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"Fighting Against Ourselves, Why History Continues to Repeat Itself?"

Rysheema Dixon

A Capstone Paper submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for a
Master of Arts in Sustainable Development/International Policy and
Management at SIT Graduate Institute in
Washington, District of Columbia, USA.

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Advisor: Kenneth Williams

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Abstract

My capstone will focus on how self-mobilization among Blacks and Indians can affect change in the United States and India to build a stronger sense of community and improve their rights to education. This paper outlines multiple approaches to fighting against oppressors, combating ethnic to ethnic conflicts and obtaining educational rights. Many cultures have difficulty teaching and learning from one another and it inhibits them from fighting for their rights as citizens. Indians in India and Black Americans have similar background stories in reference to slavery and the caste system but live in two different realities. Identity also plays an enormous role in how cultures connect and shape their behavior and interactions in society. How can one fight against a system that they are born into? The solution is complex and still has no direct answer in today's society but there is hope through organizing and mobilizing to break down that system. Once, there is an elimination of ethnic to ethnic conflicts, people can begin to organize and mobilize to fight against the system such as the government to obtain their rights to education.

The purpose of this thesis is to address the question: How does self-mobilization prepare Blacks in the United States and Indians in India to fight for their rights to education? I identified two sub questions that are related to the research question and will be discussed throughout the paper as well. (1) How is self-mobilization an effective approach to changing the educational landscape for future generations in India and United States? (2) What steps will it take to organize and mobilize Blacks in the United States and Indians in India to create change and eliminate oppression by our government sectors?

Methodology and Findings

I used academic journals, books, documentaries, electronic articles and reports to identify the linkages between Blacks in the United States and Indians in India and how they can strengthen their access and rights to education. As a result of using these methods, I have found that (1) Black Americans are capable of organizing and mobilizing on issues of civil rights but need to focus on small mobilizing efforts to obtain their rights to education. (2) There are small victories in India as it relates to organizing and mobilizing for their rights as citizens but there has not been a mass movement since Gandhi. The same could be possibly said about the United States as well in relation to Martin Luther King Jr, the Civil Rights Movement. (3) Good quality education in public schools is a limited resource in both locations (United States and India) and only given priority to the middle and upper class citizens. Government primary and secondary schools are failing to educate our nation and leaving our children, teenagers and young adults vulnerable. Education is essential to learning and growing as a person; it is also a fundamental human right.

True sustainable development happens when the community is participating in the decision making process on the issues that are affecting their country. Country ownership and leadership allows for effective and efficient change. Community members are the key leaders of sustainable development. Blacks in the United States and Indians in India are ready for change. Will you stand next to them in this revolutionary fight to education? I know I will, let's start mobilizing today.

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Introduction

Welcome to "Fighting Against Ourselves"; where we will begin to stop history from repeating itself! There are certain privileges like education that are only for the elite and upper class citizens. It has devastated the middle and low class societies around the globe. There are two particular places that I will be focusing on, United States (US) and India. Black Americans and Indians in India have similar backgrounds based on the history of slavery and the caste system but live in two different realities. I specifically chose these two areas because I recently visited and worked in India for four months and I have grown up in the black community in the United States. Being black in the US is difficult to deal with at times because the black community continues to fight against each other every day. Uplifting each other is a challenge and as a result, it discounts their knowledge and abilities. I believe that blacks fight so hard against one another because (1) they do not know their own identity in correlation to the white culture they tend to live up to and (2) the skin color complex which was socially constructed from slavery.

According to Dalal (2002), he outlines Paulo Friere's theory on horizontal violence; Mr. Friere suggests "that the oppressed attack each other, because they see in each other the internalized oppressor, and that this imago is the true target of their aggression. Thus the aggression, which cannot be expressed 'upwards' because the consequences are too threatening, gets turned either inwards or outwards in a horizontal direction." (Dalal, 2002, Ch. 5) Various marginalized groups internalize their emotions cultivated by the dominant culture and take their anger out on someone they feel is inferior to them. By not acknowledging and dealing with the root cause of the problem results in Band-Aid solutions and a vicious cycles. Resources are

limited; therefore lower class citizens in the US and India has to fight harder to catch a break. This can be applied any country context, not only United States and India.

Now that Barack Obama, President of the United State is in office, the black community thought he would be the savior and rescue the black communities across the US. As President Obama is continuing his term in office, the black community is becoming more and more impatient about not receiving the attention they deserve from the administration. Little do they know President Obama does not have as much control as the black community thinks he has; in addition, he is the President for all Americans. Congress leaders are making decisions that decide the future of our policies as well. Black Americans have to organize and mobilize to get representation in the political arena where the decisions are being made. How does one motivate black communities in United States to stop waiting for a leader and start becoming change agents to compete for their rights? Education is the first way to get the ball rolling.

When referring to India, there are similar characteristics in relation to skin color and identity issues amongst their people. In India, their identity is chosen for them in comparison to the black communities in the US, they are born with an identity based on their last name which is equivalent to your occupation, i.e. waste[1]. Individuals have an identity that cannot be changed or upgraded unless you move into the formal sector or marry into a higher caste which rarely happens. While meeting several individuals including SEWA[2] members in India, they indicated that only seven percent of the Indian population makes up the formal sector. Therefore, you are dealing with a majority of informal sector workers 93 percent not recognized by the government and do not receive benefits. The informal sector is not privileged to education as the formal

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[1] Waste, one form of occupation in India
[2] SEWA stands for Self-Employed Women's Association

sector individuals/families are in the country which comprise of middle and upper castes. This can all change if the informal sector fought against the government and demanded the education they deserve. Hence, how do you begin to organize and fight for your rights when they seem beyond your knowledge?

The purpose of this thesis is to address the question: How does self-mobilization prepare Blacks in the United States and Indians in India to fight for their rights to education? I identified two sub questions that are related to the research question and will be discussed throughout the paper as well. (1) How is self-mobilization an effective approach to changing the educational landscape for future generations in India and United States? (2) What steps will it take to organize and mobilize Blacks in the United States and Indians in India to create change and eliminate oppression by our government sectors?

'Mobilization is defined as engaging people as political protagonists and includes activities that build and use the strength of numbers and organization.' (VeneKlasen and Miller, 2008, p.257) My definition of self-mobilization is motivating self to take the lead in organizing and mobilizing people through all of your resources such as organizations, associations, governments, service providers, and most of all community members. Collective strength in numbers is powerful! Even one person can start a movement resulting in a ripple effect.

Chapter One: History of Blacks in the United States

Race is a socially stratification term that has been used since civilization has been in existence. The term is still heavily used today as well. Black lower class individuals were given an identity by the dominant culture. Smedley (1998) stated in his argument that,

> After the Civil War, race and racial ideology remained and were strengthened. African Americans particularly had to grapple with the reality of being defined as the lowest status group in American society and with the associated stereotypes. It is said that blacks cannot achieve in any intellectual endeavor, and this has so infected our consciousness that even young black children are entrapped in the myth and inhibited from expressing intellectual curiosity. Many black youth have been pressured into not acting white." (Smedley, 1998, pgs.694 and 698)

Blacks were taught to act a certain way in society and were judged by other blacks if they acted white. There was a saying back in the early days that if you do not want blacks to know anything, put it in a book because they do not read. This is a horrible message and stereotype that has stuck with many blacks in the US.

This is a clear example of how Friere's horizontal violence term is used in the black American context. Black Americans were forced into an identity by white civilization in the United States which has been streamed down to the black communities, thus turning on one another from the oppression felt by the dominant society. 'It is clear it was not only slavery that robbed black Americans of their identity. Many scholars have noted that strong and vibrant black communities survived after the Civil War, despite the laws, practices and customs imposed. There were policies and practices that prevented blacks from competing in the job market and gaining industrial skills.' (Smedley, 1998, p.698) More recently, public schools are been introducing students of color to STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics). Unfortunately, today black young men still lag behind in the sciences and mathematics fields.

