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Abstract

This article analyses critically the efforts of Teach for India (TFI), a non-governmental organisation (NGO) working in marginalised districts of India to provide quality education to disadvantaged children through its alternative teacher credentialing programme. TFI's theory of change and intervention approach revolves around the model of Teach for All (TFAll), an international non-governmental organisation (INGO) that operates in over 48 countries globally through its network partners which are independents non-profit organisations. The TFAll's theory of change rests on developing leadership within and outside of the education sector to transform school systems and inequities in educational opportunities with the ultimate goal of ensuring all students are receiving the education they need to achieve their potential. With its intervention approach that hinges on the recruitment and deployment of young talented graduates and high performing professionals as full-time teachers in underserved schools across low-income communities, the organisation has reached over 1 million students and built a strong alumni force of over 50,000 members. Despite this laudable effort in advancing education change, the effects of the programme on education reforms in diverse national contexts have faced both enthusiasm and criticism. This paper therefore, presents a critical analysis of the TFAll's Model as operationalised in India, through TFI that was established in 2009 to promote the universalization of Elementary Education (UEE) in India. It examines the underlying assumptions that informed the de-contextualisation of the model, analyses the key features of the intervention approach and presents the critiques and limitations. The main argument is that while a working partnership between TFI and the Indian government holds great potential to ensure educational opportunities for disadvantaged children, the organisation needs to re-evaluate its intervention approach to suit local realities of its beneficiaries and needs to become conscious of the socio-cultural and political economy of education within the Indian society.

Introduction

The inability of many governments to institutionalise effective strategies that respond satisfactorily to the challenges of improving access to quality basic education in poor deprived areas has provided the raison d'`etre for civil society actors, particularly non-governmental organisations (NGOs) to assume leading roles in ensuring progress for education provision and delivery across the world (Akyeampong, 2004). Apart from local and global advocacy actions to address various education planning, governance and implementation issues, NGOs also function as alternative providers of elementary education, ensuring quality service delivery for education services at various system levels (Rose, 2009). In India for example, 19 percent of the total 310,000 NGOs, registered under the Societies Registration Act 1860, are working in education and research with about one-third involved directly in provision, primarily with respect to providing education to the excluded. (Government of India [GoI], 2015). Despite free and compulsory education to all children up to the age of fourteen being a constitutional commitment under the '86th Constitution Amendment Act of 2002', India's population of out-of-school children and those not completing primary schooling currently stands at 35 million (Chandra Pandey, 2012). However, latest efforts of the Indian government in universalising quality education is complemented through several alternative programmatic interventions spearheaded by these NGOs. In his recent study of six NGOs in India, Jagannathan (2001) argues that the universal elementary education efforts of the Indian government rely significantly on the work of and by extension, partnerships with NGOs.

The role of NGOs in driving educational quality for all through cost-effective and impact-driven programmes have become greatly necessitated in various geographical and socio-economic contexts within the global educational discourse. According to Akyeampong (2004), NGOs have greatly enhanced global and national educational objectives in many countries where the government is failing in its obligation to provide basic education, particularly for highly disadvantaged populations who would otherwise not have access to education to complete primary education and achieve measurable learning outcomes. The concern, however, is that many international non-governmental organisations (INGOs) are circulating generic and de-contextualised interventions that do not reflect the specific local realities of the target beneficiaries and that of the contexts in which they are situated. With their inability to leverage contextual understanding for programme delivery, they end up with initiatives that produce short-term results which do not complement mainstream education

efforts well and also lack sustainability (ibid, 2004). According to DeStefano et al. (2007), NGOs are becoming the major service providers and effective partners in reaching underserved and deprived populations with quality education and governments can develop synergistic relationships with them to leverage their strengths within the mainstream education systems. While the innovative approaches and models of education NGOs is key in delivering educational quality for the poor and underserved, it is of paramount importance to evaluate and understand how this can be scaled into conventional state education systems through partnerships, to enable Governments adapt to their operations and programmes to improve the access to and quality of education in poor and hard to reach communities (Rose, 2009).

Teach for India (TFI), one of many active NGOs in India has attracted attention for playing a crucial role in India's efforts to universalise primary education through an intervention model for improving access to basic education for disadvantaged children. The organisation has improved on the standard models of state schooling by changing the mix of inputs at the school level where state and non-state collaborations now exist with increasing participation of more corporate NGOs in the process of educational planning with municipal governmental bodies across India. (De Stefano & Moore, 2010). Conversely, due to its indirect role in the advancement of managerialistic ideas of school reforms which are considered neoliberal, questions have been raised on whether TFI's vision is truly transformative or rather, it has become a silent vehicle for vested interests of privatisation.

