without acquiring foundational skills."
8. "**Inconsistencies and short-term thinking** in the government policies bring confusion and dampen lack of personal initiatives. Personal initiatives are often discouraged."
9. "We are subject to **arbitrary and unprofessional assessment** by the bureaucracy/ management. There is no proper assessment of the annual individual performance of a teacher. The specific challenges related to each context of our work is not considered. We are assessed in terms of certain **external yardsticks** that suit the government from time to time."
10. "When government policies fail, we become the **scapegoats**."

11. "The government of the day is keener to maintain enrollment rate, retention rate and transition rate and **not quality of outcome**."
12. "Many new projects are conceived without consulting us. They come **top-down**, and we are called into attending trainings."
13. "We are dutybound to attend **trainings**. But often they are not engaging."
14. "When a new project is implemented, no **real-time feedback** is obtained from us."
15. "**There is creative space** in the classroom, but we have several constraints that we are **not able to use** them properly."

Summing up: Teachers Cling to Tradition, but with Certain Ambiguities

- Teachers **acutely feel** the changing times and the strain caused on their role
- Teachers tend to **turn backward** into tradition to make meaning of the present
- Traditional **notion of discipline** lingers on strongly, in their minds
- **Preference for teacher-centric classroom** is tacit in their arguments
- Teachers identify family background of the children **and lack of support from parents** as a cause for the poor performance of children
- **Government**, in their opinion, must take the major blame for poor management of education vis-à-vis quality of outcome
- The government sees teachers only as a **cog in the wheel** but not as independent agents of change
- There is certainly some search for direction within the teaching community but **no shared vision** for the future

School, Home, and Private Tuition: Poor are the Victims

One of the most important factors for efficient running of schools is the kind of parental support and collaboration schools ensure. This is more in theory than in practice.

Schools in general in Tamil Nadu, whether private or government, treat parents as **clients receiving charity**. They have the least inclination to treat them as the primary stakeholders in education. Least, they feel accountable to them.

As early as 1999-2000, the Government of Tamil Nadu made provisions to make Parent-Teacher Associations (PTAs), statutory. But not much has happened.

The present context quality crisis calls for a deeper look at the **parent-teacher-school relationship.**

We saw previously, teachers blaming parents for not supervising their children's studies at home. When we asked several parents from the Socially and Economically Disadvantaged Groups (SEDGs), they gave a range of answers:

Parents' Point of View

1. "We are **not educated enough** to guide or supervise our children's education."
2. "The Homework assignments are too much; we **can't handle** them ourselves."
3. "When we meet teachers, they **only complain about** our children, and we do not get any solution."
4. "**English and Mathematics** are not taught well that we must send the children to private tuition."
5. "Teachers instead of helping our children, directly or indirectly encourage them to **go for private tuition**."
6. "Poor marks of our children badly upset us, and we **find hope only in private tuition** than in the teacher or school."

Parents are not totally wrong in their views. Majority of these parents are agricultural labourers or urban daily wage earners. Unlike their middle-class counterparts, nether have they the optimal home atmosphere nor the intellectual resources to supervise the studies of their children. But their

aspirations for their children are very high today. And are welcome. Tens of thousands of these aspiring parents, for no fault of their own, are left at the mercy of the tuition-teachers and coaching centers these days.

Tuitions are bad in the following sense:

1. They **commercially exploit** parental anxiety
2. They promote the **culture of cramming** for examination in children
3. Attending tuition beyond school hours is a big **psychological burden** on children and it takes away the joy of childhood
4. Tuitions and coaching classes directly and indirectly inculcate **unrealistic competitiveness** especially in terms of marks.
5. Tuition culture is an **anathema** to the idea of total-quality education.

Parents pay the penalty for what teachers and schools fail to do

Tuitions were seen earlier, as out of pocket educational expenses on parents who could afford. This explanation does not hold good anymore. Now, it is the poor parents, who pay for the private tuitions which is beyond their means. This is squirely because of the poor-quality education their children get both from the government and private schools. This is a classic example of how the gains made through **access and equity in education, is reversed.** 'Tuition culture' is a parasite that grows lavishly on a weak educational system and is a great undoing of education.

No wonder, it invites indignation from all quarters. For instance, on 22nd of March, Hon'ble Justice S M Subramaniam of **Madras High Court (Madurai Bench)** ordered that the state government should form special teams in all districts to identify and take disciplinary action against government schoolteachers who take private tuition and run private businesses. Justice Subramanian also raised questions over the quality of education rendered by the government schoolteachers. (Reported in Business Standards).

The quality issue cannot be addressed by schools without winning the support of the parents on a meaningful basis.

Rote Learning and Examination

Though there has been experiments on **Continuous and Comprehensive Evaluation (CCE)**, the tendency is to return to conventional evaluation.

Children in the age group 8-16 when asked about the exams, they unanimously said they do not like the conventional written examinations.

The reasons they gave, are as follows:

1. Exams bring **fear and anxiety** even before they arrive.
2. There is too **much prodding** by parents and teachers to study.
3. There is so much to memorize.
4. **Forgetting** or inability to recall during an examination is very painful.
5. There is **so much scolding** by parents and teachers if we do not score well.
6. **Teachers compare** one another using marks in the class.
7. The **time,** they allow is not enough.
8. One-word answers [objective type exam] **make us think.**
9. Teachers sometimes threaten us with **surprise tests.**
10. Some teachers **allow us to copy,** and some don't.

Though these answers do not explain much at the outset, children **do not** seem to meaningfully relate with exams. They invoke in children fear, anxiety, and contempt over comparison. They test very little in terms of their ability to think or analyze.

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If we couch the concept of quality of education in terms of child's ability to discover her/his agency, and in acquisition of such skills as **analytical thinking, problem-solving and creativity,** centralized, impersonal, written exams are no good bet. Education as an emancipatory project must, ensure holistic development of the child. This means evaluating both the **cognitive and non-cognitive** development. **Then, the Continuous comprehensive Evaluation (CCE) is the best candidate. However, this is not possible if the classroom remains teacher-centric and the authority of the text, taken as final.**

Language Learning: Tamil and English

Our Conviction put to Test

The government in principle is ever committed to give Tamil language the pride of place in school education. But over the past two decades, this conviction has been put to several tests.

