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CONSTITUTIONAL LAW PERSPECTIVES **ON THE RIGHT TO EDUCATION: THE** **ILLAM THEDI KALVI SCHEME**

AUTHORED BY - DR. C. USHA

ABSTRACT:-

Education systems underwent unprecedented disruptions due to the COVID-19 epidemic, resulting in extended school closures and significant delays in student learning. India, with its vast and varied education sector, encountered exceptional difficulties. Many states responded with novel measures to reduce the educational consequences of this pandemic. The "Illam Thedi Kalvi" (Education at the Doorstep) program launched by Tamil Nadu is a notable initiative. Its aim was to remedy the educational inadequacy caused by the pandemic by bringing education right to students' doorsteps.

The concept of "Illam Thedi Kalvi" was created to provide a stable education during times of school closures. It gathered volunteers, educators and local people to deliver lectures at the students' homes. It aimed at students from underprivileged and marginalized groups who were most affected by the absence of online education. This included providing materials for learning, face-to-day tutoring and using local educational resources to ensure no child was left behind in their ordeal.

The Right to Education (RTE) Act, 2009, is in line with this initiative, which mandates free and compulsory education for children aged 6 to 14 years in India. The Indian Constitution's insistence on educational equity and access for all children, regardless of their background, is enshrined in the RTE Act. "Illam Thedi Kalvi" aims to maintain the RTE Act by providing education to students in schools, bridging the educational gap caused by the outbreak.

"Illam Thedi Kalvi" can be evaluated on a range of factors, including student engagement, learning outcomes, and community involvement. Early reports indicate that the initiative has been

successful in re-entering students into their studies and preventing dropouts. Volunteers have been a valuable source of personalized support for students who struggled with remote learning. The program has also fostered a sense of community ownership and participation in education, which could result in long-term positive effects on the local education system.

However, the program also faced major setbacks. The pandemic presented significant challenges in terms of ensuring the safety of volunteers and students, maintaining high-quality education, and reaching the most remote and underserved regions. Additionally, the use of volunteer programs raises concerns about their long-term viability.

The "Illam Thedi Kalvi" campaign is a crucial step towards mitigating the educational impact of COVID-19 in Tamil Nadu. By adhering to the Right to Education model, it not only addresses immediate learning gaps but also establishes a framework for community-based educational reform. The results of this project can guide general educational changes intended to create a more resilient and fair education system in India.

INTRODUCTION

The Indian Constitution's Article 21A guarantees that children aged 6 to 14 years receive free and compulsory education, which is a fundamental human right. India's constitutional amendment highlights the importance of education for all children, as it is essential to promote both individual and social progress. During crises like the COVID-19 crisis, which disrupted traditional educational systems and posed significant challenges to the continuity of learning, this right has gained considerable weight.

COVID-19 caused a wave of prolonged school closures worldwide, impacting millions of students. These closures brought to light and worsened the existing educational disparities in India, particularly for children from underprivileged families who were deprived of traditional learning resources. Several states in India responded to this unprecedented challenge by adopting innovative measures to maintain education. The "Illam Thedi Kalvi" initiative, which stands for "Education at the Doorstep," is a notable one in Tamil Nadu. This program aimed to provide education directly to students at home, which provided them with education continuity while still adhering to safety

protocols required by the pandemic.

The "Illam Thedi Kalvi" initiative is a proactive approach to address the educational challenges caused by COVID-19. The plan aimed to provide students with educational resources and support by mobilizing volunteers, educators, and members of the community. This strategy was designed for students who were most affected by the digital divide and had the highest potential for educational disintegration. It included providing learning materials, in-house tutoring and using local educational resources to ensure quality education was provided to all children, irrespective of their socio-economic background.

The "Illam Thedi Kalvi" initiative is subject to rigorous scrutiny as per the constitutional basis of India's right to education. Children between the ages of 6 and 14 are entitled to receive education under Article 21A of the Indian Constitution, which was introduced by the 2002 86th Amendment Act. The RTE Act, 2009, amplifies the constitutional imperative to provide free and compulsory education to all children in this age group. The RTE Act aims to promote equal education and eliminate obstacles that prevent children from accessing and completing schooling.