This paper describes and analyses the activities of Teach for India, founded in 2009 with the mission to provide teachers to meet the educational needs of disadvantaged children across the various rural districts of India. The analysis begins with a keen overview of the education context in India, establishing the foundation for understanding the exclusion scenario for disadvantaged children. It then moves to a quick exploration of TFAll's approach as situated within global context and then, a specific review of Teach for India follows, highlighting its way of working as well as areas of strength. From that point, the discussion proceeds by critically evaluating how TFI delivers its intervention with critiques of its implementation strategies. The core argument of the paper is that while a working partnership between TFI and the Indian government holds great potential to ensure educational opportunities for disadvantaged children, the organisation needs to re-evaluate its intervention approach to suit local realities of its beneficiaries and needs to become conscious of the socio-cultural and political economy of education within the Indian society. Using TFAll/TFI as a case

study, the essay also delineates broader issues linked to the operation and work of NGOs as it relates policy development and implementation.

Contextual Overview of Education in India

Education in India is a joint responsibility of the central and state governments, and educational rights are conservatively enshrined within the Constitution (GoI, 1949). Upon independence in 1947, India made a constitutional commitment to provide free and compulsory education for all children up to the age of 14 years, a salient feature of the national policy, which earmarked the universalisation of Elementary Education (UEE) as a national priority (GoI, 2015). The Constitution of India, adopted by the Constituent Assembly on 26 November 1949, which came into force on 26 January 1950 and as last amended in 2006, enshrines the right to education, the “Universalisation of Elementary Education” in Article 21A (Chandra Pandey, 2012). Across several constitutional, national and policy statements, the Indian state recognises the vital link between education and totality of the national development process and therefore creates a sense of urgency in the need for the state to ensure the universalisation of education provision, enrolment, retention, participation and achievement, especially for children between the age group of 6-14.

The importance of the universalization of Elementary Education in India has been emphatically spelt out in several national conventions including in the National Policy of Education (1986), Programme of Action (1992), Unnikirshnan Judgement (1993) and the Education Ministers’ Resolve (1998). The reform and restructuring of the Indian educational system have overtime continued to attract attention as an important area of national and state intervention and in 2009, in an attempt to reach India's constitutional goal of universal elementary education, the Indian Parliament enacted The Right of Children to Free and Compulsory Education Act (RTE) Act. The RTE Act, which further guarantees universalisation of quality education at the elementary level in the country, remains the most important development in the Universalisation of Elementary Education in India. Subsequently, this ‘right to education’ legislation has seen a chequered history in evolving from a directive principle to a fundamental right with both the national government and state governments placing it at the centre stage of public attention (*GoI*, 2015). Its passage has since laid the basis for several policy reforms targeted at addressing equity and quality in the UEE implementation drive. According to (GoI, 2015), all states and union territories of

India have incorporated the act into the state legislative framework and adopted the norms prepared by the Government of India. Perhaps the adoption of the National Education Policy in 1986 and the Jomtien Declaration in 1990 repositioned the pace of strengthening infrastructure and delivery of public elementary education. The National Government of India became the prime mover in the design and implementation of several initiatives geared at advancing the goal of universalising education across India, invested heavily in massive infrastructural projects and teacher recruitment drives with long-term sector plans backed up with substantial financial commitments (Govinda & Bandyopadhyay, 2008). Subsequently, there was a tremendous increase in the accessibility of schools and this led to a corresponding rise in the number of children participating in school, an evidential justification for the large-scale mobilisation that resulted from massive state investments aid by multilateral and bilateral donors (Govinda, 2009). Despite significant progress in enrolment at the elementary stage over a long period as driven through the UEE with widespread operationalisation of the RTE Act, in principle, nationally set objectives for education in India remains far from realisation due to inadequate teaching provision.

With a rapidly growing population that outstripped the capacity at which schools educate children owing to limited supply of adequate and qualified teachers, India's mission to make UEE a reality became a struggle, a situation fuelled by under-planning and over-ambition (Burnett, 2017). Sayed et al. (2007) note that there were substantive policy shifts in the 1990s that targeted the massive allocation of resources to districts with the educationally excluded children from socially, economically and culturally disadvantaged groups with the aim of ensuring equity within the UEE grand plan. Despite the huge traction received by the UEE across the 2000s, Govinda and Biswal (2006) suggest that state planners failed to pay attention to the agency of achieving greater equity in provision and thus neglected targeted reforms to cater for the educational needs of those from marginalised groups excluded from the school system.