There are two sides to this issue: First one is quite external to education. It is the **fast-changing global economy** that creates employment opportunities within India and abroad. This demands English language skills from a utilitarian point of view.

The second issue is, educational and pedagogical. This is where we suffer serious ambiguities. We for no reason, refuse to draw a clear line between **'LearningTamil as Mother Tongue,' 'Learning English as a Language of utility'** and **'Using English as Medium of Instruction.'** The consequences are now visible. It is the worrisome low proficiency in both Tamil and English. This is across all levels of education.

Our Stand on Tamil at the Turn of the New Millennium

In 1999-2000 Policy Note, said, "[The Government has taken a policy decision all subjects other than English is taught in Tamil only so that they [children] do not lose affinity with their mother tongue and culture and more specifically to change the practice of teaching only in English as medium of instruction in nursery schools. *Government have also decided to give* **recognition in future to only those Nursery schools that teach at least two of the three subjects other than English and Tamil, viz. Mathematics, Science, Social Studies in Tamil.**" (Emphasis added).

Recognizing the Emerging Reality

Subsequently, in 2004-2005, it rightly recognized the emerging situation. It said, "… special emphasis is placed on teaching of English language with focus on expression and communication as this skill is a must for securing new employment opportunities in the sunrise sector."

Giving up Convictions on Tamil

But what followed was not a pedagogically sound prgrammes to promote the much-required expression and communication skills in English. Instead, the government started English medium sections in the government schools on a war footing since 2012-2013. This was to compete with private schools.

Worst came when the government dropped its '1999-2000 caveat' that at the lower primary level at least two subjects should be taught in Tamil. Private capital now had a free hand starting **all kinds of English Medium Schools** throwing educational standards to the wind.

According to United District Information System for Education (UDISE) 2019-2020 Tamil Nadu **57.6% of children were already in English Medium**. Still worse, is the figure for primary school enrollment. **It is 91%** (NSS Report No. 585, Quoted by Nilakantan: 2022). The same figure for West Bengal is 18%.

Two adverse effects have happened. First, we have allowed **Tamil language to get badly discredited as having no utility value.** Second, we have mistaken English Medium education as a guarantee for 'the much- required expression and communication skills." Again, the aspiring poor class of people (SEDGs) are the victims. They have been bought into the idea that if at all emancipation comes through education, it can come only through **the cure-all English Medium,** government or private.

What Children Say about Language Learning

1. "We **like both** Tamil and English"
2. "It is our **parents** who decide to which medium we should go"
3. "Many English teachers **do not know** English"
4. "They teach **English in Tamil**"
5. "We do not get **opportunities to speak** in English"
6. "When we try to speak **others tease** us a lot"
7. "**Memorizing** in English is difficult"
8. "We study English because they say we will get **good jobs**"
9. "If we speak in Tamil, we will **not get good jobs**"
10. "Many of our friends have come back from English medium schools because their parents **could not pay the fee**."

Teachers' Views on Language Teaching

1. There is a big confusion between evincing **pride over Tamil** as mother tongue and Teaching Tamil to suit present day requirements
2. Tamil language is even now **closed** to receiving knowledge from different domains particularly.
3. Tamil language learning is **confused** with learning Tamil literature
4. Even now **Tamil textbooks** keep children away
5. There is no scope for children to articulate their experience in Tamil; **Tamil rhetoric** finds precedence.
6. Tamil is taught **as a subject** and not as a language skill

7. There is a tacit **value hierarchy** placing English above Tamil.

English Teaching

1. Given the **sudden expansion,** there is a dearth of good English teachers
2. English language **skill cannot be taught** as a subject in 40-minute period
3. There is so much ambiguity as to whether English could be taught **bilingually** or not
4. There is no scope for English **language practice**; present arrangements are inadequate
5. Most of the English teachers are **badly equipped**.
6. **Family background** of the children are a problem; their parents can't speak or write English. They can't support their children learning English
7. **Private English tuitions** contribute to confusion in English teaching.

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The Extra-Curricular: Art, Sports, and Games: The Periphery

Every policy note makes the best rhetoric on the extra-curricular- art, sports, and games. They used to be justified as necessary component of education as they brought both mental and physical health to children. In recent times, this is touted in the name of 'joyful' schooling.

But in practice, it is the **biggest tokenism ever** paid to education in Tamil Nadu, and for that matter, elsewhere in India too.

The Wrong Premise

The idea of 'extra-curricular' is premised on the age-old educational and pedagogical theories. These old theories celebrate **'cognitive learning'** to which domain falls learning **science, mathematics, languages,** and host of other disciplines which they call **'subjects'** schools teach. Everything else is an 'aside' or 'extra.' This 'extra' is part of the 'lesser brain', or the 'emotional brain,' and hence becomes the peripheral activity of the school.

This is the reason why the token 2 hours are allotted for art teaching, or games. The schools continue to see extra-curricular are meant for a few children who otherwise **do not or cannot concentrate on studies**. For a good student, it can be a **recreational aside**, and crossing that limit can harm the child's 'regular studies.' Yet another idea associated is, 'creating the **spectacle** using the extra-curricular.' This manifests in the form of the "Annual Sports Day' and the 'Annual School Day Cultural.' Again, a few children perform, and majority watch with envy.

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Holistic Development

Modern neural science has completely discredited the above theory. They say that it is wrong to separate the so called '**analytica**l' learning and '**emotional**' learning. One depends on the other. For example, for a child to study science well, she first needs openness of mind, a defining moment to get interested or develop passion and involvement, sustain motivation, and finally enjoy of science learning process itself.