The RTE Act's principles are embodied in the "Illam Thedi Kalvi" initiative. By providing education at the students' doorsteps, the initiative aimed to address issues such as inadequate digital devices and internet access, particularly in rural areas with low economic status. The RTE Act's provision for community involvement in school management and monitoring is complemented by the scheme will involve local partners.

The "Illam Thedi Kalvi" initiative can be evaluated on several levels, including student engagement, learning outcomes, and community involvement. Early reports suggest that the scheme has been successful in re-entering students into their studies and preventing dropouts. Volunteers have been a valuable source of personalized support for students who struggled with remote learning. Additionally, the initiative has fostered a sense of community ownership and participation in education that is essential for the continued success of educational programs.

However, the plan also faced major hurdles. The pandemic presented significant challenges in terms of ensuring the safety of volunteers and students, maintaining high-quality education, and reaching the most remote and underserved regions. Moreover, the use of volunteer programs raises concerns

about their potential to be successful in the long run.

The "Illam Thedi Kalvi" initiative is a significant step towards mitigating the educational impact of COVID-19 in Tamil Nadu. In keeping with the constitutional right to education, the plan not only tackled immediate learning gaps but also highlighted the potential for community-based educational reforms. The outcomes of this endeavor can inform future educational policies and initiatives aimed at establishing a more stable and equitable education system in India. In this paper, we will further explore the constitutional underpinnings of the right to education, the implementation and impact of "Illam Thedi Kalvi" scheme, and its adherence to constitutional mandates.

CONSTITUTIONAL BASIS OF RIGHT TO EDUCATION

History is evidence of various constitutional amendments and interpretations by courts. It began in the first decade of India's independence, as a sign of the nation's commitment to an education for all. Initially, the right to education was included as a directive principle of state policy under Article 45 of the Indian Constitution, which mandated that the State would provide free and compulsory education to all children until they reach fourteen years of age. This provision lacked justiciability due to its being a directive principle, making it unenforceable in court.

The absence of enforceability and the continuous gaps in educational access prompted calls for more stringent constitutional guarantees over time. The 86th Constitutional Amendment Act of 2002 was the outcome of this. The Indian Constitution was amended to include Article 21A, which guarantees the right to education for children aged 6 to 14 years. A fundamental right that was no longer a directive principle marked the tenet of the Indian legal system.

The Indian Constitution's Article 21A states that the State must offer free and compulsory education to all children aged six to fourteen years as per the law. This provision has significant implications, establishing education as a lawful right that citizens can demand and exercise through the courts. The RTE Act, 2009, was implemented to implement the mandate of Article 21A. The RTE Act is an extensive legislation that outlines the specific tasks of the state and other entities to ensure the realization of individuals' right to education. Among the primary attributes of the RTE Act are:

1. The Act provides for free and compulsory education to children aged 6 to 14 years in a community school until they finish their basic education. To receive free education, no child

should be required to pay any fees or charges that could hinder their access to elementary education.

2. The Act establishes standards and guidelines for schools, including pupil-teacher ratios, infrastructure, school-working days, and teacher- working hours. The legislation also establishes minimum standards for teachers and mandates regular professional development.

3. It's time to move on. The RTE Act prioritizes the needs and interests of children in education, with a focus on developing child-friendly methods. The curriculum must align with the Constitution's principles, guaranteeing complete development of the child. The Act forbids the physical and mental abuse of children.

4. The RTE Act mandates the inclusion and fair treatment of children from disadvantaged and less fortunate backgrounds. Government-funded private unaided schools are required to reserve 25% of their seats for children belonging.

The following is a sample. The Act aims to promote community involvement in schools by creating School Management Committees (SMCs), which are composed of parents, teachers, and local authority representatives. Committees are responsible for overseeing the school's remit and guaranteeing grant utilization.

Article 21 A's judicial interpretation, along with the RTE Act, has further ensured the right to education. In several rulings, the Supreme Court of India has emphasized the State's responsibility to uphold this fundamental right. *Society for Unaided Private Schools of Rajasthan v. The Supreme Court confirmed the constitutionality of the RTE Act and its provisions for reserved seats in private unaided schools in the Union of India (2012)*.

To sum up, the right to education in India, as articulated in Article 21A and the RTE Act, is a robust legal framework that ensures equal access to learner's rights. In addition to requiring education, this structure also establishes the principles of educational excellence, inclusivity, and community involvement. This change, which has been largely replaced by an educational right as a fundamental principle, is reflected in India's commitment to the promotion of educational equity and justice.

