Role of Technology in Inclusion
Evidence from School Education sector in Karnataka

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The Presentation

Based on two recently concluded studies in Karnataka:

1. Use of Information Technology in Teacher Recruitment and Transfers
2. Review of the Online Admission Process for Implementing 12(1)C of the Right to Education

We are arguing that the use of technology is not a panacea in itself; it can either enable inclusion or deepen exclusion; access to and ease of using technology as well as the design plays a major role in determining which way it goes!

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Teacher Recruitment and Transfers

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Challenges that led to reforms and use of technology

- Expansion in primary and secondary education led to increase in student enrolment and related demand for teachers in a short period of time.

- Karnataka did not recruit contract teachers but appointed them within the cadre (Including KGBVs) with exception of guest teachers at secondary level.

- Remote and rural areas were harder to staff

- Transfers were done on request and no instances of mass transfer (unlike many other states).

- Teacher recruitment and transfers processes were politically linked and teachers with influence could seek desired areas while leaving the teachers in the rural and remote areas with no contacts highly dissatisfied.

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Use of IT introduced as part of a series of reforms

1991-92:
Abolition of district committees & interviews for teacher selection; merit based system introduced

Introduction of Centralised Entrance Test & Computerised counselling in engineering and medical colleges

1996-97:
Centralised Admission Cell (CAC) created for admission in B.Ed and TCH/D.Ed Colleges

Centralised recruitment through use of Common entrance test and computerized counselling for teacher recruitment

1998-99:
Demand based Teacher transfer using transparent criteria and computerized process;

