CHAPTER I

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"To put the administration of the service wholly under the central authority would divorce it from local interest and local criticism and would tend to undue uniformity and the suppression of healthy variety of method. In fact, it would be impossible to administer effectively the Education Acts without local knowledge, and therefore the duty of administration is discharged by local authorities which are really the agents of the state."¹ In fact, the departments of government connected with development have to penetrate into the provinces and villages to get know the countryside and its people, in order to persuade them to change means to understand the existing value structure of a society and to argue for change from that base. "A new approach in this has been pioneered by the community development movement and here the modern departments have a valuable ally which was not available to countries which earlier trod the difficult, the tedious, road of development. The implementation of programmes and policies for the social services can most rapidly be attained by using field officers whether the object of their efforts is to persuade the village communities and the individuals or to work with, and through local authorities."²

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The local bodies as we know them today, may be a recent growth but the soil for it has been prepared hundreds of years ago in the East as in the West. In all Aryan communities, at least local governing institutions have been in existence for a long time. It is almost impossible now to divine the mystery of their existence or ascertain the motive force which first brought them into being. The Mark, the Mir, or the Menor in the Turanic Slavonic and the Celtic races in Europe correspond to the village system of India and other eastern countries as a unit of local government. In consciousness and purpose, all these institutions seem to be identical though in the course of history, and according to the vicissitudes of different faces, the actual form of these institutions in the several countries may be different."

The local governing institutions based on village as a unit are common from the earliest dawn of history in the nations of Aryan descent. It is, of course, difficult to determine exactly the motive springs of their origin, the reasons of their development and refinement at a later date are not quite so difficult to ascertain. As regards their origin," there are prominent forces at work which demand the institutions of local governing units and which are common to all communities that have made any progress in political evolution, in social organisation, in collective consciousness, and collective enterprise." Multifarious reasons seem apparently important

4. Ibid. P. 2.
that have contributed for the growth of local governing institutions in the town as well as in the country. They are:

(a) Administrative convenience: Every modern country with pretention to civilisation is more or less centralised form of national government, which is inevitable if the community is to exist and maintain its position among sister communities similarly organised. But such centralisation is fatal to the proper government of the smaller units constituting the nation as a whole. And, therefore, rural and urban governing institutions are created or developed with a view to afford as much relief to the central, state, or national government as may be possible under the circumstances. "No matter how well organised the central office is, no matter how excellent the plans being made are, no matter how much money is allocated, the programme will fail unless it is within reach of the farmer."  

(b) Educating for larger democracy: This approach of local government creates confidence in people of a particular area and thereby an opportunity of a detailed understanding, not only for their needs but also of the long term poten-

tialities of that area. The planning of this potential development can be carried out with a greater detail and with a great deal more real understanding by people in the area, who are particularly and primarily concerned with its welfare, rather than by those in Headquarters. De Tocqueville remarks, "Under the present system of government, form and method of administration have been

developed, which tend to bring all the most effective powers on subjects of the most direct interest to the people in the hands of the central government authorities. And the moment the latter desire or are compelled to recognise the necessity of a greater and greater association of the people of the country in the task of government, the plea of utilising the local institutions as drilling field for the more complex work of national government becomes irresistible. Of course, we do not imply that when once the object of complete association of the people of the country in the task of the national government is accomplished, the local governing institutions in the town or country would be dispensed with. These last will endure, because they transcend reasons of immediate administrative convenience or political expediency.

(c) Solving social problems: It is presumed that definite type of social problems could be solved only by local governing institutions. For all these reasons, local institutions are and will be of special interest and importance in the country and will occupy a most significant place in the general scheme of our government. Though the local institutions in their present form may be the creation of British India, but it must not be overlooked that such type of institutions existed in the towns as well as in the villages in our country from times immemorial. The antiquity of the village system in our country has never been questioned. And as regards the towns, there is a mention of definite form of civic government, which attained considerable proportions in the Buddhist period; and which has never lost that importance in the ages succeeding.

Nagasthenes’ description of civic organisation is but one indication of several, which could be cited to show the hoary antiquity of municipal life in India. He speaks of town officials as being divided into six boards of Five (Panchayat).

"The respective functions were:

1. Supervision of factories;

2. Care of the strangers including the control of inns, provision of assistants, taking charge of sick persons, burying the dead.

3. The registration of births and deaths.

4. Control of the markets, inspection of weights and measures.

5. The inspection of manufactured things, provision for their sale with accurate distinction of new and second hand articles.