Brief history of slavery based on the documentary called "Dark Girls"

From 1619 to 1865, blacks were considered animals and beasts in the United States. During those 246 years of enslavement, blacks were not even considered human beings. Black Americans were animals that were enslaved to the dominant white culture that created black identity.   In the days of slavery, there were 64 distinctions between black skin complexions. (Duke 2013)   The lighter skinned black people were seen as the "house slaves" while the darker skinned black people were seen as the "field slaves". This created a divide among the race and blacks begin internalize our views toward one another. Black Americans generated a paper bag test during these years as well, meaning if you are lighter skin, you are considered smart and pretty versus if you are darker skin, and you are considered unattractive and uneducated.

From 1865 to 1964, it was the post enslavement time period when blacks were thought of as human beings but did not have rights. It was the "Emancipation without a plan." (Duke 2013) There was no law to protect blacks and it is agreed that today, certain laws are held against blacks. The Civil Rights Movement sparked blacks from being animals to human beings with rights. Martin Luther King Jr. was the charismatic leader who led this remarkable movement. After Martin Luther King Jr. visited Mahatma Gandhi, he taught blacks how to fight using nonviolence and peace. By using the nonviolent approach, blacks marched on Washington in 1964 and won their civil rights.

From 1965 to the present, Black Americans have come a long ways but are still facing some of the same challenges faced previously in reference to racism. Even though black Americans are human beings with rights and know how to organize and mobilize, it only seems to be around protesting against civil rights violations. President Obama and the National

Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) along with civil rights activists like Al Sharpton have paved the way for blacks to excel in the United States. There is still injustice due to how laws are implemented state by state. Identity and race are continuing to be in the forefront and under the radar without being discussed in an open forum. If people do not discuss black history, society will struggle to move forward.

The origins of Black Americans in the United States runs long and deep from enslavement to the modern day form of social adaptation of the black American family; culturally assimilated into the American culture. The figure below highlights the evolution of the Black family from enslavement to freedom. (Hunter, 2006, p.86)
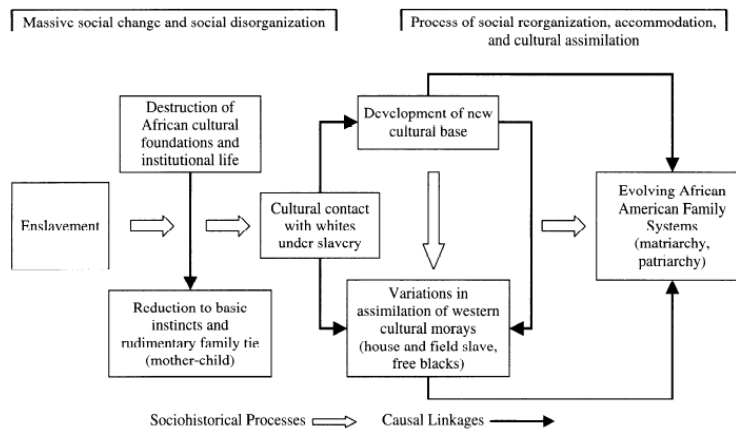
Figure 1. Enslavement, Acculturation, and Social Adaptation in *The Negro Family*: Model of the Origins of African American Family Systems.

After three decades of having no identity, blacks have now begun to think of themselves differently but need to understand their status in the US and how to fight for their rights. Black Americans are waiting for another charismatic leader to lead to a new revolution but it has not happened yet. Due to the fact that blacks continue to live up to the standards set up by the white culture, it limits their abilities in what they can do as people. I believe that black Americans can organize and mobilize once they can break down those barriers against themselves and the government to create a better society for future generations.

W.E.B. Dubois's Talented Tenth 1903, outlines social movements and education below:

"The man, who sets the ideals of the community where he lives, directs its thoughts and heads its social movements. It need hardly be argued that the Negro people need social leadership more than most groups; that they have no traditions to fall back upon, no long established customs, no strong family ties, no well-defined social classes. As the fact that such movements have been accompanied by ridicule and denouncement and decrying of those very institutions of higher training which made the Negro public school possible, and make Negro industrial schools thinkable "We are to-day deliberately rearing millions of our citizens in ignorance, and at the same time limiting the rights of citizenship by educational qualifications. This is unjust. In the discussion as to the proper training of Negro children after they leave the public schools, we have forgotten that they are not yet decently provided with public schools." (Ashbrook Center, 2012, Talented Tenth, W.E.B. Dubois)

W.E.B. Dubois was absolutely correct; blacks cannot train their children after leaving public schools if their children are not receiving quality education from the public school system. Today, more than ever blacks need a new talented tenth model. The United States needs your participation and voice at the table. Black communities and all Americans in the United States need to have a serious conversation about race and how to eliminate it to allow all Americans to progress. If the United States is based on opportunities for all, people should not limit progress by imposing unjust laws and policies. All laws and policies should be consistent and not one sided toward an ethnicity group. We will transition into the history of the Indian culture.

Chapter Two: History of Indians in India

In India, individuals are immediately born into a caste system and their identity is labeled. A majority of these individuals are born into a life of no rights. You are considered less than a person. How do you begin to fight when you have already been judged and broken?

Unfortunately, skin color is valued around the world. Due to my experience in India, I believe people appreciate lighter skinned individuals over darker skinned individuals based on the socially constructed identity and skin color issues that have affected all parts of society.

> *When I was in India from January through April 2013 as part of my practicum phase at SIT Graduate Institute, I felt immediately judged based on my skin color especially in the workplace. My host family was nonjudgmental and open to learning about my cultural background but when I moved into the workplace and around the streets of Ahmedabad, it was a different story. Before arriving to India, I was told that people will stare at you no matter what your race is. I found that out rather quickly when I entered India's streets. My classmates and I attended the notorious kite festival event in Gujarat and we are surrounded by dozens of people staring at us but only wanting to take photos with our white Americans classmates. The staring continued throughout my experience in India except when I went to visit six public schools in Nakhatrana and Ahmedabad, Gujarat. For the first time, I truly felt like a human being mainly due to the fact that those families and students were the same complexion as myself, too bad, it was closer to my time ending in India. In the beginning at the workplace, people would not speak to me and only to my white American classmate who worked at the same organization as I. People would always speak to her first because they were intrigued by her light skin verses my dark skin. There was even a point when I was trying to conduct my interviews with students, when the woman in charge would only talk to my classmate and not directly to me. This is when I got to the point that I felt uncomfortable due to having darker skin; I wrote my advisor and Dean about the experience and almost decided to come back to United States. I am still not quite sure what changed at the workplace but my supervisor became more sympathetic towards me right afterwards. From that time on, my supervisor and I became very close and still keep in touch today. I feel like I exposed my culture and work ethic to the organization and they were very receptive and open. My supervisors even asked for my feedback on the organization to strengthen it. Thus, the experience was difficult to manage at times but it was definitely worth the exposure into the Gujarat community. The major lesson is hard work always pays off.*

Introduction to the Caste System

'After the British conquered India, they wanted to set up colonies but encountered a unique system in India which was the caste system. India's caste system was called the "jati" stratification of society. This is the caste system hierarchy breakdown and these are the major classes:

Dixon, 2013
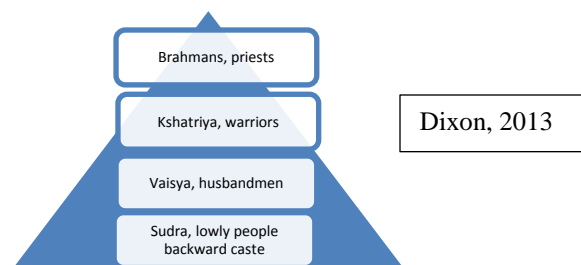
This status system is coined by the Hindi society. The caste system was universally used throughout India and every caste and tribes were proclaimed an identity.' (Mukherjee, 1999, p.1759) "The caste system in India had to work around their land being conquered and racial antagonisms that were made socially visible by skin color. This well integrated unique social system could not have originated or at least could not have conquered and lasted without the pervasive and all powerful influence of the Brahmins." (Mukherjee, 1999, p.1760) The Brahman society, which makes up part of the 7 percent formal sector, is the main reason why the caste system still remains today. It is evident that people are judged and discriminated against based on skin color. When I walked through the communities, you can also see a clear religious divide between the Hindi's and Muslim's as well.