ILLAM THEDI KALVI SCHEME: AN OVERVIEW

In October 2021, the School Education Department of Tamil Nadu launched the "Illam Thedi Kalvi Scheme" to promote education at the doorstep. The COVID-19 outbreak brought about significant educational disruptions, including school closures that lasted for weeks and new challenges in maintaining the continuity of learning. Its main aim is to reduce the amount of education lost by pupils due to these closures, providing them with access to education within their homes.

The epidemic emphasized and intensified existing educational disparities, with students from low-income families encountering more challenges with online education. To address these disparities, the Tamil Nadu government created the Illam Thedi Kalvi initiative to ensure that education's benefits were directly accessible to students from the least disadvantaged backgrounds. The plan seeks to address the disparity in foundational literacy and numeracy skills, which are crucial for students' academic and vocational advancement.

The implementation strategy of the Illam Thedi Kalvi scheme is based on community involvement and local resources. The initiative employs teachers, educated youth, and other community members as volunteers to provide educational content to students without any intermediary involvement. Personalized learning and shared responsibility towards education are made possible by this grassroots approach.

Important factors in the implementation strategy are:

1. Volunteers who are passionate about education must be recruited and trained to ensure the scheme's success. The government commenced a far-reaching campaign to bring volunteers from all backgrounds, including retired teachers, college students, and local educated youth. These volunteers received training to teach them the pedagogical skills and materials needed to effectively teach foundational literacy and numeracy.
2. Instead of relying on online platforms, the initiative established localized learning centers within local areas. They were placed in places like community halls, schools and even open spaces where students could meet in small, safe groups. Face-to-face learning was a key factor in this setup, as it allows students to learn by heart, even for younger children, who need more direct instruction.
3. It's time to move on. The Illam Thedi Kalvi initiative provides a curriculum that addresses the short-term learning gap caused by the outbreak. It centers on foundational literacy and numeracy,

which are crucial for academic success. They aim to be engaging and appropriate for the age/learning levels of students. The government furnished them, resulting in uniformity of quality and content across various regions.

4. A robust monitoring and evaluation system was implemented to ensure the success of the scheme. Students' progress was regularly evaluated to identify areas of improvement and tailor instruction accordingly. A system of feedback mechanisms was implemented, involving parents, teachers, and community members to continuously enhance the program.

The following is a sample. The scheme highlighted the significance of community involvement in educational processes. A supportive home environment was established for parents and guardians to participate in their children's learning process. By mobilizing resources and coordinating local efforts, community leaders created a sense of responsibility for the success of the initiative.

The initial impact and challenges associated with the Illam Thedi Kalvi project have been positive. It is said that a significant amount of students who had been left behind by the school closures have experienced re-engagement. Volunteers have been a valuable source of personalized support in helping students catch up on lost knowledge, particularly in reading and basic AP. The initiative has led to a stronger partnership between the community and schools, with parents contributing more strongly towards education.

But the scheme has faced some obstacles in implementing it. The ongoing pandemic poses a significant risk to the safety of both volunteers and students. Health protocols must be strictly followed to prevent the spread of the virus, including social isolation and sanitation measures. It is also a major challenge to keep volunteers motivated and committed for an extended period, especially when they have other commitments to attend to. Another issue is the scale and sustainability of the initiative. The short-term success of the localized and volunteer-driven approach is questioned, as well as the long-lasting question of how to use volunteers. To ensure a long-term impact, the government must consider adding successful features of the program to the formal education system.

The Illam Thedi Kalvi initiative can offer valuable insights for future educational policies and

emergency responses. Its emphasis on community-based approaches and foundational skills can be a blueprint for other regions facing similar challenges. This initiative provides policymakers with the opportunity to create stronger education systems that can withstand changes and maintain continuity of learning for all students.

The Illam Thedi Kalvi initiative is a crucial measure taken to address the educational setbacks caused by COVID-19 in Tamil Nadu. The initiative has made significant headway in reducing educational expenses and increasing educational access to students, by providing them with access. By implementing the scheme, it can shape wider educational changes and contribute to a more inclusive and resilient education system in India.