6. Collection of the tax of 10% charged on sales.

The six boards acting together (Town Councils) exercised a general superintendence over public works, prices, harbour and temples."

Centuries before, the great Law giver, Manu and author of the Arthashastra, write in a similar vein; and two thousand years after them, the Minister of Akbar, the great, Abul Fazl reiterates the same course of development. With such a history and organisation, our country must have deep roots in local institutions and it would be quite inaccurate to say that British rule has imposed new ideals but it cannot be denied that the alien rule succeeded to revive the forgotten institutions and presented them in new form and shape.

The character of educational administration is determined in general by two factors - the theory of the state and the theory of prevailing education. The authoritarian state tends to have a highly centralized system of administration and provides no opportunity to the public or to local governmental bodies or to professional groups to participate in the determination of the policy. The democratic state, on the other hand, recognizes that the central governmental body cannot claim omniscience and is not restricted by the obscurantism of bureaucrats with vested interests in maintaining the status quo. Accordingly the rights of local groups or communities to determine their own affairs with a minimum of interference are recognized and a partnership in ideas as well as in finances is entered into between the central and local authorities to which a certain amount of responsibility is delegated.

With certain variations, local bodies played prominent role in early periods in the United States, settlers in different groups formed small communities for the sake of their existence and the absence of any central authority made them take resort of the local authorities to safeguard their rights and at the same time to look after their educational needs. "The American advance into the exterior", writes Prof. Portus, "was far more orderly. It had to consolidate each position it won. It had to clear the forests, bring up its vanguard of women and children, and establish permanent settlements before it could extend its frontier one stage further to the West. This meant a stationary population rooted to the soil in certain selected spots, slowly winning more cultivable land from the forest but forced by fear of outside attack, to live closely together in defensible positions,
with a central loopholed block-house as a nucleus. Here were all the essentials that we have in the community. These American villages communities were also frontier posts in the backwoods. What is more natural is that these isolated and self-supporting groups should have taken charge of communal activities such as defence, justice and education.6 In this way the local control of education had its beginning in the United States and people were prone to have it in spite of the various vicissitudes that this system had to pass from time to time. "During the colonial period", writes De Young, "every citizen took direct part in managing school affairs. Every item of school business was brought before the town meeting. As towns became larger, more and more of business of the town meeting was entrusted to officials known as selectmen. Providing proper schools was one of the duties frequently entrusted to these officials. Thus the selectmen became, in reality, the first lay representatives of the community charged with the management of the schools. As towns continued to grow, the selectmen were unable to attend to school business, town business and church business. Special school committees were then created and with that practice the school board proper came into existence. Colonial practice formed the background for early state laws and by a process of gradual and irregular development, the office of school board members spread to all parts of the nation.7 In this way, the early period of American history witnessed a period of local enterprise in education per necessity, and local boards were brought forward to manage school affairs and


Remained closely associated with the local school and shouldered
the main responsibility for all items of expenditure connected
with it. So decentralization in education formed the basis of this
country and proved an eye-opener worthy of emulation for others.

English people from the very beginning were opposed to
centralization and were keen for voluntary effort and local
leadership to cope on with the needs of the country. Local
Bodies were hoary institutions from the very beginning managing
their local services and education was one of them. These
factors contributed in favour of local administration which was
further strengthened by the teaching of Godwin, who opposed
direct state control of education and thereby favourable back-
ground was quite ripe to accelerate the move of local management
in the affairs of education. Inspite of all these favourable
tendencies no local bodies came in their form up to the year 1870,
when the First Elementary Education Act was passed. This Act
permitted each area to be surveyed from the education point of
view and set up elected local school boards to direct the local
enterprise in education and enforce compulsory education. Thus
a beginning was made towards the formation of local bodies and
entrust them wholly and solely with the duties of education,
thereby to control and direct its deliberations and shoulder
all the responsibilities in the area.

The system that prevailed in France varied a bit but
local contribution and management has always been there from
its early history of education. 'Schools for the care of young
children have a long history in France. They were first
established at Waldersbach in Alsace by Pastor Oberlin. In 1837,
they were officially organised as Salles d'asile and in 1838 they
were incorporated into the system of elementary education as 'ecoles maternelles' (maternal schools). These schools are open to children between the ages of two and six and attendance is voluntary. They may be established in communities with a population of over 2,000. In communities with a population below this number infant classes may be attached to the elementary school. The buildings for the 'ecoles maternelles' are provided by the localities, but their programme must be approved by a special commission in the Ministry of Education.10

So the early history of education of United States, England and France was enough to evoke public enthusiasm of the other countries, whereby they had the fullest knowledge of utilising local talent for the good of education. Socio-political needs of these countries were responsible mostly to bring local talent together and launch the plans of constructive works in their own areas. So the early periods of India, U.S.A., England and France had their self-government institutions to look after some of the most useful activities of the community. The village system of India so well known as Panchayat System survived even during the times of Aurangzeb and was just a decentralised body as that of local bodies of United States and England and that of communes of France. Though local governing institutions based on the village in India are common from the earliest dawn of history and may be difficult to trace out their origin and purpose but it has not been beyond the reach of the historian to trace its periods of refinement and ultimately passed to a stage whereby the village as a unit had to contribute for the education of their children in the latter periods.