Scheduled Castes (SCs) and Scheduled Tribes (STs) were officially accepted under article 341 of the Indian Constitution. The President of India declared 'castes, races and tribes as scheduled castes and scheduled tribes belonging to the state or union territory. These social groups have remained underprivileged and discriminated by the higher caste. According to the government of India and state governments, they granted privileges to the SCs and STs. On the contrary, democratic politics constitute that SCs and STs make up one-fourth of the India's population.' (Bhagat, 2006, p.126) Tribes are not even recognized in the hierarchy, they have a separate caste system breakdown. Amongst these different castes, classes, occupations, religions and ethnicities in India, there is a clear bond between the communities.

Untouchability is another name for caste identification discrimination and Dalits are labeled as untouchables. Untouchability caste members have been marginalized and terrorized by Indian society through humiliation, violence and shame. Dalits even believe they are responsible

for their own suffering and exclusion. India is becoming the world's largest democracy; the

government continues to practice caste discrimination. Navsarjan and the Kennedy Center

describe Untouchability as:

> (1) A lived experience of all people in India- either as survivors and challengers (approx. 164.8 million Dalits); (2) Sanctioned by the dominant religion in India, Hinduism, in practice and texts, all major religions in India participate in the perpetuation of untouchability; (3) Abolished and its practice prohibited by the Constitution of India, as well as by some of the most important legislation in India (the Protection of Civil Rights Act, 1976 and the Prevention of Atrocity Act, 1989); and; One of the most divisive issues in the country's history, bringing into conflict two of the most important political leaders in the history of India- Mohandas K. Gandhi and Dr. Bhimrao Ambekdar. (Navsarjan and Kennedy Center, p.3)

Below are two case study examples of organizations working with the untouchable caste

members.

Navasajan Organization

Manjula Pradeep is the current Director of an organization called "Navsarjan"; a legal aid

organization that is fighting for justice with the Dalit caste community in India. My classmates

and I interviewed Ms. Pradeep on April 16th, 2013; the information below is from the interview.

- Officially, there are 6,000 castes in India and 752 Dalit sub-castes.
- The caste system is based on pure blood and power so they will only marry within their own caste unless it is a love marriage (love marriages are almost always seen in higher castes only)
- 90% of community members are not allowed in their own local temples because of their caste; "I am Hindu and I can't enter my own temple"
- A Birth Certificate includes your religion, caste, father's name and gender
- While women are considered untouchable, it makes them more accessible to sexual violence. When men are unemployed and alcoholics, they treat women and girls as if they were invisible with no rights to make themselves feel powerful
- Power is across the board and the reason why women are sexually assaulted; India is similar to slavery time in America
- Teachers and parents teach women and girls how to follow rules and behave within your caste
- You are forced to migrate if you protest in your village. You need to be mentally strong to fight battles of discrimination: "You have to be strong to help others be strong"

Ms. Pradeep told us that "Fear is what prevents us from fighting against discrimination."

There is a quota occupation system in the formal sector. In order to possibly change one's caste

system, they need to be branded into a new occupation. The organization currently works within 64 blocks and 18 villages. (Pradeep 2013) I believe Ms. Pradeep is on target about "fear"; it is what prevents us from fighting against discrimination. Many people fear the repercussions of fighting against their oppressors so it limits their ability to mobilize and organize. Discrimination is a difficult bridge to cross especially when you are alone trying to fight.

Self-Employed Women's Association (SEWA)

SEWA is one of the largest trade union organizations made up of 1.73 million women operating in India since 1972. SEWA's main goal is full employment and self-reliance for their members. The Founder of SEWA, Ela R. Bhatt who was inspired by Mahatma Gandhi, wrote a book in 2005 entitled "We are Poor but So Many", she explains the caste system in this way.

> "The caste system is well entrenched in villages and permeates every part of life. The dominance of the higher castes over the lower ones is overpowering, oppressive, and exploitative. The upper castes enjoy wealth and power in some form or another- landowners, as trades, or in the form of education. Needless, the lower caste comprising the large number of landless laborers, weavers, potters, leather workers, and other crafts, people are economically weak." The caste system also unites in fragments. Within the same caste, bonds between caste members are strong, providing unquestionable loyalty and great sense of security." (Bhatt, 2005, pgs.31-33)

Identity and caste systems are intertwined and ration cards[3] are given to everyone at birth. SEWA members are all from the informal sector and considered untouchables. SEWA believes they will always be around because there will always be a need since it is impropriate amount of informal sector women. They do not believe their members will ever get out of the informal sector and their literacy rates will remain low. Higher level caste individuals can point out someone from a lower (i.e. backward castes) caste and know not to interact with them.

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[3] A ration card takes the form of an identity card because it states the address and the number of family members living in the household (Bhatt, 2005, p.37)

The history behind India is devastating to its people and unless someone or a group fights against the government to change the political structure and caste system, everything will remain the same. As India is becoming overpopulated and more democratic, it is the precise time to organize and mobilize to strengthen their participation and involvement in the government. The revolution to fighting for their rights to education has to begin now and the lower castes can no longer be shut out of opportunities.

Chapter Three: Comparison between Slavery and Caste System

In this section of the paper, I will be comparing the history of slavery and the caste system. There are not many studies that are comparing these two systems. Therefore, I decided to dig deeper to see where there is a linkage.

Race and identity are important concepts to consider when comparing the United States and India. In both contexts, your identity is accounted for as soon as you enter society and the dominant culture defines who you are. Along with identity emerges, "Colorism, which is defined as prejudice or discrimination based on the relative lightness or darkness of the skin. Generally, a phenomenon occurring within one's own ethnic group within our own race and globally affects the socially constructed way that we look at the people who surround us." (Duke 2013) This is contributed to Friere's horizontal violence theory. Individuals are prejudged by society, in which they internalize their feelings and externally release anger onto their own ethnic group. For example, people are letting the dominant culture identify what race is considered beautiful and intelligent. In both cultures, people have been victims to race and beauty and it has affected their identity. As one nation, we have to reinforce the beauty within us and let no one define who we are.

Another comparison between blacks in the United States and Indians in India is Article 17 in the Indian Constitution which abolishes "untouchables" and the Civil Rights Act in the U.S. The United States Senate Committee on the Judiciary website states "The Civil Rights Act of 1964 prohibits discrimination on the basis of race, color, religion, sex or national origin. The Civil Rights Act was eventually expanded by Congress to strengthen enforcement of these fundamental civil rights." (Judiciary, n.d) Many civil rights activists fought hard to get the Civil Rights Act passed by legislation. I will further discuss the government and the Civil Rights Act

in the next section of the paper. Gandhi was very influential in fighting for the rights of Untouchables and believed that they should be regarded as people and human beings. He fully supported the Dalits and low status races in India. Article 17 in the Indian Constitution was passed in 1949, abolishing untouchability and its practice was prohibited by the Constitution of India.

Two remarkable leaders: Dr. King and Mahatma Gandhi

> "Through most of the past century, Indians and African-Americans supported each other's struggles because we identify with each other's predicaments and principles. Gandhi also reached out to African-Americans, spreading seeds of nonviolent protest that King would ultimately harvest."(Rao 2013)

Benjamin Mays, President of Morehouse College in Atlanta at the time introduced Martin Luther King Jr. to Gandhi's philosophy and told him to visit India to learn his technique of nonviolence as an approach to social change. On March 10th 1959, Martin Luther King Jr, his wife and Mr. Mays were greeted with a grand reception in India when they arrived. Martin Luther King Jr. was surprised that people knew so much about him and the boycott in Montgomery. They were introduced to the entire political party in India. People even recognized Dr. King on the streets of India. The Indian newspapers had more press coverage on the boycott longer than the United States.

> Dr. King stated, "I left India more convinced than ever before that non-violent resistance is the most potent weapon available to oppressed people in their struggle for freedom. And then there is, even here, the problem of segregation. We call it race in America; they call it caste in India. In both places it means that some are considered inferior, treated as though they deserve less. Dr. King identified the same problems of segregation as well as housing, employment and food issues that the United States had but it compared nothing to the existent of India."(Martin Luther King Jr 1959)

Just as black Americans were confined to slavery in the US, Indians in India are slaves to the caste system and today, this caste system remains intact. Slavery ended for us but imagine

still living in slavery times today. In both places, low income people are subjected to lack of resources and benefits and both places are not allowing mobility in underserved communities.