Plunging straight into studying science does not help much. But a story told about Einstein, a play enacted on the conflict between the church and Galileo, a documentary that shows the first expedition to Antarctica and story of the home-based laboratory Sir C V Raman put up, can better initiate a child taking interest in science rather than Newton's theory of mechanics per se. unfortunately, we ask our children to dream about passing the most challenging 'science exam' rather than selling them dreams about how

grand, and meaningful it could be to become a scientist. **Mathematics, science, and for that matter social sciences, cannot sell children dreams straight away.**

These dreams can be evoked easily and powerfully, by creating several artistic experiences in children. Practically, this calls for two things. First, the present practice of teaching subjects (science, math etc.) in an unrelated manner should give place to integrated, and issue-based teaching.

Second, there can be **art experiment-components for each subject.** They must be designed in such a manner that thy help children to meaningfully connect their emotional self with that of the big ideas of science, math, history, social sciences etc. The medium can differ. It could be drawing, painting, theatre, video-making, photo essays, storytelling, composing poems music etc.

CEDAR in March 2021, conducted a survey interviewing 435 children 301 (69%) from the Rural blocks of Thooththukudi District and 134 (31%) from Madurai City Urban Deprived Areas on the scope and availability of Co-curricular Activities. Majority of these children study in government schools and the rest in Aided Schools.

Availability of Different Extra or Co-curricular Activities in Schools

No.	Co- curricular Activity	Response as to the Scope and availability			Total %
		No Response %	Not Available %	Available %	
1.	Sports and Games	3	**20**	77	100
2.	Drawing and Painting	3	**49**	48	100
3.	Theatre	3	**75**	22	100
4.	Folk Art	3	**76**	21	100
5.	Story Telling	3	**69**	29	100
6.	Creative Writing	3	**81**	16	100
7.	Film Viewing	3	**55**	42	100
8.	News Gathering/Reading	3	**78**	19	100
9.	Photography	3	**97**	-0-	100
10.	Videography	3	**97**	-0-	100
11.	Internet/virtual Classroom	3	**84**	13	100

Time Spent by Schools on different Extra-curricular Activities in Week

Co-curricular Activities	% of Children's Responses in Terms of Time Spent in a Week					Total %
	<30 minutes	**30 to 60 minutes**	**1 to 2hrs**	**< 2 hrs**	**Occasionally**	
1. Sports & Games	45%	40%	6%	8%	1%	100%
2. Drawing & Painting	45%	42%	3%	5%	5%	100%
3. Theatre	40%	20%	14%	0%	26%	100%
4. Folk Art	41%	8%	23%	1%	28%	100%
5. Creative Writing	30%	50%	3%	3%	14%	100%

Teachers' Opinion on Co-curricular Activities

1. Not much support given by school management for Extra-curricular activities
2. If at all schools encourage them, it is for the annual event and sending children for some competitions

3. some aided schools collect money in the name of Extra-curricular activities.

4. Art, culture and games are looked down upon by majority of the teachers; they see that as distraction from studies.

5. Special Teachers involved in Extra- curricular activities are not treated on par with other teachers.

6. The hours allotted to Special Teachers are also appropriated by 'subject teaching teachers.' This is actively encouraged by Headmasters/ Management.

Child Rights, Child Protection and Safeguarding

Every society in its own way celebrates teachers, equating them either with parents or even hold them above parents. They venerate schools as temples of worship. Alexander once said: "I am indebted to my father for my living but to my teacher, living well." Even today, metaphorically this holds good. But the grammar of the teaching-learning situation has changed vastly. No more, education is teacher-centred and schools above law. The pupil there, is a right-bearing child, and teacher's authority legally restrained. In all tradition bound societies, the new homeostases of teacher-centred Vs child-centred classroom and the self-directed Vs teacher-school-imposed-discipline are yet to arrive. This is the locus where any discourse on child rights, child protection and child safeguarding must be placed.

A Range Possibilities Arise

1. Holding on to yesteryear notions of discipline, teachers can wittingly and unwittingly indulge in child rights violations; such violations can be minor or major.
2. The new rights guaranteed to children and their articulation by parents and statutory agencies, can make teachers feel challenged; they can become indifferent or apathetic to student discipline leading to unruliness.
3. Teacher apathy can seriously vitiate their role in child protection responsibilities.
4. As in any other situation of power imbalance, teachers too can become potential child right violators, or abusers.

The Emerging Reality

In recent times, in Tamil Nadu, incidences of child rights violations and abuses have been frequently reported. The pathological extremes of these violations manifested in alleged child sex-abuse, and abetment to suicide of children. The worst happen when alleged violations/ abuses lead to public anger and violence. This certainly indicates that all is not well with the present system of child protection and child safeguarding, if at all there is one.

Tamil Nadu State Policy for Children (TNSPC)

The State Government reaffirming its faith in the UN Convention of Rights of the Child (UNCRC) 1989, National Policy for Children, 2013, the National Plan of action, 2016 and the UN Agenda for Sustainable Development 2030, which

came out with the Tamil Nadu State Policy for Children (TNSPC) in November 2021.

In formulating the policy, the government tries to highlight four strategies: 1. Life, survival, Health, and Nutrition, 2. Education, 3. Protection and 4. Participation.

Para III. 4. Specifically says, "Introduce child safeguarding policy in all schools to make schools safe for children."

Safeguarding is a-day-to-day practice which involves awareness, professional capacity, monitoring and taking appropriate actions without time-lag. Above all, it needs drawing up safeguarding protocols for every school, and putting up a safeguarding mechanism. It is not a passive guarantee of rights but proactive action against any violation.

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FOR THE CONSIDERATION OF THE COMMITTEE

I. TO REVISE AND REINTRODUCE CHILD-CENTERED PEDAGOGY WITH FRESH VIGOR

1. Learning from the Past

Any good policymaking must be iterative. Whatever be the radical departure, there will be elements of continuity. This is more so when we look at the two-decade experiment meant to assure quality by ushering in child-centered classroom. Just because ABL/ALM cohort did not firmly provide children with foundational skills in literacy and numeracy, we need not throw the baby with the bath water. This means that restoring **child-centered pedagogy supported by child-centered classroom** is of utmost importance. This is futuristic, and this alone will help this generation and generations to come, to successfully navigate the 21st Century. Inventing new strategies, methods and practices can be best done by learning from mistakes. SCERT must conduct a first-rate evaluative study of the two-decade long 'Quality Experiment', involving child-centered pedagogy. Then must follow the course correction.