Recent statistics from ASER (2016) indicates that while participation levels in schools have increased across the board, the opportunity gap between the general population and marginalised social groups and minority communities continues to widen. Marginalisation and infringement of children's right and access to elementary education in India are largely determined by the stratifications and social inequalities that permeate the Indian Society (Talukdar & Sharma, 2015). Historically, segregated provision and tribal discrimination have

continually influenced educational exclusion, leaving certain groups unable to afford the cost of and access quality elementary education. These include underprivileged children from remote, rural and hard to reach communities, children with special needs and those from secluded castes, secluded tribes and other minority groups. National statistics from the India EFA 2015 National Review reveals significant gaps in the enrolment and retention rates especially for children from SC, ST, and Muslim communities against other privileged groups. With India's population of out-of-school children and those not completing primary schooling put at 35 million (UIS, 2016), it is clear the major educational development priority for India is not simply providing inputs and infrastructure, but identifying who and where the excluded groups are, and devising strategies to ensure meaningful access and provide quality basic education for them. The next section explores how an NGO, Teach for India (TFI) is providing learning opportunities for educationally disadvantaged children by mobilising elite graduates and professionals as para-teachers to teach in marginalised districts of India.

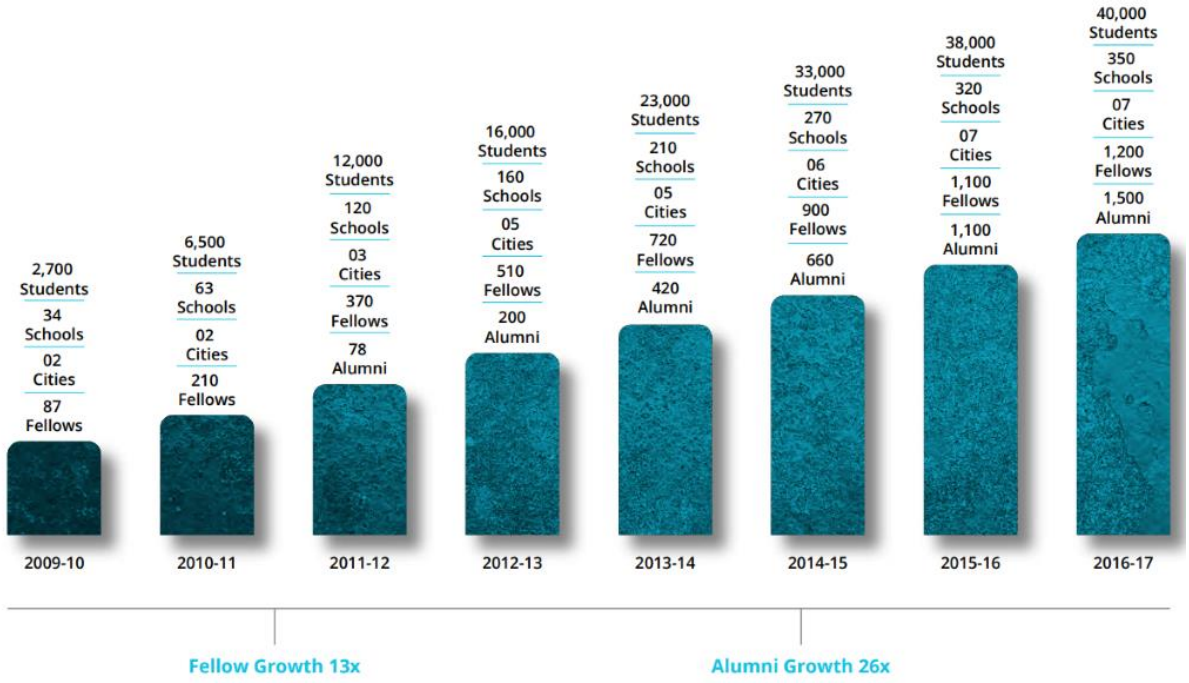
Characterisation of the Teach for India

TFI is an offshoot of TFAll which operates as a global network of 48 independent, locally led and partner-funded NGOs that shares a unifying mission to expand educational opportunity around the world by providing teachers to meet the educational needs of disadvantaged children in resource-constrained and marginalised communities. The organisation bears an institutional ideology of "educational leadership" that recognizes effective leadership as a key to resolving the global crisis of education inequity. In that sense, its grand overarching intervention approach dwells on a rubric called Teaching for Leadership, which links leadership theory to teaching practice (Thomas, 2007). This helps frame a notion that motivated teachers, with excellent teaching qualities, are foundational for lifetime leadership and education advocacy at the local and policy levels (Teach for All [TFAll], 2007).