There are major differences between United States and India, for one, the population sizes are significantly different; India is three times larger and has three times the amount of people. Mahatma Gandhi led the country to independence while Martin Luther King Jr. led the country to the Civil Rights Movement. India's majority population is made up of 93 percent of the working poor. There are many civil societies in India that are playing a key role in providing public services to the majority minority population. The black citizens in the US are still reliant on the US government for public services. Women are marginalized greatly in India especially in education compared to males and in the US women outnumber males enrolled in schools. Women have a higher role in the US society due to the women's rights movement compared to India which has had women's movements but have not passed it in legislation. Even though these two countries are similar based on identity and human rights issues, they are vastly different from the cultures and society they live in.

Chapter Four: History and Present State of the Government

In this section, I will be discussing the history and present state of the government in the United States and India. The struggle is similar in both places but there are also differences in the structure of the governments. One is capitalists and democratic while the other one is democratic and communists. We will begin with the history of the United States in respect to liberty and equality followed by the Indian government.

> "The United States declared itself bound to a set of publicly declared principles. First among them was the protection of civil liberties and the commitment to human equality. The Declaration of Independence states that "all men are created equal." It was a bold promise when people still owned slaves at the time. The most prominent of these struggles have dealt with race-ending slavery, establishing the right to vote regardless of color, abolishing segregation in schools and public services and banning discrimination in housing and employment." (Shultz, 2003, pgs. 11-12)

It took two decades before the government realized that the nation was not standing true to its promise to "all men are created equal." Many people felt that the government was forcing them into a certain direction. The government believes that they were pressured into putting the Civil Rights Act into law. The government was afraid that if they agreed to the Civil Right Act, it would be hard for them to prevent biases without creating new ones. Meaning that the government would tear down the walls of discrimination to eliminate segregation laws and bans on direct prejudice in housing and employment. The Civil Rights movement led the way to women's rights, gay rights, and the disabled rights. (Shultz, 2003, p.12) Martin Luther King Jr. played an important role in initiating this movement and Rosa Parks with the bus boycott. It changed society in the US for black Americans. Blacks finally knew that they had a stake in the nation and their rights as human beings were significant. For once, they felt like true Americans.

Another government responsibility is to deliver public goods such as education. They are responsible for providing basic education access to everyone. Many families do not send their

children to private or charter schools because they cannot afford to or want to send their children there. They would like to send their children to the local community school. Thus, the need for public schools to upgrade their system and stop the government from using private and charter schools as Band-Aids. It has always been the nation's dream to provide public education to every student in the US by the means of the government. "There are certain ingredients of an effective democracy that no government rule can provide. These ingredients are civic participation, a commitment to learn and understand the issues that government debates and to play an active role in influencing the action government takes on those issues." (Shultz, 2003, pgs. 12 and 16)

Today, the US has their first black President in the history of the nation. More racial tensions have emerged that people tend to bury as a society. The President is asked to speak on behalf of black Americans since he knows the struggle of African-Americans in the US over the decades. Blacks still face many challenges with civil rights issues in the US. It is not just the President who needs to address the issue; it is people of the nation who need to openly discuss the issue of race in the United States without feeling afraid of retaliation. History continues to repeat itself since as a country we have never fully dealt with the problem and how it has impacted our lives and how we function. The predominantly white Congress continues to vote against the marginalized groups in the US. Minority groups do not have enough representation in Congress or Senate. Some of the elected officials in office are speaking on behalf of a subject or race that they cannot relate to or understand. The government must again remind itself of the Constitution and Declaration of Independence "all men are created equal." There are equal rights for some but not all. It is not fair to the Americans that live in the US and it limits their ability to call themselves Americans.

India's Struggle for Independence

India gained independence in 1947 after being ruled by the British government for over 300 years. The British government did not know how to handle the caste system when they encountered it or how to operate around it. The British were not considered friendly people and technically they did not have to be. After India gained independence, due to the revolutionary efforts by Mahatma Gandhi, unfortunately the structures and caste system were still intact. "Gandhiji's efforts were a way of focusing our attention once again on building new structures that met the needs and faced the realities of our own people. He felt that India could be built on institutions that were small, local, democratic, and dynamic" (Bhatt, 2005, pgs.215-216)

Gandhi was born in Gujarat, India. Gandhi's two major components of his philosophy were: Non-violence and Truth. Gandhi was able to take the lead after visiting South Africa and returning to India in 1915. The lessons he learned were incorporated into the Indian society. Gandhi worked very diligently to get his message across to the people of India. Once Gandhi was able to build trust from the people of India through using newspapers and radio, he won the hearts of million. He was considered the "Great Soul."

Gandhi led his country through the struggle of Independence, teaching Indians how to fight against the British without using violence. Gandhi was arrested numerous times for leading this effort but it did not discourage him from continuing to fight for Independence for his people. The British were not ready for Gandhi's type of independence and sending him to jail was their way of keeping him from influencing his millions of Indian followers. Gandhi wanted to uplift his people out of poverty because he felt 'Poverty is the worst kind of violence'. He was unable to complete that task due to the systemic caste placed upon India. The government was corrupt

and the informal sector majority outweighs the formal sector. (Attenborough 1982) As Gandhi

gained more attention, he won over support from Martin Luther King Jr. and many others like

Nelson Mandela. They begin to lead their countries by using non-violence to conquer civil and

human right issues. During my four months in India, I could feel the essence of Gandhi in the air,

through all the streets named after him and the organizations that follow his philosophy like

SEWA. I can truly understand what Dr. King loved about visiting India and I felt truly honored

to be in Gandhi's hometown.

Present Government Structure in India

From 1997 to 2002, India had their first ex-Untouchable President. His name was N.R.

Narayanan; the people of India thought that caste discrimination was being eliminated due to Mr.

Narayanan being in office. However, this was not the case and today the caste system remains

firmly in place. India is considered a democratic country but has a difficult time defining the

roles of the government. Varshney's journal (2002) explains India's democracy in this way:

> "Democracies today are ceasing to be "civic republics"; they are becoming "procedural republics." In case inequalities have come down as a consequence of the political process, it will make India more democratic, even though an inability to reduce inequalities more will not make India's polity undemocratic. By all accounts, India's democracy has made such social victories possible. As a result, Yadav states in the Varshney's journal, In India, unlike many other democracies in the world, the incidence of voting is higher among the poor than among the rich, among the less educated than among the graduates, in the villages than in the cities."(Varshney, 2000, pgs.7-22)

Both of these governments are setup differently but the overall theme is that marginalized

communities are left to defend themselves in a capitalist and communist arena. It took the

leadership of one charismatic leader to create and implement a non-violent movement to move

the country forward. Both of these society's governments are in a better position than before but

they still have a lot of work to do around democracy. There is no true example of democracy that

has worked continuously throughout our history with any hiccups. There are numerous cases we can use from both contexts that can assist other nations in fighting for their rights and not only to education. Lessons learned are important to incorporate into our society but forgetting not to lose one's country identity at the same time.

Chapter Five: History and Present State of Public School Education

All over the US, the newest movement is closing under performing schools. Public schools are the primary target and typically the ones being shut down. Public schools are funded by the government and can be shut down as they see fit. Teachers already have a tough time teaching students in public schools and they work hard every day with minimal payment. They teach to their best ability under the stress of budget cuts and limited supplies. Public schools are the last ones to receive the resources they need to improve their student's performance. They are in a losing battle before it even begins. Parents and students have been protesting across the US trying to convince the government to stop shutting down schools. Students will be affected the most by not attending school even if it is performing badly. Charter schools are the government's Band-Aid to fixing the public school system. According to the National Center for Education Statistics, between 2010 and 2011, 1,929 elementary and secondary schools have been closed. The dropout rates for black students in 2010 were 8 percent. (NCES 2013)

What the government has failed to realize is that they are displacing students and parents are left to search for new schools. If the government is shutting down schools, they need to have a safeguard in place for those students who do not have a school home. As many public schools are being shut down, it calls parents to action to advocate for better schooling for their children. It is not the teachers or students fault that they are underachieving, if they were provided the staff and resources they needed, they could possibly outperform the new and upcoming charter schools that are typically replacing the public schools. The effects of students being displaced from schools causes them to convert to minimum wage jobs, lack the ambition to succeed, remain stuck in the same environment, align themselves with gangs, sell drugs for profit, and most of all, hurt their chances of knowing their identity. The main objective is that it allows

history to repeat itself in underserved communities, "my mother or father never received an education, neither did my children or grandchildren." The damaging effects range from communities to nation-wide. Recently, there have been protests in Philadelphia and New Jersey, students are using Facebook and other social media campaigns to keep their school operating. The media has been one of the main avenues that allow individuals to hold the government accountable for their actions. Below is my personal education story from growing up as a young woman of color in the United States.