So these beginnings in the history of education were enough to convince the common man about the usefulness of such organisations and institutions and were serving a stimulant to inspire the other countries. "Local Institutions", says De Tocqueville, "are to liberty what primary schools are to science. They bring it within the people's reach and teach men how to use and how to enjoy it. A nation may establish a system of free government but without the spirit of local institutions, it cannot have the spirit of liberty." 11

Factors contributing devolution of Education

Political: Decentralisation, as an accepted principle of public policy came definitely into vogue with the regime of Lord Mayo. Indian Nationalism began to develop gradually and the British imperialists decided to utilize local bodies as a half-way house by indianizing them on the one hand, and granting them larger power and responsibilities on the other. The transfer of education to local bodies was timely wrought to elicit maximum public co-operation to organise and manage the elementary education. The famous resolution of Lord Ripon declared:

"It is not primarily with a view to improvement in administration that this measure is put forward and supported. It is chiefly desirable as an instrument of political and popular education. His Excellency in council has himself no doubt that in course of time as local interests are brought to bear more freely upon local administration, improved efficiency will in fact follow." 12

Even as early as 1850, educated Indian opinion was becoming conscious of its rights and the seeds of a struggle of political freedom had already begun to take roots. Indians had started to demand their birth-right to rule themselves and their demand had to be met at least either to satisfy them to some extent or to direct their attention. "Naturally, the British Government found it convenient to make a beginning at the lowest rung of the official ladder and to transfer such functions only to Indian control as were politically innocuous. The first step in this direction was taken by organizing institutions by local self-government in which Indians were given a hand and by including primary education within the spheres of their duties. With the passage of time, this tradition which had begun on purely political grounds, became stronger on educational and other considerations and continued to hold the field even after the initial political considerations had ceased to operate with the transfer of education to Indian control or the attainment of Independence." 13

Social: The influence of England made everyone to think of local bodies - which could manage the affairs of education also at its elementary stage. English precedents were enough there to imitate and inspire. Some progressive British officials stood by it and Indians, on the whole, wanted to have education in their hands in order to do some good to the society as a whole. Among many subjects of importance, none could have a stronger claim than that of education. Constructive urge in people moved them to take up the cause of education, for the amelioration of society. "For although

British influence has already in many remarkable instances been applied with great energy and success to import demoralizing practices and even crimes of a deeper dye, which for ages had prevailed among the natives of India, the good results of these efforts must in order to be permanent, possess the further action of a general sympathy in the native mind which the advance of education alone can secure. 14

Besides, the growth of social sciences during the last few decades has also contributed to the elucidation of the relationship between education and society. 'The individualistic approach of the early twentieth century psychology is being replaced by the interactionism of the modern social psychology.' At the same time the community accepts and supports an educational system which perpetuates its culture and resists that which is in opposition to its culture pattern. Any social change if it has to be permanent and effective should be rooted in the attitudes of the people. Social change could be sustained and perpetuated only if it is reinforced by the values and attitudes of the people concerned with it. The best way of ensuring the formation of attitudes necessary for maintaining the changed order is to provide the younger generation an opportunity to participate in the production of a new and better order. "The modern school wants to introduce new concepts of child rearing and new contents and materials of education and the efforts of the school are bound to fail if the community does not approach the school programme from a similar point of view and co-operated with the school in bringing about a desired changes. Similarly the community cannot move forward if

the schools are not able to reinforce the new pattern that is being evolved. It is not possible to move the school without moving the community and vice versa."16