2. Educational Movement to Realize Radical Restructuring

the apparent flaw in the previous approach was excessive reliance on 'educational management strategies including training.' Bringing in child-centered pedagogy vis-a- vis classroom, demands changing deep-rooted socio-political, and cultural structures. This calls for all-round mobilization of energy in the form of an educational movement. (E.g., Arivoli Iyakkam). This is possible only when there is a shared vision among all- the government of the day, the educational bureaucracy, teachers, parents, students, civil society, writers, scholars and the ordinary men and women who are otherwise apathetic. This calls for massive investment for educating the public. public

3. Radical Restructuring of the Classroom to Precede

Radical restructuring of the classroom must precede any radical restructuring of pedagogy. This is not primarily in the hands of educational bureaucracy. It is **in the locus of Teacher-School-Parent transaction** or collaboration. This calls for radical change in school-level governance, teacher-school accountability to parents, parental collaboration in school projects and

teacher's willingness to accept their role as facilitators. This cannot happen overnight. The state should throw its full weight behind this.

II. TO INVEST IN TEACHERS

4. Professionalizing the Role of the Primary School Teacher

As it appears, teachers are just the cogs in the wheel of the massive educational bureaucracy which is in the habit of thrusting its own agenda from above. If primary school teachers are kept at the bottom end of the command structure for ever, they will move the clock further back the government must take every possible step to **professionalize the role** of the primary school teachers and recognize her autonomy. This means:

I. Avoid the appointment of all kinds of ad hoc teachers, and contract employees to handle primary education

II. Develop a professional code of conduct to ensure their independent thinking and autonomy, and not department rules.

III. Strictly hold them accountable for their actions and enforce the professional code of conduct.

IV. Expose them to the best possible trainings including that of **getting them exposed to the international community** of schoolteacher. It is not university teachers who lay the foundation for the Global Citizenry, but schoolteachers.

V. Make School specific professional assessment must be made compulsory for career advancement

III. ENDING PRIVATE TUITIONS

6.recognising the Vicious Cycle

Private, commercial tuition is a direct indicator of the quality of education a school offers. It works in a vicious cycle. Teacher cum exam-centered classroom leads to rejection of poor-performers/slow-learners in a class. This makes homes that cannot provide family-platforms and tutorial support, go to private tutors who commercially exploit them poor quality tutorial. Tuitions further their reinforce Teacher-centered Pedagogy and Exams. And the quality moves down in a spiral.

7. Making Remedial Input a Teaching Routine

Pedagogy and curriculum must be reorganized in such a way that children in a class, must be monitored continuously for their progress from the beginning. At every quarter, those who lag must be identified and remedial output planned. The remedial input can go along with regular teaching routine. And wherever necessary, it can go beyond the class hours too.

8. Roping in Parents

Parents must be compulsorily roped in, to muster support for this process of remedying. The teacher should constantly engage the parents in reviewing the progress made by the child.

9. Bringing in Continuous Evaluation

The key however lies in removing the conventional exams. In its place, bring in Continuous Comprehensive Evaluation (CCE). Keeping track of individual child's progress by a class teacher, and to be in communication with parents, are not difficult things to do. It needs empathy, fairness, and professional commitment.

10. Taking Disciplinary Action

Tuition by teachers of the government and government aided schools must be strictly banned. Violators must be dealt with under service and conduct rules.

IV. LANGUAGE LEARNING

11. Taking Advantage of the Mother Tongue

It is the argument of many child psychologists and sociolinguists that learning in mother tongue is the only way to ensure free, joyful, original, and reflexive learning. The **rich natural-social-emotional world of the child** is better comprehended by concepts pedagogically aided by the mother tongue. It is necessary to bring back Tamil Medium education with fresh vigour and energy.

12. Not to Leave Tamil Behind English, in the name of Utility

It is quite unfair to leave Tamil behind English, in the name of utility. Bringing back Tamil as a language of learning (Medium of Instruction) has twin objectives. First, the notion that Tamil medium education denies proficiency in English must be removed from the minds of parents and children. The recent developments clearly show that the 'English proficiency of English

Medium students' is no better than the 'English Proficiency of Tamil Medium students.' (After initial fancy, many children belonging to poorer households are reverting to Tamil Medium in Government Schools). The pedagogical challenge, therefore, is**, increasing English Proficiency in children irrespective of the medium of study** which is immensely possible. This also calls for removal of the colonial baggage associated with English.

13. 'A Forward-Looking Tamil is the need of the Hour'

The second of the twin objective is, addressing the utility issue of Tamil that has crept in, over the past 20 years. This is market driven. Education, educationists, and the state instead of taking this up as a challenge, have tried to hide behind English. This has served no useful purpose to the vast majority studying in our schools. As we go along assuring English proficiency in schools, we need to doubly strengthen Tamil, through Tamil Medium Education. This calls for a "Forward Looking Tamil'. This means, equipping Tamil language to creatively engage the 21st century developments. **The Forward-Looking Tamil we envisage, must be such a receptacle as well catalyser of new knowledge of every domain, particularly that of science and technology.** This is quite opposite of venerating and classicising Tamil. This apart, a student studying in Tamil medium must have the opportunity to continuously climb up the educational ladder till the tertiary stage. In the past, we tried many half-hearted experiments only to give them up. We must go beyond.

14. English Language Skill cannot be Taught as a Subject

It is imperative to develop the right pedagogy and environment to teach English as a language skill, and not as a subject as we do now. A skill can be acquired only through practice. This means **articulating personal experiences, thoughts and emotions through speech and writing** and engaging others- teachers, peers, strangers, and formal audiences and by using different functional domains of knowledge. This type of learning contexts is seldom available in schools. (By contrast, the middle, upper middle and rich classes can naturally or by design, provide very stimulating and a 'language rich' family platforms for their children to practice).

