Domination and emancipation

Teacher agency in
ICT and Education programs

- Gurumurthy K, Director IT for Change

ICTs

- Digital technologies
  - Creating and storing information easier, quicker, simpler
  - Sharing, communicating, publishing easier, quicker, simpler
  - Potential to impact educational processes significantly

  - Yet to see evidence of this potential being fully realised
  - Program design one cause of this gap

Aim

- Teacher agency accepted as a basis for education to be emancipatory,

- Teacher agency explored as a factor in program design

- *"In order to revive our state school system of education, and simultaneously facilitate larger goals of social and gender justice and equity, it is important that we enable schoolteachers to become professionals who can undertake this mammoth task with responsibility and commitment" Prof Poonam Batra, CIE, DU*

- Paper aims to provide a framework for assessing programs, based on how the program design has supported teacher agency

Approach

- Primary and Secondary data on ICT programs implemented or being implemented in school education (mostly in India)

- Practitioner perspective

Elements for analysing scope for agency

- Hardware
  - Local, open
- Software
  - Customisable
- Content (curricular resources)
  - Adaptable
- Pedagogy (learning processes)
  - Adaptable

Axes of centralisation and privatisation

- Implementation - centralised v/s decentralised

- (Design – centralised v/s decentralised)

- Ownership – private v/s public

Public and Centralised

- EDUSAT

- Centralised model sees digital technologies as 'pipes' that will transmit

- Participation not important, 'quality' is

- Low local ownership

- Local contexts ignored

- Maintenance issues

Private and Centralised

- CAL program of IIM Bengaluru in Karnataka

- In addition to being centralised, ownership is with private entities, preventing the sharing/appropriation of content

- Teachers minimal role in program

- School operator, taluka operator, state level operator

- Teachers do not have access to infrastructure or content

Private and decentralised

- ICT@Schools Program

- Most popular model in India

- Core processes with vendor operator

- Privatised model creates a stand-alone program with limited teacher engagement

- For profit model means further investment during BOOT period difficult

Public and decentralised

- IT@Schools (Kerala)
- Subject Teacher Forum (Karnataka)
- Program implementation decentralised
- Maximum scope for teacher agency
  - Maintain hardware, install and configure software, create and modify content, experiment with pedagogies
- 'Alive and Open'
  - to understand and explore
  - to express, create and collaborate

Public and decentralised

- Necessary condition but not sufficient
  - SSA CAL program
  - Active efforts at developing capacities essential, along with infrastructure maintenance

Trends

- Internet blurs these categories
- However overall pressures towards centralisation and privatisation will continue
  - Bureaucrat control over teachers
  - Commercial possibilities
  - 'Lock-in' to proprietary products
- Big data – assessment data to create individual learner analytics
  - Will dictate curriculum and pedagogy

Policy – possibility for social agency

- Policy needs to support ICT program design/implementation in decentralised modes and with public (read government + community) ownership

- The National ICT in school education policy is a progressive one, emphasising

  - Content creation

  - Free and open source software

  - Keeping core educational processes out of outsourcing model

- Thank You