> *As a young girl, I went to public school from K-8th grade and I felt I learned a lot. It was primarily a predominantly black school. As I entered into ninth grade, I had the privilege to attend Cheltenham High School which is a really good school in the prominent Elkton Park area of Philadelphia. I went from a dominantly black school to a dominantly white school, which was a confusing time for me. After one year in Cheltenham High School, I transferred to a Delaware trade school (Delcastle Technical High School) and studied Nursing. Delcastle Technical High School was a mixture of whites and blacks, qualified as a good school but I had to apply and be chosen by the school since it was a vocational technical school and not in my local neighborhood school. The school in my community was unsafe and had a terrible reputation so my mother did not want to send me there. I bring up that point because millions of children do not have a choice in the education they receive and results in underserved communities having bad reputations. The government should be equipping the public schools with the resources they need to teach students about history and practical skills for the future. Black colleges have a reputation of "you won't get any work done, every girl is getting pregnant in their first year of college, and they won't teach you anything". Only the superior black institutions are competing like Howard, Fisk, Bethune Cookman, Tuskegee, and several others but it is difficult to get into those schools at the same time. If we are supposed to be uplifting our black Americans, why not make it affordable and accessible to low income communities? As the job market is becoming more and more competitive, our black Americans are being left out due to the lack of education. In some places like Chicago, Detroit, Philadelphia, it is more likely for black males to go to jail than graduate from high school. We are doing more damage to our own people and society.*

Till today, blacks are still left to fend for themselves in the public school system. Black Americans had to fight for everything they received and believed that only athletic scholarships were the only way to get into college. Blacks had to boycott in order to be provided the same education as the white culture. For example, in Gladwell's article on Small Change: Why the Revolution will not be tweeted, he talks about practical traditional organizing that unfolded in the 1960's that led to the boycott and civil rights movement. It was the traditional sit-ins and protests with thousands of people that helped us move into a revolution without the usage of

email, texting, Facebook or Twitter. He further explains that the civil rights movement was more like a campaign. In 1959, there were a total of sixteen sit-ins in cities throughout the South and they were organized by civil rights organizations like NAACP and CORE[4]. (Gladwell 2010) The NAACP played an instrumental role in organizing along with the Southern Christian Leadership Conference that Martin Luther King Jr. was leading at the time. There were several black churches that were involved in the movement as well and the ministers exercised their authority over the congregation to support the movement. The religious groups were extremely helpful in getting their congregations involved in the movement and religious groups today are still very influential among communities nation-wide.

During the 1960s, there was a social movement for independent black institutions (IBI) since parents were struggling with control over their child's education in public schools. This eventually led to the Council for Independent Black Institutions (CIBI). By the late 1980s, there were over 400 IBI's serving black inner city students. Thus, there were a total of 52,000 children enrolled in independent black institutions. (Bush, 2004, pgs.391-392) The Black Partners and Huey Newton were also vital in creating a social movement around education as well in Oakland, California in the 1960s. (Hughey, 2007, p.223) It is essential to point out these successful social movements were driven by self-mobilization. It is also important to recognize that organizing and mobilizing people around a cause or initiative is not a difficult task. People have been doing it for decades and traditional organizing is coming back in full effect. These were well-thought out plans that were executed by key players affected by the issue or problem and wanted to see educational changes in their communities.

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[4] CORE stands for Congress of Racial Equality

No Child Left Behind by Bush Administration

After three days of being in office, President George W. Bush on January 2001, made an announcement about his plans for a bipartisan education reform that was called *No Child Left Behind*. The President stated that this would be the solution to accountability, choice and flexibility of federal education programs. In September 2001, the new law of *No Child Left Behind* was set in place and the framework included "how to improve the performance of America's elementary and secondary schools while at the same time ensuring that no child is trapped in a failing school. The NCLB Act, proposed by President Bush includes increased accountability for States, school districts, and schools; greater choice for parents and students, particularly those attending low-performing schools; more flexibility for States and local educational agencies (LEAs) in the use of Federal education dollars; and a stronger emphasis on reading, especially for our youngest children." (US Dept. of Education 2004) Everyone has the right to good quality education no matter what their background or social economic status is. There are states that allow students to go to school for free if you live in the state for over three years, i.e. Georgia and California.

As of 2010, Alliance for Excellent Education notes that 'approx. two thousand high schools are performing at the lowest level and producing nearly half of the dropout rates. The schools that are performing at low standards represent 58 percent of all the black dropout rates in the United States compared to 50 percent of all Hispanic dropouts. Most of the dropout rates are happening among the East coast and Southern states. Each year, 1.3 million students fail to graduate from high school and more than half are students of color.' (Alliance for Excellent Education 2010) Unfortunately, these are devastating numbers in today's society; it is difficult to

hear that 1.3 million students are dropping out of school each year. The public school system must be in terrible shape if we are failing 1.3 million children and young adults. This needs to change today and we cannot wait any longer. It is clearly stated that we are losing our future generations and failing the students of the nation. We need to find people who are ready to advocate for educational reform for the nation.

Please refer to two full interviews in the Appendix section that address the issue of black Americans and lack of education privileges. The two interviews are from a service provider in Philadelphia and a Ph.D. Associate Professor from University of Delaware. They agree that the public school system especially for blacks is inadequate and the government leaves the public schools without efficient resources. Unfortunately, black children are targeted based on the public schools they attend and unless the government starts to take public school education seriously it will remain the same. This is when parents, students, education activists, elected officials and service providers need to self-mobilize and pressure the government to reform the public school system.

Education System in India

The Ministry of Human Resource Development, Government of India indicates on their website in 2002, 'the India government passed Article 21-A in reference to free and compulsory education of all children in the age group of six to fourteen years as a Fundamental Right. Eight years later, "The Right of Children to Free and Compulsory Education (RTE) Act was passed in 2009, under Article 21-A, meaning that every child has a right to full time elementary education of satisfactory and equitable quality in a formal school which satisfies certain essential norms and standards.' (Dept. of School Education and Literacy 2011) In 2011, only 57 percent of

children are going to school and the goal was to have every child in school by March 2013 according to online article on India Today. (Chowdhury 2011) That means 53 percent of children are out of school at the present time. These laws are being passed but there seems to be no implementation and follow through.

Among the informal sector which makes up 93 percent of the country, adult education is still a dream for most Indians. There are no schools that are teaching basic literacy skills to the informal sector. Sadly, many of the SEWA members that I met were not educated and only received up to a 5th standard (grade) education. The Indian government and Constitution are supposed to provide every citizen with rights and privileges but this is not being applied to the informal majority population. 'But when an overwhelming number of the population is poor, illiterate and uncertain of their rights, they can neither exercise those rights nor benefit from them. Even government-controlled media makes no attempt to reach the working poor. In absence of literacy, the poor have to depend on memory' (Bhatt, 2005, p.41). Government controlled primary schools in the villages mainly start with 1st standard to 7th or 8th standard. Secondary schools are most often private schools that low caste families cannot afford or are too far for parents to send their children without local transportation.

Education is only a privilege for upper and middle caste individuals. The public schools are open to lower caste students and typically they are not learning or grasping the right materials to compete. I visited six schools and interviewed students, parents and teachers for SEWA while in India and they all had different resources for their students. They were all government schools and taught the same curriculum. SEWA tasked me with mapping and identifying the current condition of the Nakhatrana schools that SEWA Nakhatrana Community Learning Business

Resource Center (CLBRC) served. Even if the school was advanced like Navi Dhamai Primary School, the curriculum is not suitable for learning. When visiting the Navi Dhamai School (1st-7th standard) in Nakhatrana, the principal told my co-worker and I that their village students do not understand the concepts of parachutes and trains unlike urban students and rural teachers have a difficult time explaining these concepts to their students since students have never been exposed. As a result, teachers have to demonstrate to students by using pictures.

