1. Details of Module and its structure

Module Detail	
Subject Name	Education
Paper Name	Educational Administration, Management & Leadership in School Education
Module Name/ Title	**Decentralization, Local Management and Governance in Education**
Module Id	e-PG-EDN 13.23
Pre-requisites	Learners are expected to be aware about the hierarchical structure of education system and issues related to quality.
Objectives	After going through this content, the learner will be able to: 1. define decentralization and deconcentration in education 2. identify stakeholders in education 3. highlight the main role of stakeholders in education system of India 4. identify the hurdles in decentralization of education in India
Keywords	Educational administration, Educational decentralization, stakeholders, local governance

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1. Introduction

Policymakers, educators, and others involved in education are seeking ways to utilize limited resources efficiently and effectively in order to identify and solve problems in the education sector and to provide quality education for children. Their efforts have contributed to realize the significance and benefits of community participation in education, and have recognized community participation as one of the strategies to improve educational access and quality. Decentralization also plays important role in school governance.

2. Learning outcomes:

After going through this content, the learner will be able to:

1. define decentralization and deconcentration in education

2. identify stakeholders in education

3. highlight the main role of stakeholders in education system of India

4. identify the hurdles in decentralization of education in India

3. Decentralization, Local Management and Governance in Education

3.1. Meaning of Decentralization in Education

Decentralization is defined as the transfer of decision-making authority closer to the consumer or beneficiary. This can take the form of transferring powers to lower levels of an organization, which is called deconcentration or administrative decentralization. A popular form of deconcentration in education is to give additional responsibilities to schools. This is often called school autonomy or school-based management and may take the form of creating elected or appointed school councils and giving them budgets and the authority to make important educational decisions. Deconcentration may also take the form of empowering school directors or directors and teaching faculty to make decisions within the school.

Another form of decentralization, and devolution, entails transferring powers to lower levels of government. Most often, education responsibilities are transferred to general-purpose governments at the regional or local levels. Examples are the decentralization of basic education to local (district) level governments in India. In rare cases additional responsibilities are given to single-purpose governments, such as the local school district in the United States. When education responsibilities are transferred to general-purpose governments, the elected governing bodies of those governments must make decisions about how much to spend on education versus other local services.

Decentralization moves decision-making closer to the people and may give them greater say in schooling decisions as well as greater ability to hold service providers accountable. Whether it leads to improved education is more debatable. In principle, schools are empowered to determine their own priorities and to develop their own school reforms to improve teaching and learning. In practice, weak management capacity, insufficient funding, inadequately trained teachers, and weak system support make it difficult to realize the positive potential of decentralization. The

empirical research evidence on education decentralization is mixed but frequently shows that increasing parental participation in school governance, giving teachers the right to select their own textbooks, and granting school directors the authority to recruit teachers contribute positively to education quality.

3.2 Constitutional obligations of Local Self Government Institutions in India

In order to impart certainty, continuity and strength to the Panchayat Raj Institutions (PRIs) and Urban Local Bodies (ULBs), the 73rd and 74th Amendments have come into force in 1993. These amendments of the Constitution of India, provided for empowerment of panchayats and municipality, Nagarpalikas by way of promoting self- governance, reserving 33% seats for women; and for the citizens belonging to the Scheduled Castes and the Scheduled Tribes in proportion to their population. Articles 243G & 243W and 11th & 12th Schedules of the Constitution indicate the subjects to be devolved to the panchayats and Nagarpalikas, respectively.

While the Eleventh Schedule of Constitution deals with evolution of functions to different tiers of Panchayats in respect to twenty- nine subjects including education – primary and secondary schools, Article 243W of the Constitution of India, specifies the powers, authority and responsibilities with respect to Municipalities. Among the 18 major functions to be performed by Municipalities mentioned in Article 243W there are cursory reference to educative functions rather than any explicit reference to it.