Financial: It was not a hidden secret those days that the Central Government was experiencing financial stringency under the wasteful system of centralised financial administration created in 1833. The Central Government in itself was in no way, in a position to launch the educational plans and schemes. On the other hand, the public demand for proper education was gaining ground so there was no way left out to raise taxes and collect education cess with the public co-operation and seek public advice to launch the educational plans. Local authorities was considered the best media for the purpose. Education cess was raised for education. Mr. E.I. Howard, Director of Public Instruction, Bombay drafted a bill for the levy of an educational cess to support village schools. In the same way, James Thomason, the Lieutenant Governor of the North West Province (Now U.P.) actually levied the first local rate in India in 1851. The efforts of these officers gathered strength, when local rates were imposed even in England in 1870, under the Elementary Education Act of 1870 and the levy of local rates accompanied by the creation of local bodies to administer them became general in India, as a simple imitation of a English precedent. "The decentralisation that thus began on financial grounds soon came to stay as a measure of general administrative reform and the levy of local fares to meet a specific situations of financial stringency ultimately resulted in giving local bodies a share in the administration of education and primary education in particular."17

Stages of Local Decentralisation pertaining Education:

It has been a burning topic for the last over a century to decentralise development projects and harness local enthusiasm, local knowledge and local support for education. The concept of associating local bodies or local authorities is not a new one. It has passed successively through four different stages i.e., Association (1863-84), controlled delegation (1884-1924); uncontrolled delegation (1924-1933) and reversion to controlled delegation through resumption of larger powers (1933-1953), and the latest is the move of Panchayat Raj institutions and revealed the following advantages:

1. "Such transfer makes the development of democracy and the development of mass education an inter-dependent and integrated programme in which each supports the other.

2. It helps in decentralisation of authority.

3. It rouses local enthusiasm, develops local initiative and harnesses local resources for the support of elementary education.

4. It brings elementary education closest to the people."

The Source Material:

At the outset, one is confronted with a serious difficulty in the scarcity and unavailability of the material for study. Authorities are distressingly few and sketchy where they exist, or at least they are not easily accessible to the inquiries after the nature and purpose of local institutions. Gazettiers and tales of travellers stand on opposite poles of rigid accuracy.

CHART I

STAGE OF LOCAL DECONCENTRATION PERTAINING EDUCATION

ASSOCIATION
1863 - 1884

CONTROLLED DELEGATION
1884 - 1924

UN-CONTROLLED DELEGATION
1924 - 1938

REVERSION TO CONTROLLED DELEGATION
1938 - 1958

DEMOCRATIC DECENTRALIZATION
1958 - 1962
and romantic ardour in a delineation of detail regarding the history of the principal towns of modern India; but neither of these — though by no means over — abundant, can satisfy the student of the research, who particularly is keen to know something about the growth of local institutions, who considers the governing principles and features of modern local institutions from a definite viewpoint. It becomes difficult to envisage fully even the outlines of the local institutions in this country, how to discover the hidden purpose and the unspecified indistinct, perhaps unthought of goal remains a mystery.

The study of local institutions in European countries has always claimed the attention of the most earliest scholars. "True in America, the history of the present great cities goes hardly more further backwards than that of the chief Indian cities of today; but they have made up for want of a long history in the United States by the striking fidelity to the instinct for local autonomy, which has made city government and its problems of inexhaustible interest even to the most perfect believer in nationalism. In India the absence of a long glorious history hanging like a halo of departed glory around each city, is unbalanced by any such counterpoise of acquired dignity or utilitarian divinity; and so the proper, comprehensive, scientific study of our civic institutions remains still a desideratum of political and economic organisation in this country. Local institutions, like the renovated village Panchayats have been so thoroughly anglicised that one fails to recognise the old friend in the new garb; and even when the recognition is made, one hesitates
to push on with the friendship for lack of proper appreciation of the nature and purpose of the newly discovered friend."

Some difficulty was faced at its initial stages to procure documents particularly of the earlier period and the author had to visit the National Archives Library, New Delhi, Prantiya Shikshan Mahavidyalaya Library and even British Library, Delhi and National Library, Calcutta to go through the relevant records of the period.

The Hunter Commission Report 1882 and Hartog Committee Report 1929 and other reports just as the findings of the Kher Committee 1954 and lately Selwakrai Committee Report 1953 proved essential records for the purpose and other quinquennial and decennial Reviews of education published from time to time added to the exploration of the role of local institutions in the development of education.

Considerable variations of different provinces in the formation of Local Bodies Acts and their implementation added to unavoidable repetition and disparities in implementations from time to time.

Comparative study with other countries also proved a misty problem for in the foreign countries civic institutions had their early start along with gradual development with a brilliant background of civic sense and thirst for such local institutions, while in India such institutions had been carved out of political necessity and had lost their shape even by too much mingling with the ideas and ideals of foreign countries.