15. Bilingual Teaching of Tamil

Researchers speak about the **interdependence hypotheses**. By this, they mean that 'there is a common underlying language proficiency for two languages being learned by a bilingual student. And this helps to transfer competencies developed in one language to another.' What logically

follows then, is, a strong foundation in the mother tongue can be used as a pedagogical resource to teach the second language called English. Straightforwardly, this calls for bilingual teaching of English.

16. Allowing Tamil and English to Creatively Engage

If we really want to improve the teaching resources at schools and teacher standards, we need to have very strong graduate and postgraduate language programmes, which sufficiently allow Tamil and English equally but creatively engage one another. Practically speaking, why can't there be B.A. (Tamil and English) degree programmes besides B.A. (Tamil Language and Literature) and B.A. English (Language and Literature) programmes. **Why can't we break the existing pedagogical and disciplinary barriers?** This will also largely empower students opting to master Tamil literature, who otherwise get into an exclusivist trap studying Tamil language and literature alone.

V. THE EXTRA-CURRICULAR MUST GET INTEGRATED WITH THE CURRICULAR

17. Using Art and Play for integrated Learning

the stage has come where **art, culture** and **play** need to be integrated with the 'curricular' as they provide wonderful pathways to reach children. Even, the core subjects like science and maths can use these mediums. The idea 'art for art's sake' and game game's sake do not ensure joyful learning in all children but only in those who see that as an exclusive avocation. The art and play, schools encourage, must be truly participatory.

18. Collaborative Teaching Experiments Using Art

The value hierarchy of subjects in the name of utility, must go. An integrated experience of learning art and science for instance, brings broader understanding of the phenomenon under enquiry, better application of mind to real life situations and problem-solving capabilities. Schools should crate space for collaborative teaching experiments, at least on select issues by all concerned- the science teacher, the social science teacher the storyteller, the theatre teacher, and the artists. Children must be shown life as an organic whole.

19. Higher Investment in Art Education

Schools right now, do not have the required resources to do this. The government should come forward to invest in special teachers, alternative curricular research, and experiments.

20. Mobilising Resources from Beyond the School

Schools can be encouraged to collaborate with organisations, individuals and professionals who have the right resources in art and cultural training.

VI. CHILD RIGHT, CHILD PROTECTION AND SAFEGUARDING

21. School-Level Safeguarding Protocols and Mechanisms

Safeguarding as we know must necessarily go much beyond the statement of policies. Each school must be asked to adopt **standard protocols, and procedures for action** that prevent even minor rights-violation, harm, abuse, and distress caused intentionally or unintentionally in the school setting. It should prompt proactive action and is a day-to-day practice. Protection is part of it and is more specific to children who are vulnerable in the school setting.

22. Child Protection and Safeguarding Audit

Safeguarding practice calls for greater **awareness among teachers, accepting of responsibilities and becoming accountable**. Without monitoring by both internal and external agencies, this runs the danger of becoming yet another tokenism in the long line of earlier initiatives. This is where Child Protection and Safeguarding Audit becomes imperative. This audit to become effective, must be made **mandatory** and supported by relevant provisions of law. If this happens, it is half the battle.

23. Separate Directorate for Child Protection and Safeguarding

The government must initiate measures to have enough **internationally accredited auditors** for monitoring of child safety and **active practicing of the safeguarding in schools**. When we have a separate Directorate for conducting school exams, why not we have a separate Directorate for Child Protection and Child Safeguarding at Schools.

VII. SCHOOL DEVELOPMENT

24. Benchmarking and Developing Government Schools

There are about 35, 554 Government Schools in Tamil Nadu. These are the biggest hope for children belonging to socially and economically disadvantaged households. Unfortunately, all these schools are not at same levels of development. They vastly differ in terms of infrastructure facility, enrolment, and quality of teaching. Left in this situation the poor children will

be increasingly forced to send their children to private schools. The government should come forward to launch a time bound 'School Development Programme.' Schools must be first categorised by levels of a benchmarked standard' and then developed on a targeted basis in a given period of time. Creating a School Development Authority witch involves multi-disciplinary expertise can make this viable

25. Mobilize all the Available Resources

It is our view that radical changes in education in favour of socially and economically marginalised children and youth, cannot be realised through stand-alone policies and actions of the government, and educational establishments. There must be active partnership and collaboration between them, and other sectors of the society- civil society, NGOs, corporates, educationists, thought leaders etc. This calls for specifically identifying areas/nature of partnership, collaboration, and mobilisation.

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Appendix

List of Participants in:

1. Consultation-1: "Addressing the Educational Challenges Faced by Children and Youth belonging to 'Socially and Economically Disadvantaged Communities: Implications for the Proposed Educational Policy of the Tamil Nadu Government" [organised by CEDAR in collaboration with Lady Doak College and TNCRW on Sep 30th at Madurai]

2. Consultation-2 One-day Consultation organised by CEDAR with Schoolteachers on Oct 1st at Kovilpatti

3. Consultation-3 One-day Consultation organised by CEDAR with Children on Oct 2nd at Madurai

4. Focus Group Discussions (FGDs) Conducted between 2021-2022

S. No.	Name of the Participant	Position	Academic/Professional Background
1.	**Dr Chinnaraj Joseph**	**Director and Managing Trustee, CEDAR** (Formerly Principal and Secretary, The American College, Madurai)	Development Sociologist by academic pursuit and practice. Member, UGC Committee for Starting Centrally Sponsored Colleges in 350 Educationally Backward Districts in India (2007- 2008); UGC Nominated Member, The Governing Council, National Assessment and Accreditation Council (NAAC) 2007-2010; Member, UGC Committee for Granting Autonomy for Colleges in India (2007- 2011); Member, Expert Committee for Advising Change in School Curriculum in History (2017)
2.	**Dr Kalaiyarasan, A.**	**Assistant Professor**, Madras Institute of Development Studies (MIDS), Chennai.	A Non-resident fellow at the Watson Institute for International and Public Affairs, Brown University. A Fulbright-Nehru Fellow at Brown University and was a research faculty at the National Institute of Labour Economics Research and