In 2009, TFI, the largest of all TFAll's network partners was birthed as a public-private partnership (PPP) in under-resourced municipal schools in Mumbai and Pune, two of India's most populated cities, where the ostracization of street children, SC and ST is conspicuously evident (Subramanian, 2018). As described by the founder, Shaheen Mistri, her interest to address certain inefficiencies in the Indian education system was

further solidified when she encountered first-hand how the vast social and economic disparities in Mumbai creates educational exclusion (Blumenreich and Gupta, 2015). Her initial plan of providing after-school support for underprivileged children from low-income communities through Akanksha Foundation led to an expansion that led to the establishment of TFI. This buttresses the standpoint that the expansion of TFAll's theory of change and implementation on a global scale across various local contexts, including India is influenced by the responsiveness of civil society actors to the heightened need to address educational disparities and expand educational opportunities for all, especially for disadvantaged children (TFAll, 2011).

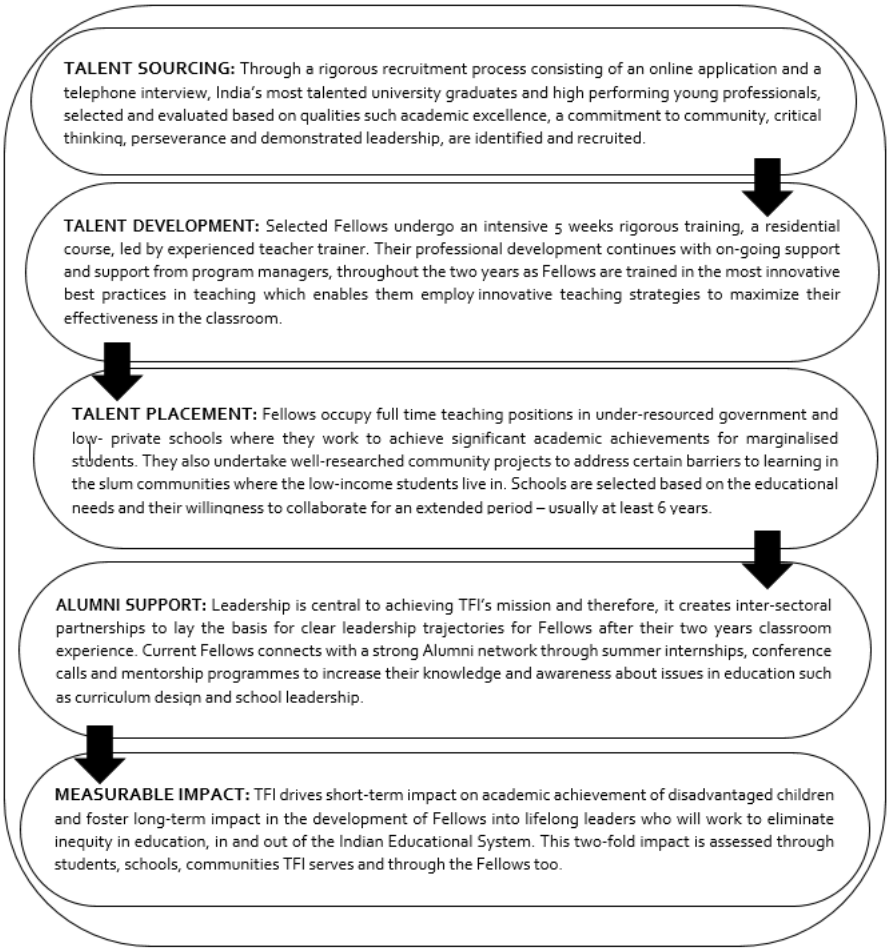
Conceived with an overarching goal of addressing educational disparities, TFAll's theory of change is situated within the ideologies of equality, accountability and measurable impact (Londe, Brewer& Lubeinski, 2015) and this is inextricably linked to Section 12 of the RTE act which identity with children from socially and economically disadvantaged groups (Chandra Pandey, 2012). The cultural and conceptual adoption of TFAll's model in India is framed around the ideology that education is emancipatory for the poor, a "problem solving" narrative which is justified by the rapid population surge, the highly divisive nature of state against non-state education provision and subsequent marginal exclusion of the disadvantaged from educational opportunities (Subramanian, 2018). Therefore, with over 96% of all children in the ages of 4-16 years enrolled as at the end of 2011, the emergence of the TFI programme into the Indian educational landscape was situated within the vision of complementing the nation's efforts in delivering improved learning outcomes and universalizing the equitable access to quality education (Chandra Pandey, 2012). To achieve this, the objective was to deliver systemic change through effective and adequate teachers' recruitment by providing an average figure of 1000 new teachers per year in at least eight major cities by 2016 (ibid, 2012). To this end, TFI recruited, trained and placed 87 fellows to teach 3000 children in 34 schools across Mumbai and Pune in its first year of operation (Fabel, 2011). This tally has since increased to over 1200 fellows in 350 schools across 7 major cities of India in its 9 years of operations (Teach for India [TFI], 2017). The major indicators of TFI's organisation growth in terms of reach, impact and expansion across India are presented in Figure 1 below:



Source: Teach for India (2017, p. 27)

The scope of the transformational impact TFI hopes to create with its Fellows over time within failing municipal education systems transcend beyond the classroom (Subramanian, 2018). In the short term, Fellows will serve as dedicated teachers in under-resourced government and low-cost private schools across low-income communities to drive significant educational attainment for disadvantaged children. Fundamentally, it is expected that these fellows will form a transformational leadership force of alumni whose experiences and insights of service will inform their willingness to effect systemic, long term changes for educational quality in the context of India's RTE Act (TFI, 2013). As Chrisina, Robison and Spilka (2016) note, the intensity of the experience of being grounded in the inequities faced by their students and communities is expected to inspire a sense of injustice in these Fellows and, subsequently, the development of a personal calling to address the underlying problems of educational inequity.

TFI's intervention is rooted in a five-pronged model that consists of short to long-term programmatic projections. These cut across the recruitment of the fellows as para teachers, their training and deployment, alumni support and assessment of short term and long-term impact (TFI, 2014). Figure 2 below illustrates the TFI's Model in concise details as follows:



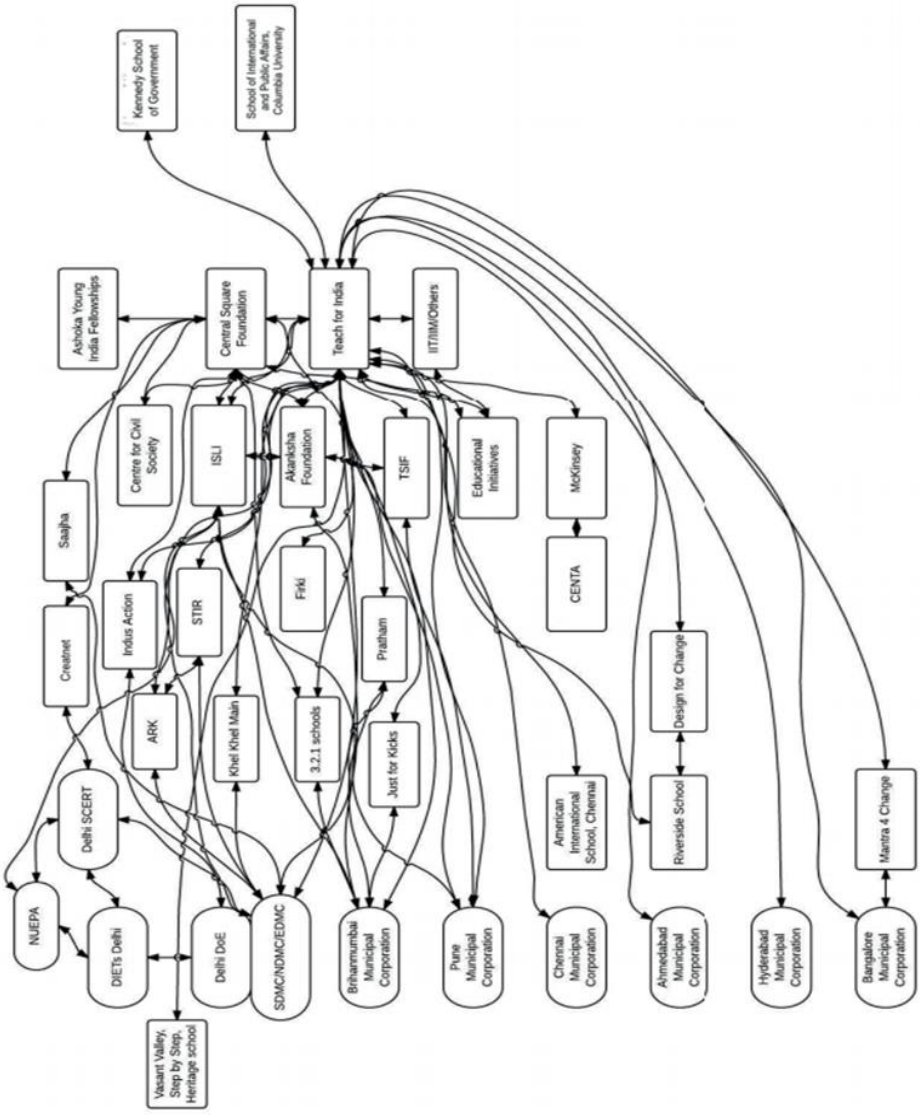
Source: Thomas (2007), Teach for India (2014)