Teachers records computerised and grievance redressal strengthened

Nali – kali introduced

2007:
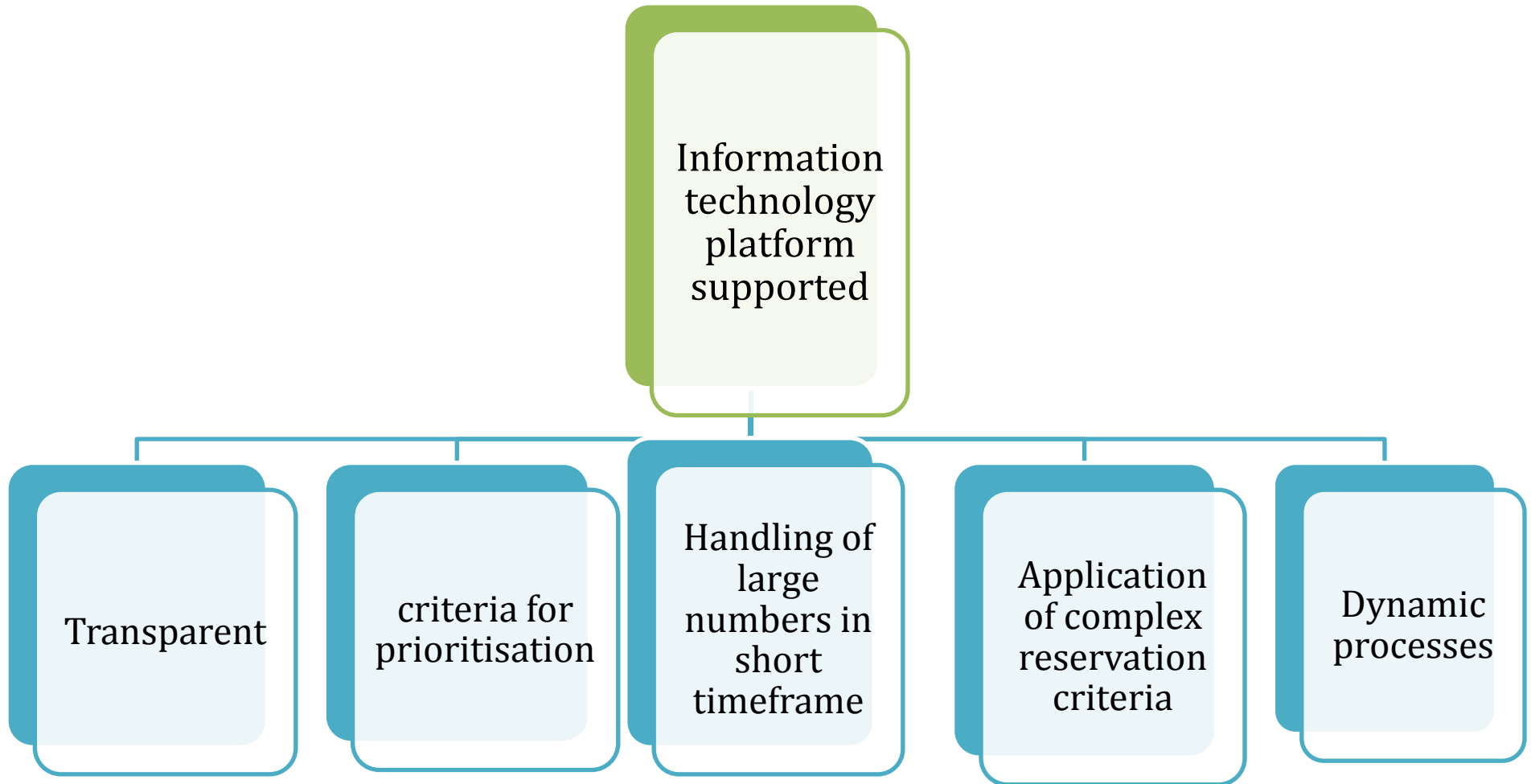Teacher Transfer Act was passed

2014:
Teacher Eligibility Test (TET) introduced based on RTE guidelines

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Use of Technology Facilitated Efficiency

Information technology platform supported

- Transparent
- criteria for prioritisation
- Handling of large numbers in short timeframe
- Application of complex reservation criteria
- Dynamic processes

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Facilitated Inclusion

- All teachers have an opportunity to apply for transfers
- Priorities for creating the list were clearly outlined and transparent
- Teacher had a choice as per the rank in the priority list – both in first posting and executed through a process of counselling using a computerised list of teachers ranked as per the priority. Home posting possible.
- The notion of Zone was introduced: A B and C. Teachers in Zone C get the highest weightage and priority. In case of a tie, the seniority of individual , and age is given preference
- First posting in Zone 3; eligible for transfer after five years of service; 3 years in case of spouse also in government service
- Equalizing the vacancies; if the number of transfers are not to exceed 500, and the available positions are 1000, then this 1000 will be distributed in a manner that all blocks make only half the positions available to be filled on transfer.
- Complex process of reservation included as part of the software for recruitment
- BUT the provision for punishment transfer was added.

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Priority Criteria as per the 1998 Policy	Priority Criteria as per the 2007 Teacher Transfer Act
i. Terminal illness cases	i. Cases of terminally ill (open heart surgeries, cancer, kidney failure) applicants; self and family member included
ii. Physically handicapped cases	ii. Cases of physically handicapped/disabled teachers with more than 40 per cent disability (medical certificate required);
iii. Other serious medical ailment cases	iii. Cases of widow female teachers;
iv. Teachers occupying surplus posts that have been transferred to other schools	iv. Cases of married teachers whose spouse is posted outside the seniority unit and has completed 3 years of service (they can only avail this provision once during the service). Highest priority is given if both spouses are government employees;
v. Husband and wife cases where both are in government service	v. Other female teachers;
vi. Female applicants with less than 3 years' service left	vi. Elected office bearers of recognized associations of government schools;
vii. Male applicants with less than 3 years' service left	vii. Other male teachers.
viii. Other female applicants who completed 3 yeas service in the same place	
ix. Other male applicants who completed 3 yeas service in the same place	Source: Teacher Transfer Act 2007
Source: Jha, Saxena and Baxi, 2001	

Introduction of Technology Embedded in Wider Reforms

Parallel efforts made to address teacher grievances; Teacher records were streamlined and seniority lists updated

Political commitment coupled with bureaucratic push; legislative process ensured negotiations of interests

Responsive to both research and implementation experiences

Coupled with introduction of reforms in curricular / pedagogic practices as well; introduction of Nali -Kali

However, it has not addressed major issues of exclusion; discrimination

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Online Admissions for RTE 12 (1) C Provision

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Right to Education Act 2009 Section 12 (1) (c)