			Development, a research wing of NITI Aayog (Planning Commission), Government of India. His recent book: "Dravidian Model: Interpreting Political Economy of Tamil Nadu (Cambridge University Press 2021, co-authored) and Rethinking Social Justice (Orient Black swan 2020 co-editor)
3.	**Dr Ramya, M. M.**	**Dean,** A.M. Jain College (Autonomous), Chennai.	Research interests in the areas of Digital Image Processing, Artificial Intelligence, Machine Vision and Virtual and Augmented Reality. Grants worth Rs. Two crores awarded. 2 products were developed during the pandemic and patented – A service robot for COVID-19 isolation wards and a Portable air-purifying respirator. Fellowship from World Technology University Network (WTUN) for Faculty Exchange Program at UniversitiTeknologi Malaysia in December 2019. Publications: Journal articles-39; Conference presentations – 24; Citations – 190 and h-index – 7
4.	**Dr Raja Meenakshi J**	**Asst. Professor,** Dept. of Women's Studies, Mother Teresa Women's University.	Post-Doctoral Fellow - Indian Council of Social Science Research (ICSSR), Department of Social Work, Central University of Tamil Nadu. Published books for UGC/CBSE – NET/JRF/SET in Social Work, Sociology and Women's Studies. Co-authored in academic research, writing books and journals.
5.	**Dr R Beulah Jeyashree**	**Vice Principal,** Lady Doak College	Administrator/Teacher
6.	**Dr Helen Mary Jacqueline**	**Dean of Academic Affairs,** Lady Doak College	Administrator/Teacher

7.	**Andrew Sesuraj M**	**Public Policy Consultant,** Tamil Nadu State Planning Commission	Former Convenor of Tamil Nadu Child Rights Watch (TNCRW), Child Protection Consultant of UNICEF, State Master Trainer and Independent Consultant of Samagra Siksha and Trustee and Hon. Director of Jeeva Jyothi Trust. Involved as Principal Investigator, Co-investigator and Co-facilitator in research, Coordinated and committee member of drafting policies for UNICEF, Tamil Nadu State Policy for Children. Worked as the Asst. Professor at Loyola College and Madras School of Social Work for 10 years. Invited as Resource Person both at the International and National Level for Seminars and workshops.
8.	**Mr N Thirugnanam**	**Chief Coordinating Editor**, Tamil Nadu Textbook and Educational Services Corporation, Govt. of Tamil Nadu Chennai	Previously District Coordinator, Samagra Shiksha, Madurai.
9.	**Dr Sundar Kaali**	**Independent Scholar-Researcher** Subaltern Historian and Independent Researcher.	Formerly with the Department of Tamil, Gandhigram Rural Institute (Deemed University), Authored several Research Papers, Journal Articles, Book Chapters and books in Subaltern History and Cultural Studies.
10.	**Mr Mammathu N**	**Musicologist, Author, Critique**	Umaru Pulavar Awardee 2022 Principle Investigator Cum Organizer – Tamil Music Research Centre – Thyagaraja Arts & Science College, Madurai, Member Board of Studies, – S. R. M. University Member – Curriculum Development (Music) – School Education Department - Government of

			Tamil Nadu Director and Head, dept. of Indian music, MMFSA, Madurai - From 2016 to till date.
11.	**Dr Sabu Simon**	**Director, Arogya Agam**, Theni District, The State Convenor, FPCP and Working Committee member of TNCRW.	Graduation and post-graduation in Plant Sciences from The American College. M.Phil. and PhD from Gandhigram Rural Institute (Deemed University).
12.	**Mr Anbunathan K**	**Independent Consultant**	Former Correspondent, Chettinadu Group of Institutions, Former Director of the Department of Management Studies, The American College
13.	**Dr Uma Maheswari N**	**Asst. Professor,** Dept. of Social Sciences, Lady Doak College and Coordinator of MSW.	Work experience in NGOs. Contributed a few chapters in books. Presented papers at International and National Seminars and Conferences.
14.	**Ms Vidhya Lakshmi R**	**Asst. Professor,** Dept. of Social Sciences, Lady Doak College, Madurai	Master's degree in Social Work, Diploma in Training and Development and Labour Laws. Worked in the NGO and healthcare sectors for 15 years before joining Academics as a full-timer. Published books and contributed chapters for books. Attended and presented papers at National level seminars and workshops
15.	**Mr Charles S**	**Asst. Professor, Dept. of Social** Work at Madurai Institute of Social Sciences and **Director – Nodal Office Madurai of Childline.**	Education: Master's degree in social work, M.Phil. in Labour Studies Worked in the NGO sector for 6 years before joining Academics Master trainer of Tamil Nadu Police Wellbeing Programme of Madurai District
16.	**Mr Sharath Sathya**	**Programme Officer,** Tamil Nadu State Child Protection Society, Dept. of Social Defence, TN.	Founder, KarpomKarpipom and works as the Trainer in Child Safety, Child Safeguarding, Prevention of Sexual abuse, and

