

Events and Interactions

Getting into the mode of unschooling



The FDR Research team made a two-day field visit to Aksharavanam - Vande Mataram Foundation in Kalwakurthy, Telangana on June 19, 2019. The purpose of the visit was to explore the feasibility, viability and reliability of self learning with zero or minimal external facilitation in primary and secondary education. The field visit was an eye opener as the team was able to gain first-hand experience to see the

implementation of self-learning and peer-learning pedagogy. The team also interacted with children for their feedback and also gauged their learning outcomes. The FDR research team got involved in many group discussions with various experts who are working in the field of school education. Going ahead, FDR seeks to work jointly with relevant stakeholders to improve the quality of education.

Panel discussion for relevant interventions on urban education

A session on CSR for Education in the Urban Context-Creating Evidence and Enduring Impact was organized by Pratham and CII at Green Business Centre, Madhapur and Hyderabad. It provided a platform for key stakeholders like the NGOs,

Government and Industry to comprehend the education landscape in an urban ecosystem and create scope for relevant interventions. Through this initiative, the FDR research team discussed the scope for widening its role in building a strong connect in CSR activities in education. The panel acknowledged the need for research and advocacy in CSR activities.

In conversation with the Former Surveyor General of India:



Dr. S. Subba Rao, former Surveyor General of India, interacted with FDR's research Team at Begumpet office on 22 June, 2019. He took them through the journey of the oldest institution in India (The Survey of India). He stated that “Map is

a basic infrastructural tool, its role is not limited simply to determination of physical space and providing complete geographical picture, but also serves as a backbone to any development activity.” He shared many technical details on the changing trends in mapping, along with the significance of maps in providing public services. Other topics of discussion included the surveying of International borders, state borders, gaps in maps and quality of public servants. The FDR team together with Dr. JP and Dr. Subba Rao also discussed city planning, urbanization and issue of traffic being a hindrance to public movement in relation to mapping and survey. Dr. JP addressed the implications of undermining the role of Cartography in City Planning. With regard to traffic issues, Dr. JP shared his experience of the Netherlands' traffic system, citing it as a worthy example to learn from. Dr. Subba Rao said

that there is a need of 3-E i.e. Engineering, Education and Enforcement in city planning. Adding to it, Dr. JP said, there cannot be any civic duty without enforcement. The interaction concluded with a discussion on how it is still not too late for Indian urban zones to shift from chaos to sustainable and planned development.

A discourse at South India Regional Constitution on NEP draft



Dr. JP shared valuable inputs with the intellectual gathering at the South India Regional Constitution organized by Save the Child on draft National Education Policy 2019 in Hyderabad on 19 June. Dr. JP was of the firm opinion that the two grave issues in Indian Education are unfulfilled potential and

avoidable suffering. He compelled the intellectuals to ponder on the real causes of the decrease in enrollment in government schools in the light of huge government spending on school education. Dr. JP through his keynote address recognized the dire need of resource reallocation, which could be achieved by consolidating schools and subsidizing the transport fare. He also asserted that the definition of success and its determinants needs to be reconsidered. Education system should shift its focus from quantity to quality, from assessing students based purely on the antiquated grading system to gauging their performance on better-defined learning outcomes. The most significant aspect for attaining the desired shift is to develop an incredible evaluation system. Dr. JP called for realignment of incentives so that stakeholders can strive for better outcomes.

An interactive session at “ipolicy for Young Leaders” organised by the Centre for Civil society.



Dr. Jayaprakash Narayanan brainstormed with the participants on the topic “States vs Markets”. The discussion started by throwing light on those sectors that have been witnessing tremendous growth and improvement in quality of their services, and those that have remained stagnant for the last two decades. Then, Dr. JP urged the participants to question why there were such differences, and also elaborated on the role of states and private players in an economy. He underscored that for an economy to perform effectively,

the states should be involved only in the allocation of public goods such as defence, rule of law, public infrastructure and provision of basic amenities; not in private goods. Additionally, he emphasised that the states should liberalise to facilitate free markets and competition for optimal allocation of resources.

A Round Table Talk on Need for Empowering Local Governments

Lok Satta Party organised a roundtable on the Need for Empowering Local Governments on 9 June, 2019 at Sundarayya Vignana Kendram, Hyderabad.



Dr. JP opened the discourse by expressing that local governments should be treated

on par with the Union government and the State governments. Diluting the position of local governments would weaken democracy. This will create a political environment where citizens will not understand the value of their tax money in relation to their livelihood. When we create such a huge gap between the rulers and the ruled without empowering villages economically, the existing crisis will intensify. There is a change in rulers but ruling system remains stagnant. Decentralization of powers in all practical senses is the only solution to the present crisis. While acknowledging its few shortcomings, Dr. JP expressed his belief that the New Panchayati Raj of Telangana is better than its predecessor.



In terms of specific actions that

would strengthen local governments, Dr JP said that the states should allocate 50% of their resources to villages akin to the way center distributes to the States. He also added that for effective services and better savings, there should be a cluster of gram panchayats instead of small panchayats, and that an Ombudsman should be appointed by the state for checks and balances. The Telangana Janasamithi State President, Acharya Kodandaram also extended the support on behalf of his party, by stating that the Samithi is ready to collaborate with Loksatta. In that discussion, Former High Court Judge Justice Chandrakumar also expatiated in the same vein that political parties are only working for sustaining and winning elections and not for providing good governance to public. •