Right to Education Act (RTE) implemented in Karnataka in 2012

Section 12 (1) (c) – Private Unaided Schools to admit in Class 1 at least 25% of students from weaker and disadvantaged sections

Manual Admissions for first three years of implementation – 2012-13, 2013-14 and 2014-15

Process of manual admissions included:
- Schools accepted application forms, scanned them based on the criteria identified (age, neighbourhood schools and disadvantaged or weaker sections)
- First shortlisting conducted by school
- Final selection based on lottery system at school level, in presence of Education Department officials

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CBPS Study 2013: Issues of Exclusion in the Admission Process:

Tried to Ask: are the admission processes rule-based, transparent, free of corruption and other distortions?

- Lack of clarity/uniformity in process followed
  - Entry level class: LKG or class 1
  - Locality criteria
  - Weightage for caste/ economic criteria
  - Documents being demanded
  - Information asymmetry

- Existing students being admitted
- Admission tests being conducted
- Fees charges (net out of pockets expenses about 30-40 % of what other parents spent)

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CBPS Study 2013: Issues of Exclusion Inside the school

- Classroom experiences: discriminatory (calling them as RTE children, pointing out to others why they are unable to cope, repeatedly pointing out why they are 'slow learners', and so on)

- Instruction in the mother-tongue absent (and also seen as completely undesirable)

- Schools not segregated but teachers resentful

- Other parents not informed but a good proportion not averse to accepting (when asked about their views on RTE, 52% not responded-could be averse, 37% welcomed it)

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Online Process for Admissions

Introduced during 2015-16 academic year

Required considerable preparations -- database of schools with medium of instruction and number of seats as per ward / Panchayat limits and development of software

During 2015-16, documents were manually verified

During 2016-17, document verification was linked through Aadhar, Election or Social Welfare database

Shortlisting done in the system based on documents submitted

Selection through state-wide lottery using Randomisation Software recommended by GoI

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How Online Process Addressed Certain Efficiency Issues

1. Specific definitions for Neighbourhood Schools --- controlled by Software

2. Segregation of high-priority categories from OBC category for admissions – more allocation of seats for HIV, Street children, Physically Challenged, Orphans

3. Parents preference taken into account

4. Transparent randomisation software for final selection without any irregularities

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Issues of Exclusion Remained / Deepened (1)

- The Design of the Online Form not Sensitive to Inclusion Issues

  a) Language – Requires competencies in both English and Kannada to navigate the form; **Excludes not only large chunk of migrant population but also those Kannada-knowing population who do not know any English**

  b) Control for variables absent for high priority categories

- Access to technology limited and also intimidating: Rise of Agents /Middlemen for filling out Forms → Higher Out of Pocket Expenditure for Applications (Internet, Scanning, Assistance in Filling out Forms, Printing of Forms)

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Issues of Exclusion Remained / Deepened (2)

2. Issues related to Converting the system Online:

a) Children in wards with no private unaided schools mapped were excluded from the process

b) Age of the child remains an issue as the definition does lead to some level of exclusion; **not applicable to remaining children who do not follow this route - discriminatory**

c) Information gaps -- especially for those who cannot read Kannada / English; Adequate information available on the Department website but not accessed by all

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Issues of Exclusion Remained / Deepened (3)

3. Exclusion within the selection process

   a) Plan of using Election / Aadhar card from 2017-18 → efficient and speedy document verification but eliminates those without these IDs + forcing parents to enroll for Aadhar; **contradictory to another RTE provision that says that no documentary proof of date of birth and residence will be mandatory for admissions; also discriminatory if not mandatory for all parents**

   b) Cases with discrepancies in documents -- BEO verification → token verification → process unclear as to whether these were finally included or excluded from the Final Selection Pool

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Use of Technology in Education: Potentials and limits

- Can enhance efficiency and also inclusion to an extent if designed and executed well, and the user group has easy access (e.g. teachers)

- Can deepen exclusion if not designed well taking the users' constraints into account; can even be discriminatory (e.g., children and parents belonging to poor/disadvantaged groups)

- Has the danger of hiding inclusion – exclusion issues, and even be discriminatory; need to check that even if it seemingly enhances efficiency

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Thank you !

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