Management of Government High Schools in Udupi District

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ABSTRACT

This paper aims to analyse the current management, problems facing and changing socio-economic conditions of government high schools in the province of Udupi District in the state of Karnataka. Whilst historically known for delivering strong foundations in education, government schools now find themselves competing with increasingly popular private schools. Using a combination of fieldwork, in-depth interviews, questionnaires and document analysis, this research looks at 2 key case study schools. The findings show that 90% of the students attending Government Composite High School Shettibettu (Parkala) and Rajeev Nagar High School (Manipal) are children of migrant labourers moving around the country from North Karnataka. Whilst basic infrastructure such as classrooms and playgrounds are

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somewhat satisfactory, there is a lack of digital technology meaning schools are completely unprepared for the current age of Artificial Intelligence. This is worsened further due to the problems within the management, leading teachers to become overwhelmed with non-teaching responsibilities provided by the state. This research shows that investment is required to improve conditions within government schools through increased public funding, public-private donor initiatives and management changes to stop public education becoming a tool to increase socio-economic inequality.

KEYWORDS: *Educational Management, Government High Schools, Udupi District, Digital Divide, Migrant Students, Management Problems.*

1. Introduction

Public education in the coastal region of Karnataka, specifically within Udupi District has historically been one of the main pillars of education within the region. Government schools were created to provide fair access to education for all so they could be seen as tools to increase democracy. They mainly cater to those in poverty and living in rural areas. Udupi currently has 106 government high schools and 72 government-aided high schools.

Within the last 2 decades there has been an increase in popularity of private schools. This has been achieved as they have more money, better facilities and are well marketed. This means government schools are falling behind, creating a multi-tiered system within education based on socio-economic status. This can cause issues if not addressed as it will negatively affect the core values of a welfare state and create poorly funded schools only for those on the lowest end of the economic spectrum.

2. Objectives

This research aims to address the following objectives:

- Evaluate the current state of government high schools in Udupi District.
- Identify problems within government high schools relating to financial investment, technology, staffing and teaching/ non-teaching workload.
- Create solutions and strategies to improve government secondary education.

3. Methodology

This research uses an empirical management approach to understand more about the schools and the issues faced. It uses fieldwork, questionnaires given to educational staff, in-depth interviews with senior teaching staff and secondary analysis of state spending documents (Sharma & Gupta, 2020).

The research group conducted extensive fieldwork with Government Composite High School Shettibettu (Parkala) and Rajeev Nagar High School (Manipal) within the district. These schools were chosen as they are located in urban-rural boundaries, meaning they can showcase the changes happening within the district.

4. Findings & Discussion

4.1 Changing Demographics: One of the most interesting findings from the fieldwork completed with Government Composite High School, Shettibettu, and Rajeev Nagar High School was the changing demographics of students. It was found that 90% of the students attending these schools are children of migrant labourers moving around the country from the poor districts of North Karnataka.

This has caused a huge divide in society (Patil & Deshmukh, 2023). Middle and upper-class families have

moved away from government schools and now attend high-fee private schools. This means government schools have become the safety net for those in extreme poverty. Both schools have basic facilities such as classrooms, playgrounds, tables and chairs; however, they struggle with the extra challenges of dealing with students who have different languages, cultures and remedial needs without any specialist help from the state (Mohanty, 2024).

4.2 Digital Divide: Whilst the world is focussing on using Artificial Intelligence, adaptive learning and advanced computer science within secondary education, government high schools within Udupi are lacking in this area (Bhat & Shenoy, 2025). Findings from the fieldwork showed that government schools are far behind private schools when it comes to computerisation.

Operational Parameters	Government High Schools (Udupi)	Private Competitors (Udupi District)
Funding	Strict State Grants & Ad-hoc Donors	High Fees & Corporate Backing
Technology	Very little / Outdated Computers	Full Digital Classes & AI
Staffing	Overloaded with Non-teaching	Specialised Staff

As state funding for technology is limited, government school committees rely heavily on ad-hoc donations to get computers. This means there is no long-term plan for technology, causing students to struggle to compete within a digital economy (Nair & Pillai, 2023).

4.3 Staffing Issues: During interviews with senior teachers, it was found there was a problem with the staffing within schools. Teachers at both schools mentioned they had a large amount of non-teaching work to complete.

They had to spend a significant amount of time completing complex state welfare tasks, mid-day meal analytics, census, electoral roll data and various reporting tasks (Fernandes & D'Souza, 2021). This causes a reduction in teaching time, less interaction between teachers and students and a lower quality

of education. Additionally, there is no budget for important extra-curricular activities, meaning students are not engaged (Thomas, 2024).

5. Management Recommendations

To improve the situation within Udupi's government high schools, the schools need to be restructured.

Remove Bureaucracy: The state must remove the non-teaching issues from teaching staff by creating new roles for clerks within each school cluster (Kumar & Sinha, 2022).

Implement CSR: Rather than relying on individuals, the Department of Public Instruction should create a public-private initiative to link Udupi's popular banks, businesses and education sectors to specific government schools for ongoing digital funding (Mishra, 2025).

Support Migrants: As 90% of students are migrants, special courses, adaptable resources and funding should be provided to these schools (Reddy, 2023).

6. Conclusion

To provide education as a powerful tool to create an extremely fair and democratic society, there needs to be more investment into government high schools. The trend in Udupi District is becoming a problem due to government schools becoming exclusive to those on the lowest end of the economic spectrum, whilst the wealthy invest in elite private schools. To change this, there needs to be structured funding from the state, digital improvements and teachers must be freed from the bureaucracy.

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