THE PURPOSE:

The purpose of this work on 'The Role of Local Bodies in Indian Education' is:

a) To trace the evolution of the role of local bodies in Indian education in the modern period.
b) To evaluate the existing trends and administrative practices of the local bodies in education.
c) To make suitable suggestion to enable the local bodies to play their role on an adequate and sound footing in the system of democratic decentralisation with special reference to education.

Local Bodies, in the present form have been the creation of alien rule. The institutions in spite of several vicissitudes do survive but without paying proper appreciation and adequate attention. So the study has in view the exploration of the handicaps standing in the evolution of such institutions and the remedies thereof. Besides, the work has in consideration the factors that evoke local initiative and has to study and evaluate the existing trends and tendencies that make and mar the progress of local authorities in education. Above all the work has assessed the whole survey of the Local institutions and their role in the new system of democratic decentralisation. An attempt has been made to explore the various elements that harness local initiative, and local interest to ensure smooth working of these institutions in the country. Consequently, emphasis has been laid on the new democratic set-up of the country i.e., democratic decentralisation and find out its scope in the field of education and chalk out an effective programme of educational
decentralization in the country.

**THE PLAN:**

A few words may be said regarding the plan of study followed in this work. No attempt has been made to transform this study into an annotated edition of the respective legislative enactments nor compilation of general principles. The study throughout has taken the evolutionary process conceived after a careful study of the each problem of the times in the light of experiences gathered in other countries regarding those problems. Lastly, in each chapter achievements are summarised and experimentations in the particular field are there as they stood in the particular field in the most advanced countries of the world and finally applied the lessons so gleaned to Indian conditions.

The work is divided into seven chapters. The introductory chapter contains the importance of local-self Government and its place in ancient India and some foreign annex countries and therein is the glimpse of the factors for devolution of education.

The second chapter describes in brief the historical evolution of administration in relation to education prior to 1882. Therein each stage of devolution is described with historical and other background with comparative study of the foreign countries of the times. Along with the same is given the graphic picture of the Local Bodies at work in India with a closing note of evaluation and assessment of the whole period.

The Third Chapter draws the complete picture of the decentralization in education from the year 1882-1902, mentioning legal, administrative and financial powers of
Local bodies and after effects of the Local Bodies Acts state-wise. Main events have also been described in order to clarify the latest position about education with reference to historical development and achievements thereon.

The Chapter i.e., fourth contains the highlights of the period of transition from the year 1902 to 1921, carving out a suitable case of transition along with the evolution of devolution in educational administration, its scope, and its achievements. Besides the move towards the compulsory education has been mentioned with reference to Gokhale and Patel Act and thereby enactments brought in force during the period. Efforts of decentralised administration and the role of local bodies therein have found a suitable place as regards their achievements and other spheres covered by them. Powers of local bodies with reference to their administrative and financial aspects have been discussed. At the end of the chapter, evaluation and assessment covers the whole period that describes the achievements of the whole period along with the historical move and other phases involved therein.

Local Bodies under Diarchy have been discussed in The fifth Chapter. It contains role of local bodies in diarchy; their powers - Administrative and financial; critical study of compulsory Education Acts during the diarchy; proportional assignments to education: Hartog Committee Report and its observations: after-effects of the Hartog Committee Report and its critical study. The chapter has its close-up with the usual evaluation and assessment.
Then the role of Local Bodies from 1937-47 i.e., Provincial Autonomy has been discussed in the sixth chapter. Proper place has been given to the Surgeant Report and its after-effects; and state-wise evolution and devolution in education.

One more chapter i.e., Seventh describes the role of Local Bodies in Independent India. This period has been bifurcated into two periods i.e., 1947 to 1956 and 1956 onwards: The former routine period and the latter period of democratic decentralisation have been taken up in view of their contribution in each period. The powers of Local Bodies have been discussed along with the new trends that are there due to Independence. The new set-up of democratic decentralisation has been discussed in view of the tendencies of the foreign advanced countries; the place of local authorities, their plans, future prospects, scope and handicaps do find place in this chapter; At the end the same conclusion in the form of evaluation and assessment contains the whole in brief with historical background and other features of the times.

At the end, the study of Local Bodies suggestions and conclusions are given. This chapter is the sum of the findings, their present position and future prospects in this country along with guide lines to accelerate the process of local administration in education. Bibliography of books and references has been given at the end.

The study has indicated some topics that can be
undertaken for further detailed study. They are:

(a) Close study of local governing institutions and their effective role in education.

(b) A detailed study of Act of Local Bodies with special reference to education at various levels.

(c) A detailed structure of local bodies in view of the democratic decentralisation in our country.