The TFAll's programmatic approach which is replicated by TFI stems from the assumption that high-performing college graduates and brilliant corporate professionals can remarkably improve their students' learning outcomes and close the achievement gap between the rich and poor (Straubhaar & Friedrich, 2015). Conversely, this assumption is strongly contested within the contemporary global educational landscape on whether the TFAll's model is truly effective in delivering high academic achievement (Friedrich, 2015). As a counter-evidence, TFI claims that students in TFI classrooms are "at a skill-level about 2–4 years above their current grade levels," and in 2010–2011, the majority of these students gained more than a year of growth in many subject areas (TFI, 2017). While Heiling and Jez (2010) argue that students taught by TFI fellows produce lower test scores as compared to those taught by locally trained teachers, several evaluative studies suggest positive results on student test scores at both primary (Glazerman & Mayer, 2014) and secondary levels (Friedrich, 2014). Despite the inefficacy of student achievement as a sole

criterion in measuring its effectiveness or impact, TFI still upholds its belief in measurable impact and continues to evaluate its beneficiaries through standardised tests. The programme has become so achievement-driven that it has lost sight of its primary aim of delivering quality learning that addresses teaching quality and achievement gap, yet it continues to expand to more district schools reaching more disadvantaged children. Beyond students' academic achievement, TFI needs to focus on other indicators such as teacher performance and stakeholders' satisfaction to evaluate the impact of its intervention model.

Apart from its operationalisation as a non-profit enterprise like other TFAll's network partners, some salient features that has contributed to the pace of growth of TFI across major Indian cities include local autonomy, inclusive representation and most importantly, public and private partnerships (TFI, 2016). In 2013 when the Municipal Government of Mumbai designed a public-private partnership (PPP) model for the management of over 1100 government schools and decided to collaborate with private organisations and NGOs, it was regarded as a major development towards the privatisation of education through the PPP Model and TFI was a key model organisation working with the framework (Thomas, 2010). The influence of TFI in local education reforms reflect through its strong connection to a significant network of NGOs, educational institutions and private foundations that are partnering with municipal governing bodies to shape reforms in poorly functioning school systems (Subramanian, 2018). As Rose (2009) point out, NGO provision in India has become integral to national education plans and as a result, special programmes are designed and funded by the government in partnerships with NGOs within an overarching strategic approach to systemic issues. According to Subramanian (2018), TFI is a central actor in a growing network of active and leading non-state institutions in India that are addressing the issues of poor infrastructural support and teacher shortages in district schools. With its position, there are tendencies for the organisation to facilitate the design and implementation of a grand intervention framework in partnership with the government to further strength education provision for disadvantaged children. Owing to significance of cross-sectoral collaboration, it is imperative to engage a collective of entrepreneurial social actors who needed to see action produce certain kinds of effective results (Subramanian, 2018).

Figure 3 below shows the key intersections of TFI's work with that several foundations, alumni organisations, municipal bodies and government institutions that can be leveraged to scale its intervention approach.



Source: Subramanian (2018, p. 37)

Based on the strength areas highlighted, TFI has shown the institutional capacity to significantly support efforts of the Indian government in advancing nationally set objectives to address educational disparities for the disadvantaged. However, to ensure impact and effectiveness beyond mere scaling in numbers, various limitations of its organisational design and operations must be addressed.

Critique and Limitations of TFAll and TFI

TFAll's leadership development drive in education has advanced educational progress, both locally and globally. The organisation has successfully mobilised over 65,000 para-teachers, produced 40,000 alumni and reached an approximate figure of 6 million students - typically those from the most disadvantaged socioeconomic backgrounds, as seen in India and with other network partners across the world (TFAll, 2017). In spite of this excellent impact record and the resulting recognition as one of the most successful movements in global education (Exley, 2014), TFAll has received huge criticism in recent times over a number of converging issues which I analysed below.