The government does not provide enough teachers at each school and they do not pay their teachers and administrators hardly any money especially since they typically live outside of the village. Also, there is a chalkboard listing each student and their caste affiliation at every government school, reminding the students that they are considered low caste.

Amara Primary School (1st thru 8th standard), was among one of the last public schools I visited, it was located in a Muslim community and they actually shut down the school for years and then the government decided to reopen it so you have twenty year olds attending school on a ten grade level. This is the type of effect shutting down schools can have on students and it hurts them and results in their immobility to move forward. The government told the principal to teach students basic a,b,c,d's but not the meanings. They know how to say English words but do not know the meaning behind it as well as in their own language. I had to teach students the meaning of "How are you?" in Gujarati (the local language) and they seemed really interested in learning more. Not equipping these students with the right tools leaves them behind. One major takeaway is that there were only three girls who were in attendance compared to the ten boys present. The girls usually do not attend school after a certain age due to the dowry[5]; their families take them

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[5] Dowry, bride payment (gift) to the groom's family, often financial

out of school to prepare them for marriage, not only do they receive low quality education but they are married off at such a young age as early as nine years old. It affects the lives of these girls every day and educate becomes secondary for them and survival always comes first.

Out of the five government schools I attended in the Nakhatrana district, after interviewing 96 parents, 85% of them were not educated. How do we begin to educate parents on the importance of good quality education if they have never been educated themselves? The value of girls and women is close to non-existent unless you are in a higher caste and no one has challenged the government, families or citizens for undervaluing girls and women. In order to improve our results of future generations, the value of girls and women must be recognized by the government and society to change the landscape of education for low caste families. We can do this by creating and implementing laws and rules that enhance the outcome of children graduating from primary, secondary and tertiary schools. One of the 5th grade girls from Morgas Primary School (1st-7th standard) told me, "Even if my parents tell me know no, I can't receive higher education, I will argue and fight with them until they say yes". It begins with one voice that resonates to affect change in a community to nationwide.

In reference to the question of how self-mobilization can be an effective approach to changing the educational landscape for future generations in India and United States, there is power in numbers and we must organize and mobilize to create the change we want to see for the future. If we do not document and expose people to discrimination and prejudices that affect our countries and communities then we are doing our future generations injustice before they are born. Future generations are at a disadvantage based on our struggles and will continue to face the same oppression we had. The government is treating all public school systems as inadequate

and non-functioning and wants to change them to charter schools. In Florida recently, the public schools were given an "F" based on the student's standardized test scores that students are not appropriately prepared for. The state has finally admitted that the way they graded schools is inaccurate. Parents and students decided to take a stand against the Board of Education and won their attention by exposing that it is a game to make public schools appear to be failing so more for-profit charters can come in or maybe lawmakers can convince parents to demand vouchers. (Parker 2013)

In India, "quality in education is not possible if the participants in the race start from different points. Thus, equality in education requires major changes in the society at large, apart from reforms in the educational system which are also very important. Thus, a multi-targeted and carefully planned attack on inequality is required. The policy-makers in India concentrated their attention on school reforms only. A shift in attention is necessary from schools to homes. This would solve the problem of inequality in educational opportunity and inequality in educational attainments." (Tilak, 1979, p.427) India does have a women's movement that is reaching across the country but education opportunity and attainment must be included in the rights for not only women but all society. We have seen that mobilization and organizing for rights has worked in the past and needs to be implemented now and in the future.

Policy-makers need to understand that free education does not mean good quality education and most parents do not want to send their children to free public schools that are not providing high quality education to their children. Parents are tasked to find alternatives for their children meaning they conform to private and charter schools. The government needs to improve the public school model and allocate the appropriate amount of funding and resources. Our

countries depend on free education since everyone cannot afford a higher quality education. It is time to step up and mobilize for the future generation of students entering the world.

Chapter Six: Lessons and Limitations to Self-Mobilization

As we transition into lessons and limitations to self-mobilization, we need to keep in mind our discussion points from above. We know that self-mobilization has valuable lessons as well as limitations based on the organizations and individuals involved. The traditional way of organizing seems to be diminishing in the United States and society is put at a disadvantage but technology is helping the new generation of young leaders. India faces the caste system that lowers their capacity to mobilize but there is great progress in their movements. The United States and India could use one another to exchange approaches of self-mobilization that can be used to inspire other nations just like Dr. King and Gandhi. The limitations section was developed from my perspective and experience as well as my policy advocacy class with Jeff Unsicker this Summer 2013.

Lessons Learned of Self-Mobilization

After working with the Self-Employed Women's Association (SEWA), I learned their art to mobilizing and organizing women. Below are four main lessons learned from SEWA's experience mobilizing and empowering poor self-employed women (Blaxall, 2004, p.2):

1. Organizing members (as distinct from offering services at the outset) helps to ensure ownership and having subsequent activities that are based on member's needs, while providing a firm foundation for future growth. In making poor women better informed about their rights, it increases the accountability of various organizations. In helping members articulate their needs, it ensures that SEWA activities are demand-driven. And in identifying potential activists and leaders among new recruits, it lays the ground for SEWA's future growth.
2. Values at the core of an organization help establish consistency in its purpose, and serve to attract and retain highly motivated staff and members. They also underpin the patience and perseverance needed to influence the policy environment. From its inception, SEWA has been steeped in Gandhian beliefs and practices. Perseverance, egalitarianism, inclusion, and participation are actively incorporated into meetings and organizational practices.

3. Flexibility in an organization's style and structure encourages experimentation and learning, a willingness to take advantage of partnerships with others, and an ability to recognize crises as opportunities. Flexibility induces innovation and risk-taking; a capacity to grow; a decentralized style that promotes a highly motivated, energetic and committed staff; and a focus on ideology rather than dogma.

4. Leadership is crucial not only in defining an organization's vision, but also in establishing management and behavioral practices that reduce social distance between corporate management and grassroots members. Moreover, effective leadership skills can be taught to and learned by poor and uneducated women. Ela Bhatt founded and led SEWA for 24 years. Under her leadership, and since her departure seven years ago, there has been a remarkable set of participatory management and behavioral practices that close the social distance between members and managers. This included regular rotation of office holders, highly compressed pay scales, a stable core management cadre, a conscious policy of developing new leaders, and a policy of avoiding entanglements with political parties.

5. There are no short cuts and you have to organize around community issues for participation. Organizing does not have an ending but projects have an end. There is no timeline for empowerment and people have different empowerment processes. (Navavaty 2013)

These lessons can be used in any context; the biggest lesson is that self-mobilization needs to be citizen driven with a mission and goal in mind. Find like-minded people that can help your initiative or cause and partner with organizations and government sectors to accelerate and enhance your efforts to make the change you are looking for.

Limitations of Self-Mobilization

1. Lack of trust in the organizer and people involved
   a. Trust is very important when entering a community and working with their leadership. As an organizer, you should gain the trust of people and allow people to follow your lead and believe in you. If there is a lack of trust in the organizer, the plan to organize or mobilize typically fails. Relationships are a key ingredient to success.
2. Recruiting people with their own agendas and self-interest
   a. Recruit people who are directly affected by the effort or have self-interest in the subject that can contribute positively to the group. Recruit service providers who work with the people who are greatly affected by the cause. Also, organizing through organizations and institutions in which people are already involved in like PTAs, schools, unions, neighborhood associations.

3. Unclear mission, vision and objectives for the group
   a. Ensure that your group starts with an agenda and the organizer clearly lays out your objectives for the meeting. Over a series of meetings, you will develop a mission, vision and objectives for the cause with your organizer. If you do not have a clear mission and vision along with objectives for the cause, people will lose interest very quickly and you will become ineffective.

4. Not citizen-driven
   a. The key to organizing and mobilizing is that it should be led and owned by the community and it should be focused on a cause that the citizens are familiar with. They should be ready to take over the cause or issue, once they are educated on the cause with the proper support. Citizen driven organizing is key to a successful outcome.

5. Conflicts amongst the group
   a. The organizer or community leader must be ready to deal with conflicts as they arise. Manage the conflicts by talking through the process and staying neutral. Do not take sides and remind everyone why they decided to join this cause. Each person's point of view should be heard. If you are conducting a protest, have security available and everyone should know who the enforcers are if they need them.