3.3 Importance of Decentralization in School Governance

These are the main objectives of decentralization in education sector

1. **To improve education by:**
   - Increasing the amount of inputs to schooling;
   - Increasing the relevance of programs, or matching;
   - Improving the quality of inputs to schooling;
   - Increasing the innovativeness of programmes;
   - Increasing the range of options available to students;
   - Reducing inequalities in access to education of quality;
   - Increasing learning outcomes.

2**. To improve the operation of education system by:**
   - Increasing the efficiency in allocation of resources;

- Increasing efficiency in the utilization of resources;
- Increasing the match of programmes to employers' requirements;
- Increasing the use of information about issues, problems or innovations (thereby improving efficiency).

3. **To change the sources and amount of funds available for education by**:

- Increasing the overall amount of money spent on education;
- Shifting the sources of funding from one social group to another.

4. **To give benefit to the local government by:**

- Increasing revenues for education available to local government;
- Increasing the capacity of local governments;
- Improving the responsiveness of central government to local government requirements;
- Redistributing political power, weakening actors at the centre in favour of those outside the centre.

5. **To give benefit to the central government by**:

- Relieving the central government of external political problems;
- Relieving the central government of internal bureaucratic headaches;
- Relieving the central government of financial burden;
- Increasing the political legitimacy of central government
- Reducing corruption at the national level

3.4 Decentralization and School Governance in India

The Right to Education Bill (2009) has been passed by Parliament with the intention to evolve different models of public-private-partnership (PPP) in 3,500 government schools out of 6,000 model schools that the government is hoping to launch in future. The plan is to bring an overarching authority for Higher Education based on the recommendations of the Yashpal Committee Report (YCR) and the National Knowledge Commission (NKC). In India there are many partners (stakeholders) in education sector.

3.5 Major Stakeholders in education in India

A stakeholder is anyone who is involved in the welfare and success of a school and its students, including administrators, teachers, staff, students, parents, community members, school board members, city councillors and state representatives.

Stakeholders may also be collective entities, such as organizations, initiatives,

committees, media outlets, and cultural institutions. They have a stake in the school and its students, which means they have personal, professional, civic, financial interest or concern in the school. Stakeholders' engagement is considered vital to the success and improvement of a school.

3.6 Role of Major Stakeholders in Education

The involvement of the broader community of the school can improve communication and public understanding and allows for the incorporation of the perspectives, experiences and expertise of participating community members to improve reform proposals, strategies, or processes.

Parent, family and community involvement can have a different meaning for different people. These stakeholders involved in different tasks:

- **Parenting:** Help families by providing them with parenting skills and family support; make them understand the phases of child development, its complexities and ways to cope with it. Help schools understand backgrounds and cultures of families and their goals for children.
- **Communicating:** Create reliable communication channels between school and home to communicate with the families regarding school programs and student progress.
- **Volunteering:** Enable educators to work with volunteers who support the school along with the students/ students and the school. Involve families as volunteers and as audiences at the school.
- **Learning at Home:** Encourage the involvement of families in academic learning of their children at home through curriculum-related activities such as including homework and goal setting.
- **Decision Making:** Involve families as participants in school decisions, governance and advocacy activities.
- **Collaborating with the Community**: Coordinate with community groups such as businesses, cultural and civic organizations, colleges or universities for providing resources and services for families, students and the school

3.6 Role of Stakeholders in Local Management and Governance in Education

The goal of any kind of activity that attempts to involve community and families/parents in education is to improve the educational delivery so that more children learn better and become well prepared for the rapidly transforming World. There are various reasons to support the idea that community participation and local governance contributes towards achieving the goal.   These are the following rationales that explain the role of community participation through decentralization in education.