			adolescent behaviour issues of children.
17.	**Ms P Pathirakali**	**Headmistress** Hindu NadarKamarajar High School, Chozhapuram	Teacher/Administrator
18.	**Ms S. Jeya Shree**	**Headmistress,** Panchayat Union Middle School, Pungavarnatham	Teacher/Administrator
19.	**Ms V Delcy Devanesam**	**Headmistress,** T.N.D.T.A Primary School, Iluppaiyurani, Koosalipatti	Teacher/Administrator
20.	**Ms Amala Pushpam**	**Music Mistress,** Government Girls Higher Secondary School, Kovilpatti	Teacher
21.	**Mr Manthiramoorthy**	**P.G. Assistant,** Government Girls Higher Secondary School, Vembar	Teacher
22.	**Mr R Parthiban**	**P.G. Assistant,** Government Girls Higher Secondary School, Vilathikulam	Teacher
23.	**Mr S Gopala Krishnan**	**P.G. Assistant,** Madurai Meenakshi Matriculation School, Madurai.	Teacher
24.	**Mr V Subramanian**	**P.G. Assistant,** Government Girls Higher Secondary School, Kovilpatti	Teacher
25.	**Ms Saraswathi**	**S.G. Teacher,** A.V.S. Primary School, Muthiahpuram, Thoothukudi	Teacher
26.	**Mr M Raj**	**S.G. Teacher,** Panchayat Union Middle School, Melanambipuram, Thoothukudi	Teacher
27.	**Ms B Manimozhi Nangai**	**S.G. Teacher,** Lakshmi Mills Primary School, Kovilpatti	Teacher
28.	**Dr N Ratna**	**B.T. Assistant, (English Teacher)** Athimarapatti.	PhD in English

		Thoothukudi Rural.	
29.	**Mr Siva**	**B.T. Assistant,** Madura College Higher Secondary School, Madurai.	Teacher
30.	**Mr Koodalingam**	**District Programme Coordinator,** Samagra Siksha, Thoothukudi District	Administrator
31.	**Dr Christopher Sherwood**	**Piano and Voice Teacher** at Lady Doak College, Madurai	Former Head of the Department of Religion, Philosophy and Sociology, The American College.
32.	**Ms Nisha**	**Director,**Manitham Trust, Dindigul.	NGO Leader
33.	**Ms Helen**	**Director**, Sand Trust, Sivagangai	NGO Leader
34.	**Mr Arockiam**	**Director**-Child Development, Sakthi Vidiyal, Madurai	NGO Leader
35.	**Mr P Raja Gopal**	**Director**, NEEDS, Srivilliputhur, Virudhunagar	NGO Leader
36.	**Mr Nirmal Raja**	**Project Officer,** RCPD, Madurai	NGO Leader
37.	**Mr Arun Raja**	Programme Manager, Child Voice, Nilakottai, Dindigul	NGO Leader
38.	**Ms J Selvi**	Parent/Facilitator	Keela Eral Children Resource Centre
39.	**Ms Howsalya**	Parent/Facilitator	Thomas Nagar Children Resource Centre
40.	**Ms V Chandra**	Parent/Facilitator	KoosalipattiChildren Resource Centre
41.	**Ms Ponnuthai**	Facilitator	ManjanaickerpattiChildren Resource Centre
42.	**Ms Mariammal**	Facilitator	ManjanaickerpattiChildren Resource Centre
43.	**Ms Sangeetha**	Facilitator	Keela Eral Children Resource Centre
44.	**Ms Kalpana**	Parent/Facilitator	Thomas Nagar Children Resource Centre
45.	**Ms Arputhakani**	Parent/Facilitator	Pungavarnatham Children Resource Centre
46.	**Ms Sabitha**	Parent/Facilitator	Jawaharlalpuram Children Resource Centre
47.	**Ms Poonkodi**	Parent/Facilitator	Ambedkar Colony Children Resource Centre

48.	**Ms Meenakshi**	Facilitator	Tallakulam Children Resource Centre
49.	**Basheer Khan N**	**Creative Lead (Filmmaking),** CEDAR	B.Sc., (Viscom), Specialises in 'Children Making Children's Film' as an alternative media strategy
50.	**Ponkundram I**	**Creative Lead (Photography & Music),** CEDAR	Formerly photojournalist at Vikatan publications 2013-2015. Responsible for shaping and leading the Creative Photography Project in CEDAR.
51.	**Karthick V**	**Creative Lead, (Cinematography**), CEDAR	B.B.A, & Dip in Film Making. Involved in film production and the 'Children Viewing Children's films' programme.
52.	**Balakarthikeyan D**	**Research Associate and Field Coordinator,** CEDAR	Postgraduate in Social Work. Involved in Research and Documentation. Coordinates Children's Resource Centres in the urban deprived areas of Madurai.
53.	**Balaji S**	**Creative Lead, (Film Editing),** CEDAR	B.E., Dip. In Filmmaking, Specialises in Film Editing.
54.	**Guru Prakash**	**Creative Lead, (Editing),** CEDAR	B.E (Automobile Engineering). Specialises in Film Editing
55.	**Thaveedu Raja**	**Programme Assistant,** CEDAR	More than 15 years of experience in Office Management
56.	**Michael Raj A**	**Senior Community Educator,** CEDAR	Master's Degree in social work. 15 years of experience in Field Coordination and Programme Delivery
57.	**Marikannan**	**Community Educator**, CEDAR	B.Sc., (Maths) Children's Collective. He teaches Foundational skills in Mathematics and Computer Basics to children. He also teaches dance as an alternative art education.
58.	**Babu K**	**Creative Lead (Drawing and Painting),** CEDAR	B.Sc., Independent Artist and Art Teacher. His paintings have been very well received in several international, national and regional exhibitions and art events.
59.	**Selvam A**	**Creative Lead, (Theatre),** CEDAR	Postgraduate in Social Work, Theatre Artist and trainer. Also a registered artist with the Department of Arts and Culture of the Government of