6. Lack of motivation
   a. The lack of motivation can slow down the success and progress of the group. The small victories are important to stay focused as you work on long-term projects. Celebrate those victories and continue keeping people positive and motivated.

7. Funding
   a. The number one aspect of organizing that most organizers and groups forget about is fundraising. Organizing for campaigns need money to be functional. If you need funding, plan accordingly ahead of time. Figure out who is good at soliciting funding amongst the group and outline a strategy.

8. Unknown biases
   a. As you begin organizing, there are times when you have to be neutral on issues. Know your biases going into the issue and reflect on how you can best not let those biases get in the way of your progress as a group. Talk it through with your group members as well to see if they are feeling the same problem. Maybe write out all of your biases on a large easel pad paper to continue to refer to them throughout the process.

9. Unidentified Targets and Tactics
   a. When you are organizing, it is extremely important to identify your targets as soon as you outline your reasoning for organizing on a particular issue. After you identify your targets, the next step is to figure out the strategy (tactics) on how to get the attention of your intended audience. If you do not have your targets and tactics in place, it will diminish your group's efforts. You will run into major problems if your targets and tactics are not identified, you could hit a brick wall quickly and be unable to recover.

10. Unaware of Opponents and Backlash
    a. A good organizer will know the moves of their opponents and ready for backlash at any time. Researching all of your allies, opponents and primary & secondary

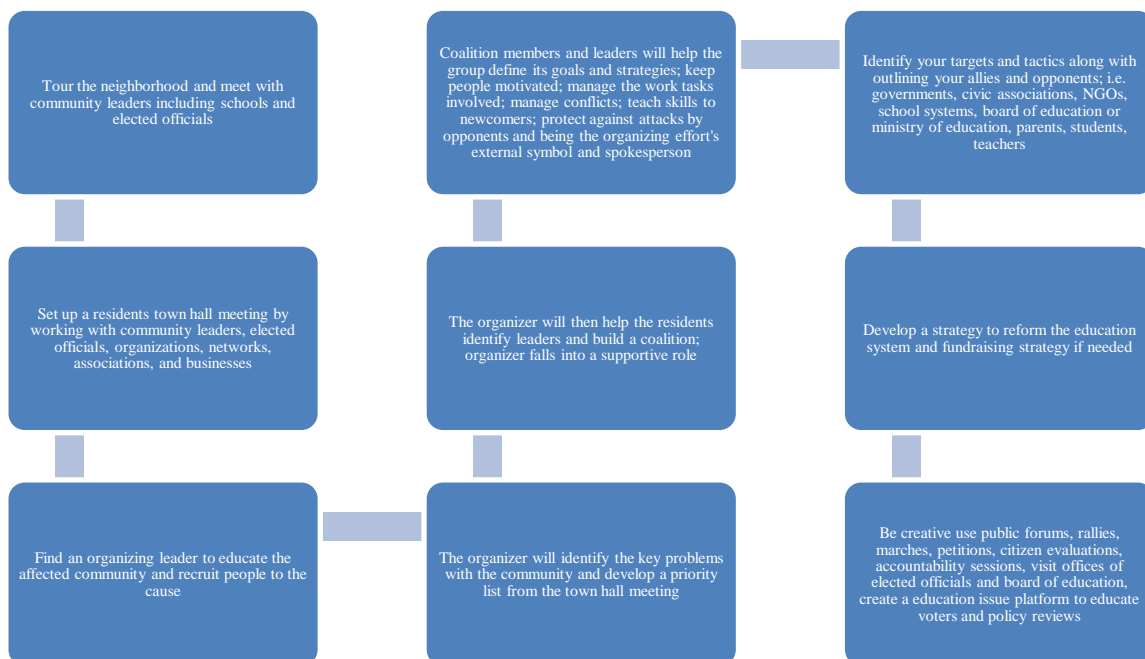targets is a critical element to being well prepared for any backlash. Be creative and think about all the possibility that could go wrong.

These limitations are imperative to review, ensuring your group is organized and have a specific plan in place. This is what separates successful initiatives from unsuccessful ones. The next section of the paper will give you the steps to creating a sustainable results based initiative or cause.

Chapter Seven: Steps to Self-Mobilization

There are specific moments in our history where self-mobilization is effective. In this section of the paper, I outlined steps individuals or groups should take in mobilizing and organizing. These steps can be used in any country context, not only United States and India. This is my "RD Pathway to Citizen Driven Results" framework I created for people entering new communities and working with the community on issues affecting their neighborhoods. (Dixon 2013)

Tour the neighborhood and meet with community leaders including schools and elected officials

Set up a residents town hall meeting by working with community leaders, elected officials, organizations, networks, associations, and businesses

Find an organizing leader to educate the affected community and recruit people to the cause

Coalition members and leaders will help the group define its goals and strategies; keep people motivated; manage the work tasks involved; manage conflicts; teach skills to newcomers; protect against attacks by opponents and being the organizing effort's external symbol and spokesperson

The organizer will then help the residents identify leaders and build a coalition; organizer falls into a supportive role

The organizer will identify the key problems with the community and develop a priority list from the town hall meeting

Identify your targets and tactics along with outlining your allies and opponents; i.e. governments, civic associations, NGOs, school systems, board of education or ministry of education, parents, students, teachers

Develop a strategy to reform the education system and fundraising strategy if needed

Be creative use public forums, rallies, marches, petitions, citizen evaluations, accountability sessions, visit offices of elected officials and board of education, create a education issue platform to educate voters and policy reviews

- ✓ **Step One:** Take a tour of the community to see the landscape of the neighborhood
- ✓ **Step Two:** Meet with Community Leaders including the schools and elected officials in the area to understand the complexity of the problem
- ✓ **Step Three:** Work in collaboration with the community leaders, elected officials, organizations, associations, and businesses to set up a town hall meeting with the residents
- ✓ **Step Four:** Identify the key problems in the community and prioritize them into a list; with the highest priorities at the top; let the community highlight the issues in creative ways like journaling, drawing, mapping, art, etc. See where education falls on the priority list

- ✓ **Step Five:** Find an organizing leader to educate the affected community and take on the responsibilities of recruiting people to the cause
- ✓ **Step Six:** In this case we are focusing on education, so after the organizer has educated the community on the issues of education raised as a priority; the organizer should help the residents identify leaders and build a coalition so they can fall into a supportive role
- ✓ **Step Seven:** The coalition members and leaders will help the group define its goals and strategies; keep people motivated; manage the work tasks involved; manage conflicts; teach skills to newcomers; protect against attacks by opponents; and being the organizing effort's external symbol and spokesperson. (Shultz, 2003, p.98) Be clear on your biases and agenda
- ✓ **Step Eight:** Identify your targets and tactics along with outlining your allies and opponents; i.e. governments, civic associations, NGOs, school systems, board of education or ministry of education, parents, students, teachers
- ✓ **Step Nine:** Develop a strategy to reform the education system for low income families by clearly giving community stories of how it has affected their children, their lives and the lives of the future generation. Storytelling is powerful and empowers the community to take leadership and feel like their voice is being heard. Develop a Fundraising strategy if needed
- ✓ **Step Ten:** Be creative use public forums, rallies, marches, petitions, citizen evaluations, accountability sessions, visit offices of elected officials and board of education, create an education issue platform to educate voters, policy reviews (VeneKlasen and Miller, 2002, pgs.262-270)

Valuable Notes: Be ready for opposition and backlash. Celebrate the small victories with the group as you move forward to fighting for your rights. Remain positive and the persistence of using the non-violence approach is significant; if you get lost along the way, revisit your mission, vision and objectives established in the coalition. Citizen Driven Projects are typically successful and sustainable. Bring in more resources if you need them especially if you are new to organizing. Developing a sustainability plan with the community would be helpful to your initiative as well.

There are multiple ways to use this framework starting with an outside organization acting as the initial organizer and switching it off the community or a citizen from the community working on an initiative or cause that spreads to the community.

Good luck and stay focused on the goal!