1**. Maximizing Limited Resources**

Involving parents, families, and communities in the process of research and data collection can reveal them factors that contribute to lesser enrolment and attendance, and poor academic performance of the schools. Furthermore, parents are usually concerned about their children's education, and are often willing to provide assistance that can improve the educational delivery. In places where teacher absenteeism and poor performance are critical issues, parents can be part of the system of monitoring and supervising teachers, ensuring that teachers arrive at classrooms on time and perform effectively in the classrooms. Parents and communities are powerful resources to be utilized not only for the improvement of educational delivery, but can also be used transformed as the core agent of the education delivery.

2. Developing Relevant Curriculum and Learning Materials

Communities' and parents' involvement helps achieve curriculum and learning materials that reflect children's everyday lives in society. When children use textbooks and other materials that illustrate their own lives in their community, they can easily associate their present/ recent learning with their previously learnt concepts.

3. Identifying and Addressing Problems

Communities can help identify and address factors that contribute to educational problems, such as low participation and poor academic performance.

4. Promoting Girls' Education

Community participation can contribute to promote girls' education. Active participation of communities in school activities and frequent communication with

teachers and parents help them learn that girls' education contributes to the improvement of various aspects of their lives, such as increased economic productivity, improved family health and nutrition, reduced fertility rates, and reduced child mortality rates. Involving parents and communities in discussions as part of school activities also helps in identifying factors that prevent girls from schooling and reduces NER (Net Enrolment ratio) of girls.

5. Realizing Democracy

Where schools are perceived as authoritarian institutions, parents and community members do not feel welcomed to participate in their children's education. They are not capable of taking any responsibility in school issues and tend to feel that education is something that should be taken care of by educational professionals at schools. Many people, especially minority groups, develop this kind of negative attitudes towards schools because they are not treated with respect by the teachers. Involving communities in schools is a way of reaching democracy through identifying and addressing inequities embedded in institutions and society as a whole.

6. Ensuring Sustainability

One of the major factors to ensure sustainability of programs is the availability of this regard, community participation in education cannot ensure the sustainability of schools by itself often since times communities have to rely on external funding to keep the program sustained. However, involving community is a way to ensure that A cess on land revenue should be universally levied in all areas and that the legislation on the subject should provide for the minimum and maximum rates of such levy. In the village panchayats, as in the municipalities, a portion of the total revenue should be earmarked for Primary Education, the benefits brought by a development program will be maintained after the external interventions are stopped.

3.7 Role of Local Bodies in Educational Financing

Local Bodies like Municipalities, Boards, District bodies, Zilla Parishads and Panchayats run schools in their respective areas. They appoint staff, provide equipment and finance to these schools through grants from the State Government

and local taxes. Such educational institutions are directly under the control of these Local Bodies.

For meeting the expenditure, the school committees should receive:

(1) A grant-in-aid fixed on the basis of equalisation.

(2) A certain proportion of the income of the local village panchayat.

State grants to local bodies on account of primary education should be based on a combination of the (a) proportional grants, (b) a special grant for backward areas and (c) specific purpose grants. It would be in the interest of education to make it obligatory on municipalities to earmark a specified proportion of their net revenue for primary education. All funds thus earmarked for Primary Education should be entitled to receive grant-in-aid according to rules.

3.8 How can Local Management and Governance improve education?

Community participation can contribute to education delivery through various channels. The following is a list of ways through which local management can contribute towards the education system

- advocating enrolment and education benefits;
- boosting morale of school staff;
- raising money for schools;
- ensuring students' regular attendance and completion;
- constructing, repairing, and improving school facilities;
- contributing in labour, materials, land and funds;
- recruiting and supporting teachers;
- making decisions about school locations and schedules;
- monitoring and follow up on teacher attendance and performance;
- forming village education committees to manage schools;
- actively attending school meetings to learn about children's learning progress and classroom behaviour;
- providing skill instruction and local culture information;
- helping children with studying;
- garnering more resources from and solving problems through the education bureaucracy;
- advocating and promoting girls' education;

- providing security for teachers by preparing adequate housing for them;
- scheduling school calendars;
- handling the budget to operate schools;
- identifying factors causing educational problems (low enrolment, and high repetition and dropout); and
- preparing children's readiness for schooling by providing them with adequate nutrition and stimuli for their cognitive development.