ANALYSIS OF THE SCHEME IN LIGHT OF THE RIGHT TO EDUCATION

In light of the Right to Education Act, it would be beneficial to evaluate the Illam Thedi Kalvi scheme in terms of its accessibility and inclusiveness. Under the RTE Act, children of all socio-economic backgrounds are entitled to receive a free and compulsory education. The Illam Thedi Kalvi initiative aims to bring education to the doorstep of students, particularly those from marginalized and underprivileged backgrounds who were hardest hit by the digital divide during the outbreak.

By assembling volunteers and community resources, the initiative goes beyond traditional barriers of lack of digital devices and internet connectivity that were worsened during the outbreak. This localized model allows students in far-flung and poorer areas to continue their studies. The emphasis on foundational literacy and numeracy in the scheme is significant for these students, who are frequently left with less support than their peers. The direct involvement not only bridges learning gaps but also fosters a supportive educational atmosphere within the community.

The quality of education is equally important as the accessibility, which is a crucial aspect of educational equity. Training and competence of volunteers is crucial to the success of the Illam Thedi Kalvi scheme. By utilizing appropriate training programs, volunteers are better equipped to teach relevant subjects and use effective teaching techniques. The success of the scheme is dependent on the volunteers' dedication and skills, which can affect the quality of education.

The availability and quality of educational resources are also important. The learning materials offered must be both pedagogically sound and engaging to ensure effective learning. The ability of teaching to adapt to the individual needs of students is another key factor. The ability to adapt volunteers' teaching style and pace of learning is crucial for ensuring that every child can comprehend the concepts being taught.

Continuous assessment and feedback systems are necessary to monitor educational progress and quickly address any gaps. Regular examinations aid in assessing the development of pupils and evaluating teaching methods, which facilitates the rapid adjustment of curriculum and teaching strategies.

The Illam Thedi Kalvi initiative may have noble goals and innovative elements, but there are still some obstacles to be resolved. A major obstacle is the absence of resources. The availability of high-quality educational materials and logistical support for volunteers can be challenging, especially in less affluent regions where resources are scarce.

Another major issue is variability in volunteer training and effectiveness. The quality of education can vary greatly depending on whether the volunteers are skilled, motivated, or simply able-bodied. Providing consistent training and support can help to alleviate this issue, leading to a more uniform educational experience for all students.

Also, there are likely to be disparities in the quality of education provided across different countries. Unappealing educational outcomes may arise due to the fact that urban areas have more resources and skilled volunteers than rural regions. To address these disparities, it is essential to strive for a fair distribution of resources and ensure that volunteers in all areas are adequately trained and supported.

Additionally, maintaining long-term volunteer motivation is a challenge. The scheme's reliance on volunteer efforts necessitates their ongoing involvement and commitment. In order to address this issue, volunteers should be motivated and encouraged to volunteer, as well as being supported in their professional development and overall welfare.

The Illam Thedi Kalvi initiative is in line with the constitutionality of education by making it more accessible and inclusive. The quality of education provided by the scheme is influenced by various factors, including volunteer training, resource availability, and teaching flexibility. The scheme's full potential is dependent on the challenges and limitations posed by resource constraints, variability in volunteer effectiveness, and potential educational disparities. By addressing these issues, the Illam Thedi Kalvi initiative can serve as a prototype for future educational initiatives aimed at creating equitably and robustly integrated education.

COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS WITH OTHER INITIATIVES

To fully grasp the Illam Thedi Kalvi scheme, it is necessary to compare it with other educational initiatives carried out across India and globally. The comparative analysis can provide valuable insights into the most effective way to develop the scheme and identify areas for improvement.

The COVID-19 outbreak has prompted several countries to develop innovative measures to alleviate educational disruptions. Digital Education initiatives were swiftly extended in nations like the United States and the UK. These efforts encompassed distribution of digital devices to students, provision of internet access, and creation of online learning platforms for distance education. These actions enabled students to continue their education despite school being closed, with some success and others not, depending on the socio-economic situation.

Many states in India have initiated their own educational campaigns. Kerala, for example, implemented a comprehensive digital learning program using television, online classes and community-based learning. Similarly, Maharashtra's "Bal Mitra" program prioritized community involvement and access to local amenities to aid students' education during the outbreak.

Investigating case studies from various countries can reveal the success of different approaches taken to mitigate educational disruptions. The effectiveness of using community radio stations to broadcast educational content in Kenya's remote areas is demonstrated by a case study. "Ceibal en Casa" in Uruguay provided students with laptops and internet access, which ensured that digital learning could continue without interruption.