Neoliberal Interferences with Local Education Governance Structures

Firstly, since its inception in 2007, TFAll has grown substantially from being an INGO aimed at filling vacant teaching positions in disadvantaged settings to an influential proponent of 'neoliberal marketised solutions to educational inequality (Londe, Brewer& Lubienski, 2015, p. 4). Beyond its superficial two-year teaching intervention approach, TFAll's growth and influence as a major non-state institution reflect through its key role in large-scale neoliberal education reforms around the issues of school management practices, alternative teacher credentialing programmes, para-teachers training/recruitment, student learning assessment and public-private partnerships for education (Blumenreich & Gupta, 2015). With a presence in over 46 countries, the transnational spread of the TFAll's NGO model across various political, social and economic contexts exemplifies a "policy borrowing or micro-lending system" (Friedrich, 2014) within its network partners. Undoubtedly, this supposed transformative approach for local education reform is presented as "apolitical" and "simplistic" (Vellanki, 2014). However, TFAll's role in the "uncritical exchange of ideas and educational practices from the West" (Blumenreich & Gupta, 2015), especially in addressing the urgent demand for teachers in disadvantaged settings can be viewed as a form of neoliberal globalisation, which is governed by the notions of marketisation and privatisation and has evidently empowered traditionally disadvantaged groups which it was targeted at (Gupta, 2012). Additionally, with its imposition of external values and neglect of the significance of implicit beliefs and cultural diversity, TFAll has propagated a new order of educational colonisation within several local educational systems as its

western concepts of private schooling and alternative teacher credentialing programmes spread globally (Blumenreich & Gupta, 2015). It is noteworthy that with such marketised solution for educational inequality emanating from a Western discourse, the TFAll's approach ensures the continuous lending of a neoliberal policy that does not only reinforce the marginalisation of disadvantaged groups but is also strategically positioned to benefit the developing world through political and economic means.

Circulation of a Decontextualized Intervention Approach

On a further note, a review of the TFAll Model reveals the circulation of a generic decontextualized intervention approach across diverse and dissimilar historical, economic and cultural contexts. Specifically, its lack of reference to certain peculiarities and uniqueness of the Indian society like the local purposes of education, multilingualism, cultural values and philosophical ideas embedded within the Indian culture demonstrates the pitfalls of several INGOs that seek to address local education challenges and yet disregards the significance of context-specificity. For example, the emphasis on strong English-speaking abilities as a key recruitment criterion for potential TFI Fellows, in a country that possesses vast linguistic diversity, reflects a crucial component that weakens the broad vision of the organisation. According to Vellanki (2014), the selection of English speaking fellows by TFI to become English-speaking teachers in Indian government schools where the local and regional languages of communication are the medium of instruction is a case of linguistic imperialism that creates disjuncture with the local context of India's multilingualism. This contravenes the "Three-language Formula" which governs the existing policy on the language of instruction in Indian schools that was adopted by the Education Commission in 1961 which aims to integrate English, Hindi and two other Indian languages into mainstream schools (Blumenriech & Gupta, 2015). Moreover, this reproduces a systemic form of marginalisation as Fellows are specifically trained and placed in government-controlled English-medium classrooms to teach children from socially disadvantaged families and communities who cannot speak English. While TFI is a programme aimed at closing teaching gaps, its rigid approach in deploying English Speaking recruits in its strictly English-medium host schools where English is being "taught and learnt by compulsion" has played a role in surrendering control of local forms of knowledge production and contextually pedagogy which could have been a potential strength of TFI (Blumenriech & Gupta, 2015).

Inadequate Teacher Preparation Model

While TFI's vision of deploying 1000 new teachers per year in at least eight major Indian cities to help advance nationally set educational objectives for disadvantaged children seems laudable (TFAll, 2017), it's teacher preparation model which involves just five to six weeks of residential training presents a great concern. Borrowed from its Western counterparts like Teach for America and Teach First UK, the TFI's short-duration teacher training programme leaves limited time for the fellows to get acquainted with and build their knowledge about the local culture which they can use to contextualise their teaching methods (Thomas, 2007). Furthermore, since most of the selected fellows had no prior training in education, five to six weeks of professional training do not equip them enough to understand and engage with complex social aspects like caste, class and tribes which interacts with the relationship between the teacher, the student and the process of teaching and learning itself which are peculiar to the Indian context. According to Vellanki (2014), TFI's teacher preparation practices are antithetical to the principles and beliefs of the India's 2005 National Curriculum Framework (NCF) and to the 2009 National Curriculum Framework for Teacher Education (NCFTE), both of which underlines the significance for teachers to develop and nurture socio-emotional skills that are vital for a learner-friendly progressive approach to teaching. Drawing on the sociological underpinnings of education which implies that social structures and identities influence schooling and education, he further argued that the minimal understanding of theoretical perspectives and lack of sensitivity towards diverse socio-cultural backgrounds creates a vast socio-cultural gap between TFI's young teachers and their students. Therefore, reflecting on the drawbacks of TFI's teacher preparation model, it can be argued that a grounded understanding and engagement with certain dynamics, such as caste, gender, race, which are peculiar in the Indian context is significant for TFI fellows to maximise learning experiences for its target beneficiaries. Indeed, as Blumenriech and Gupta (2015) demonstrate, "what is needed in India are dedicated and well-prepared classroom teachers, committed to the cause of teaching rather than inexperienced and underprepared teachers who are bound to leave after their short teaching stint of two years.