			Tamil Nadu.
60.	**Muthupriya B**	**Accounts Officer,** CEDAR	Postgraduate in Commerce, worked for Aparajitha Corporate Services. Specialises takes care of Accounts, Statutory Compliances and Office Administration
61.	**Rajadurai B**	**Chief Educator and Manager,** CEDAR	MCA, More than 15 years of experience in Project Implementation, Monitoring and Evaluation in the Development Sector.
62.	**Dr Thressia T.J**	**Research Head,** CEDAR	M.A., PhD. Thressia is a trained Sociologist and had a stint in university teaching. She was the Director of CEDAR for ten years (2010-19) before taking up this assignment after a break.
63.	**Prof. Winfred Thomas**	**Trustee,** CEDAR, Madurai	Madurai
64.	**Prof. Manickam**	**Head, of Ophthalmic Instruments and Maintenance Dept.,** Aravind Eye Hospital, Madurai	Madurai
65.	**Dr Navamani**	**Trustee,** CEDAR	Medical Practitioner
	Mr David Jerald	**Trustee,** CEDAR	Madurai District Court
66.	**Mr Ramachandran**	**Asst. Professor and HOD** Dept. of Social Work, Mannar Thirumalai Naicker College	Teacher
67.	**Mr P Devanathan**	Retd. Government Official	Madurai
68.	**Mr Sivaprakash**	Retd. Civil Engineer	Madurai
69.	**Ms Poornima D**	Student	I B.B.A., Thiagarajar College, Madurai
70.	**Ms R. Rithuvarna**	Student	III B.A., English, Thiagarajar College, Madurai
71.	**Ms P. Raveena**	Student	III B.A. English, Thiagarajar College, Madurai
72.	**Ms Nithya G**	Student	II, MSW, Mannar Thirumalai Naicker College, Madurai
73.	**Mr Srinivasan**	Student	II MSW, Mannar Thirumalai Naicker College, Madurai
74.	**Ms Joshika**	Student	II MSW, Lady Doak College, Madurai

75.	**Ms Shobika S**	Student	II MSW, Lady Doak College, Madurai
76.	**Ms Jeeva Shree**	Student	I MSW, Lady Doak College, Madurai
77.	**Ms R Mithra**	Student	Madurai Institute of Social Sciences, Madurai
78.	**Mr Rajaram**	Student	Madurai Institute of Social Sciences, Madurai
79.	**Ms Anusiya A**	Student	8th standard, Govt. girls higher secondary school, Kovilpatti
80.	**Ms kavya J**	Student	6th standard, Govt. Girls Higher Secondary School, Kovilpatti
81.	**Ms Mathuria T**	Student	6th standard, Shyamala Higher Secondary School, Kovilpatti
82.	**Mr Baskara Eshwar**	Student	8th standard, Everest Mariappa Nadar Higher Secondary School, Kovilpatti
83.	**Mr Ganesh Kumar**	Student	7th standard, Everest Mariappa Nadar Higher Secondary School, Kovilpatti
84.	**Mr Dharshan**	Student	6th standard Nadar Middle School, Kovilpatti
85.	**Ms Sahana**	Student	10th standard, Govt. Higher Secondary School, Kovilpatti
86.	**Ms Kamala Rani**	Child	8th Standard, Govt. Higher Secondary School, Kovilpatti
87.	**Mr Muhil Varshan**	Child	7th Standard, V.O.C. Govt Boys Higher Secondary School, Kovilpatti
88.	**Ms Gayathri**	Child	9th Standard, Everest Mariappa Nadar Higher Secondary School, Kovilpatti
89.	**Mr Kamalesh**	Child	11th Standard, Everest Mariappa Nadar Higher Secondary School, Kovilpatti
90.	**Mr Divakar**	Child	8th Standard, Panchayat Union Middle School, Pungavarnatham, Thoothukudi
91.	**Mr Ramar**	Child	8th Standard, Panchayat Union Middle School, Pungavarnatham, Thoothukudi
92.	**Ms Muruga Lakshmi**	Child	6th Standard, Panchayat Union Middle School, Pungavarnatham, Thoothukudi
93.	**Ms Soundara Valli**	Child	9th Standard, Panchayat Union Middle School, Pungavarnatham,

			Thoothukudi
94.	**Ms Sorna Devi**	Child	7th Standard, Govt. Girls Higher Secondary School, Keela Eral, Thoothukudi
95.	**Ms Karthika**	Child	11th Standard, Govt. Girls Higher Secondary School, Keela Eral, Thoothukudi
96.	**Mr Kanniraj**	Child	9th Standard, Hindu NadarKamarajar High School, Chozhapuram, Thoothukudi
97.	**Ms Gayathri**	Child	11th Standard, Auxilium Matriculation School, Keela Eral, Thoothukudi
98.	**Mr Hariharan**	Child	7th Standard, Veerabahu Vidyalaya Matriculation School, Keela Eral, Thoothukudi
99.	**Ms Vishnu Lakshmi**	Child	6th Standard, Hindu NadarKamarajar High School, Chozhapuram, Thoothukudi
100.	**Ms Nivetha**	Child	8th Standard, Hindu NadarKamarajar High School, Chozhapuram, Thoothukudi
101.	**Mr Mahesh Kumar**	Child	10th standard, Hindu NadarKamarajar High School, Chozhapuram, Thoothukudi
102.	**Mr Ariram Perumal**	Child	12th standard, Raja Higher Secondary School, Manjanaickerpatti, Thoothukudi
103.	**Mr Naga Arjun**	Child	9th Standard, Dhanapal Higher Secondary School, Madurai
104.	**Mr Sakthivel**	Child	7th Standard, Dhanapal Middle School, Madurai
105.	**Mr Radha Krishnan**	Child	6th Standard, Rajaji School, Madurai
106.	**Mr Naresh**	Child	10th Standard, Govt. Higher Secondary School, Othakadai, Madurai
107.	**Ms Gayathri**	Child	7th Standard, Auxilium Matriculation School, Madurai
108.	**Ms Saranya**	Child	7th Standard, Sengunthar Higher Secondary School, Madurai
109.	**Ms Suba Sri**	Child	6th Standard, Sengunthar Higher Secondary School, Madurai
110.	**Mr Vijay Abraham**	Child	6th Standard, Dhanapal Middle School, Madurai

CEDAR was established in 1994. In the first 20 years we largely worked for the abolition of child labour in Viruthunagar, Thoothukudi and Thirunelveli districts of Tamilnadu. We reached out to 144 child labour prone villages. We now work for children and youth coming from the most marginalized and excluded communities in Tamilnadu. We help them to realize their 'creative potentials' and 'agency.' We also involve in Research and Advocacy

CENTRE FOR EDUCATION DEVELOPMENT ACTION AND RESEARCH

CEDAR

ESTD. 1994

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