The comparisons can be utilized to shape future policy for the Illam Thedi Kalvi scheme. Kerala's multi-modal approach and Kenya's implementation of community radio can serve as models for Tamil Nadu to improve educational access and engagement.

Policy Recommendations ##### Volunteer training should be comprehensive and must include provisions for providing quality education. It includes not just basic pedagogical training, but also specialized training in the use of digital tools and new teaching strategies. Volunteers must possess the ability to engage students effectively, address diverse learning needs, and incorporate technology into their teaching methods. Professional development opportunities can be extended to volunteers to enhance their effectiveness and motivation.

Utilizing Technology To Improve Reach and Efficiency of Illam Thedi Kalvi Scheme #####. Digital platforms may offer additional educational resources, foster ongoing learning, and enable real-time monitoring of students' progress. To reinforce classroom learning, mobile apps and online portals can provide interactive learning modules, videos, and quizzes. Remote tutoring and mentoring can be achieved by technology, especially for students in remote areas.

The success of the scheme relies on active community participation. By involving local stakeholders, such as parents, teachers, and community leaders, we can create a supportive environment for learning. Regular engagement activities, workshops, and feedback sessions can enhance community participation. The effectiveness of the scheme can be enhanced by empowering School Management Committees (SMCs) to take on more responsibility for monitoring and supporting educational initiatives.

To achieve long-term success, the Illam Thedi Kalvi scheme must undergo changes and evolve to tackle new challenges. To ensure that the scheme remains responsive to students, strategies must be constantly reviewed and adjusted. Establishing a robust monitoring and evaluation system can aid in keeping track of the scheme's progress and impact. The sustainability of funding and the implementation of successful practices in formal education can contribute to the longevity of the scheme.

These policy proposals can enhance and sustain the success of the Illam Thedi Kalvi scheme. Through the use of technology, community participation, education reforms, and comprehensive volunteer training, the scheme aims to address educational disruptions and ensure that all

students in Tamil Nadu receive quality education.

The comparison with other schemes likewise provides a roadmap for improving the Illam Thedi Kalvi scheme. The plan will draw on successful approaches from other areas, adapt to local circumstances, and emphasize sustainability to not only mitigate the immediate educational effects of the COVID-19 outbreak but also establish a more resilient and inclusive education system for the future.

CONCLUSION

The Illam Thedi Kalvi scheme represents a significant effort by the Tamil Nadu government to uphold the right to education amidst the unprecedented challenges posed by the COVID-19 pandemic. This initiative demonstrates the state's commitment to ensuring that all children, regardless of socio-economic background, have access to education, thereby fulfilling the constitutional mandate under Article 21A.

By bringing education directly to students' homes, the scheme addresses the immediate barriers to learning caused by school closures. It emphasizes foundational literacy and numeracy, which are critical for the academic progression of students who have faced significant disruptions. The use of volunteers and community resources has been instrumental in bridging the educational gaps, showcasing the potential of community-driven educational models.

From a constitutional law perspective, the Illam Thedi Kalvi scheme aligns with the Right of Children to Free and Compulsory Education (RTE) Act, 2009, by striving to provide equitable educational opportunities. The initiative underscores the necessity of innovative approaches in ensuring the continuity of education during crises, highlighting the importance of flexibility and adaptability in educational policies.

However, ensuring the right to education requires more than just accessibility; it necessitates quality and sustainability. The scheme's success depends on comprehensive training for volunteers, the effective use of educational resources, and the continuous involvement of the community. Addressing challenges such as resource constraints, variability in educational delivery, and maintaining long-term volunteer engagement is crucial for the initiative's sustainability.

The analysis of the Illam Thedi Kalvi scheme provides valuable insights for future educational policies. It underscores the importance of preparedness and adaptability in educational systems to withstand disruptions. By integrating technology, enhancing volunteer training, and fostering community participation, such initiatives can become more robust and effective.

In conclusion, the Illam Thedi Kalvi scheme is a pioneering effort to mitigate the educational impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic. It highlights the critical role of innovative, community-based approaches in upholding the right to education. Ensuring accessibility, quality, and sustainability in education requires ongoing commitment and adaptation from all stakeholders, paving the way for a more resilient and inclusive education system in the future.

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