De-professionalisation of Teaching

Conclusively, beyond the limitation of its inadequate teacher preparation model, TFI's approach in tackling teacher gaps face stiff opposition from professional teachers' association across India over the de-professionalization of teaching. The employment of contractual or para-teachers with little or no prior training in education has become a contentious issue whose short and long-term effects has a significant influence on the social status and roles of teachers' in the society. By employing people without adequate professional orientation, (Talukdar & Sharma 2015) argues that TFI de-emphasises the professional nature of teacher's work and further demotivates regular teachers especially within the Indian society where teaching is considered a profession of high accountability and teachers perceived as a bank of knowledge. As captured within NCFTE (2009),

> *"The status of the teacher reflects the socio-cultural ethos of the society; it is said that no people can rise above the level of its teachers". Such exhortations are indeed an expression of the important role played by the teachers as transmitters, inspirers and promoters of man's eternal quest for knowledge. Should this role expectation be not taken as a rhetoric but as a goal to be constantly striven for, the urgency is to address ourselves seriously to examining the issues related to the preparation of teachers as well as to prune the theory and practice of teacher education."*

This perception of teachers as "professionals" depict the core fundamental issue upon which the NCFTE is built and based on the foregoing, it is arguable that the representation of teaching as "a short-term social work" by NGOs with fast-track teacher preparation and licensure programmes like TFI contributes to the declining reputation of teaching as a worthy profession. There need to be improvement on approaches to teacher preparation with further emphasis on professional training, induction into teaching and other professional development opportunities.

Conclusion and Recommendations

Globally, the success of national governments in extending access and ensuring quality in educational opportunities for disadvantaged populations remain marginally exclusive

as a result of institutional capacity, financial resources and political will. However, evidence from various researchers on state and alternative provision of basic education have demonstrated that NGOs are capable of driving participation, access and outcomes for excluded and vulnerable populations such as, out-of-school children and those from low-income backgrounds and hard-to-reach communities, to ensure educational quality. While barriers ranging from poverty, challenging demographics, conflicted situations and a host of factors have excluded millions of children from accessing quality education, NGOs have been successful in providing opportunities to ensure access to education for such populations through complementary and alternative approaches.

TFAll's intervention approach of placing non- education professionals as teachers in public classrooms serving poor children in marginalised communities across the world has attracted huge success and the network partners have received massive support from various stakeholders such as national governments, foundations, local and international corporations. Its satellite programme in India, TFI through the alternative teacher credentialing methodology works with municipal schools in districts across India to complement government efforts in filling teacher gaps. The success of the programme can be leveraged to scale efforts within the mainstream education systems to further integrate more disadvantaged children.

However, this essay argued that the negligence of contextual realities in the adoption of the TFAll model in India comes with grave implications. Major social disadvantages such as castes, tribes, gender, geographical location, uneven development and poverty represent the multiple barriers to education and learning faced by children from disadvantaged groups across India and it takes context-specific interventions to address them (Chandra Pandey, 2012). The range of critiques presented for TFI also highlights the drawbacks of the operations of most INGOs and NGOs which needs to be addressed.

This study has shown that systemic analysis needs to be done to assess various factors that can aid the programme's approach in event of any state and non-state collaboration to scale such intervention and to ensure it does not exacerbate exclusion in the longer term. With adaptation and closer context specificity, NGO interventions could be enhanced to cover more beneficiaries and maximise more sustainable impact.

As the central figure in a growing transnational network of corporate education NGOs in India and its role in the spread of a neoliberal and market-oriented model of education reform, it is also beneficial for TFI to engage in critical reflections of how its organisational design and approach can be improved on to scale its localised and global-level impact (Vellanki, 2014). Another area that needs further scholarly attention is the accountability structures for the considerable and substantial funding the organisation receives from public and private partners as this will aid the understanding of the scope of its programme planning, design and operations. To address teacher gaps with impact and sustainability in sight, TFAll must address its lack of national cultural and policy context in India and the inadequate teacher preparation model.

As Blumenreich and Gupta (2015) rightly assert; “what is needed in India are dedicated and well-prepared classroom teachers, committed to the cause of teaching rather than two-years teachers who will probably leave the classrooms to become leaders in other companies and organisations.

The solution to ensuring equity and quality in education for disadvantaged children in India is highly complex. On one hand, TFI’s intervention approach holds great promise but on the other hand, the organisation needs to re-evaluate its intervention approach to suit local realities of its beneficiaries and become conscious of the socio-cultural and political economy of education within the Indian society.

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