3.9 Advantages of Local Governance in Education

- **Solution at grass-root level:** The local self- government solves the problems of rural people at the grass-root level. This strengthens democracy. The typical needs of a particular village are well attended by this system of government. The state government remains so much busy with multifarious functions that it seldom gets time to attend to the basic problems of different rural areas. The local government reduces the burden of responsibility of the state government to a large extent.
- **Perform various functions:** The functions performed by the local self-governments are vital for making life of the local people happier and prosperous. The various needs of the rural areas such as construction and maintenance of roads, availability of water, construction of schools and education facilities, improvement in agriculture, etc. are taken care of by the local self-government.
- **Encourages local leadership:** The problems of particular rural area can be best attended by the members of the Panchayat. The state or national government cannot do so because of so many reasons. Therefore, the problems of local people are solved by local leaders through the institution of local self- government. The real improvement in the social and economic conditions of people can happen only through their intentional participation in the developmental plans and programs.
- **Training ground of citizenship:** The local people are motivated to confront and solve their problems on their own. They become less dependent upon other external agencies. It creates confidence among the local leaders at the grass-root level. These leaders put their best foot forward. Many local leaders advances their career to become state-level and national level politicians.

- **New experiments:** New infrastructural and developmental projects can be first implemented at local level to gauge its impact on the system. Successful projects can later be introduced in other areas of local government.

3.10 Changes in front of Local Governance in Education

The system of Local Self Government is not foolproof to defects or drawbacks. The challenges in front of Local Self Government are discussed below:

1. Regionalism: Sometimes it is criticized on the ground that it incites regionalism. The local leaders get so much entangled in the solution of their own problem that they hardly look into the things beyond their nose and join the national mainstream.

2. Fail to address National problems: Secondly some critics remark that the leaders at the local level fail to appreciate the state or national problems in their real perspective because of the very difference in the nature and scope.

3. Local elitism: Local elitism is a major problem. Sometimes resources for development can be captured by local elites and used primarily for their own benefits rather than of intended beneficiaries.

4. Decreasing interest of community members: Decreasing interest of community members is also a big threat in the way of decentralisation. Individual or community management of education has been a cultural phenomenon in India from ancient period to present time but it is reversing when it is formally assigned to the community.

5. Illiteracy and low educational level: Illiteracy and low educational level have cumulative impact on the actualisation of the democratic participation/ decentralisation. Illiteracy bars the flow of information to some predefined/definite section of the community and makes them unaware about their roles, rights and responsibilities.

6. Lack of interest on the part of political leaders and bureaucrats:

These groups never attempt seriously to include all the sections of the society in the management of education. Some socially, economically deprived groups dare not to raise their voices and communicate their educational needs. Political leaders and

bureaucrats use to maintain secrecy regarding public rights and their roles in the systems.

7. Dearth of human resources fit for the work is a major problem of the field: Education sector is deprived of the administrative leaders who have first-hand experience of the system as well as interest to improve the system. It needs self-motivated personnel who can realise the existing policies like decentralised management and can conceive innovative plans and strategies to implement them.

4. Conclusion

Community participation itself is not a goal in educational delivery, nor a panacea to solve complicated issues contributing to poor educational quality in both developing and developed countries. It is a process that facilitates the realization of improving educational quality and the promotion of democracy within society. Present day need is to involve communities at various stages of monitoring like; preparation, implementation, and evaluation. Communities are also expected to develop and strengthen these capacities so that they can contribute more towards the governance and management of education. In this sense, the state job is to facilitate the process, providing communities with the necessary knowledge and skills, and making sure communication takes place effectively among different stakeholders, including parents, community members, teachers, and government officials. As the recognition of community participation increases, careful examination of its exercises becomes more important.