Conclusion

In conclusion to bring all of the elements of my argument for self-mobilization as a tool to successfully implementing policy changes and ways to obtain educational rights, I will refer back to my main research questions starting with how does self-mobilization prepare Blacks in the United States and Indians in India to fight for their rights to education. There are a number of organizing victories between the United States and India. One cannot say if one country is advancing over another but both cultures were able to learn from each other and influence one another. The Black Panther Movement has influenced other countries like Australia, an example of cross-cultural experience. I recently learned that old black gospel songs like "We shall overcome" are being used in other regions of the world, for inspiration. The world is changing through traditional organizing and technology advances. These two countries are very different based on the size difference and number of people but they both have a history of being oppressed. They have both learned ways of getting out of the horizontal violence cycle.

True sustainable development happens when the community is participating in the decision making process on the issues that are affecting their country. Country ownership and leadership allows for effective and efficient change. Community members are the key leaders of sustainable development. Sustainable Development relies on self-mobilization efforts and the future of youth to create a better world around us.

In regards to my sub-question on how is self-mobilization an effective approach to changing the educational landscape for future generations in India and United States, traditional and new ways of organizing are important to use and they will serve us well. There are many successful cases of social change through organizing and protests all over the world. For

example, the young generations in places like New Delhi, India, MENA region and US states like Florida, New Jersey starting movements through traditional organizing and technology platforms. There is significant hope for the future generations and we should take them under our wing. Education is essential to learning and growing as a person; it is a fundamental human right. Education is becoming extremely crucial to employment opportunities so we need to prepare our upcoming students for the real life obstacles that they will face but make their transition easier. Minority populations in the US need to develop more curriculum materials to put information into the textbooks so that minority students can learn about their culture and history background.

In my final question: What steps will it take to organize and mobilize Blacks in the United States and Indians in India to create change and eliminate oppression by our government sectors? My "RD Pathway to Citizen Driven Results" framework can work in any of these contexts and it starts with one person trying to make a difference; it can evolve into a movement. India and the United States could use this framework to organize and mobilize their country to participate and demand the rights they deserve. After interviewing Reema Navavaty at SEWA, she told me that "organizing has no end only projects do." (Navavaty 2013) This is a very important concept to keep in mind when using the framework as well, there is no time limit and organizing with a structure and plan takes time. It is not a quick fix and the reason why a lot of protests fail is because they do not have a plan. We can no longer be oppressed by the government sectors and need to utilize the assets that already exists in the community. After you have identified the gaps in services then you can begin to bring in new resources to compliment your existing assets.

From my research, these are the three major lessons that I learned. I have found that (1) Black Americans are capable of organizing and mobilizing on issues of civil rights but it typically happens when civil rights are violated among the black community. If Black Americans could focus on small mobilizing efforts around issues like education, healthcare, and many more disputable rights issues, as one collective unit they can change the power shift of the nation. The government and Board of Education need to change their policies and allow black Americans to participate in the process. How can decisions be made about the education sector without black Americans voicing their opinions and suggestions on how to potentially fix the issue? Everyday more and more black students are graduating from high school because community leaders, educators, parents and students are fighting for their education. Many black communities are realizing that you cannot get a job based on a high school diploma or GED or even a college degree today. Black Americans have more power than they think and need to prove that they are not willing to accept lower standards because of where one lives or comes from. Mass movements need to start up today. Our past and new generation of organizing is setting the stage for social change.

(2) There are small victories in India as people have been organizing and mobilizing to fight for their rights as citizens but there has not been a mass movement since Gandhi. The fact that adult education is still a dream for most of the people in India is a sad story as well as over millions of children are not attending school. The government is paying attention to the issue but not actively implementing change in the low caste systems. There are over millions of civil society organizations in India and the problem has not been eliminated yet. By not respecting people as human beings with rights to education causes more devastation to the country

especially when their basic needs are not met. The Ministry of Education must be a part of the solution not part of the problem.

(3) Good quality education in public schools is a limited resource in both locations (United States and India) and only given priority to the middle and upper class citizens. Education is one of the ways to break people out of poverty. We are trapping our citizens in communities they cannot survive in or get out of. Without good quality education, it prohibits individuals and families from achieving their dreams and aspirations in careers and their personal lives. We need good quality education for all including the marginalized communities. We cannot value one gender over another, boys and girls should be receiving the same quality education on the same scale; one should not be advancing over another. For example, in the United States girls are leading in the education sector leaving the boys behind especially in specialty tracks like science, technology, health care, social sciences. In India, it is the reverse, girls are less valued than boys and as a result, girls are lagging behind boys. One day, I would like to envision a world that has equal balance in the education sector and access is no longer a barrier.

I have outlined my entire argument for why self-mobilization is an effective tool to obtaining rights to education. I strongly believe that self-mobilization in these two countries (US and India) and other countries around the world are needed. Educational rights are entitled to everyone not just middle and upper class citizens. Self-mobilization is the way to breaking out of poverty and secure the resources you need. Once the cycle of horizontal violence and identity issues are over, you will be more than ready to fight for your rights not only for yourself but for the future generations that awaits. Blacks and Indians are ready for a change, are you? Will you

stand next to them in this revolutionary fight to education? I know I will, let's start mobilizing today.

Appendix 1

Interview with Matthew Williams, Service Provider in Philadelphia

These are the three questions that I requested from Matthew Williams, Service Provider in Philadelphia: (1) What is your perspective on the education system in US for blacks, from history to present state? If you were a part of the No Child Left Behind from the Bush administration, can you talk about it? (2) What role do you think the government should play in making education better for blacks? (3) What are some of the barriers blacks face in mobilizing for a cause? And how do you think it can be overcome?

Below are his responses to these questions.

(1) I can speak from the perspective of public education for blacks. Public education for blacks is for lack of better words is 'a joke.' Statistics today tell us that most blacks live in the inner city. Therefore, inner city urban public schools service predominantly blacks and Latinos students. These schools do not have enough resources to adequately provide black students with Free Appropriate Public Education (FAPE). The problem starts at the top. Administrators mismanage the funds allocated to large urban school districts, and when the federal government finds out, and then funding gets cut. What makes it worse is that local government blames the taxpayers, saying the reason for the school district's budget cut is because of all the unpaid property taxes. Most blacks live in large urban areas with a lot of abandoned properties, and many of them are socio-economically disadvantaged. It is like we are test subjects. America is not a country that gives away anything for free, and that includes public education. And, for blacks we get it worse than any other ethnic group in this country. No child left behind, changed the face of public education. Everything was determined by test scores. High stakes testing means everything to predominantly black school districts, because the amount of funding received by the district is decided by tests. This makes things worst for blacks. If it is not enough that blacks are virtually boxed in specific areas and forced to attend certain schools. Now the schools that are predominately black, the funding is a direct result of how well black students perform on standardized tests compared to their white counterparts from districts with sufficient resources.

(2) The government should do a better job of making a level playing field for all students to get the most from public education. How do you actually do that is the million dollar question? First, it will take delegating the right people to administrative positions. Not just someone with the credentials on paper, but someone that is truly invested in making a change for the better. Then, ensure that every district receives the same amount of funding, according to their enrollment. Also, closely monitoring the allocation of all funds evenly across all districts, and not penalizing districts based on test scores.

(3) One major barrier black's face in mobilizing for a cause is the crabs in a barrel syndrome. It seems like blacks cannot stand to see other blacks doing well for themselves or happy. This mentality is a direct result of the education system. The lack of resources provided to blacks in public schools hinders their growth and exposure to the world which routes

all of their attention to commercialized views of black America. Commercialized black America is fiction for most blacks. Yet, they try to imitate what they see and expect instant gratification for anything that they do. This unrealistic expectation takes the focus off of education and puts emphasis on the here and now. Here and now is not a good way of thinking because there is no mention of the hard work involved to accomplish the goal. There needs to be a larger emphasis on education in black communities. Blacks that value education are not well respected. It's the entertainers, dealers, and ex-cons that seem to be the most respected in black communities. There needs to be more involvement from the entertainment industry that is capitalizing off black America to promote educational equality for blacks with donations to every major urban metropolis of millions of dollars to the public school system with every school in the district receiving the same amount according to the population size.

Appendix 2

Interview with Yasser Payne, Ph.D., Associate Professor at University of Delaware

These are the five questions that I requested from Professor Payne: (1)What is your opinion on the education system for blacks in the US? (2) How do you think the government should be involved in education? (3) What do you think about the public schools in comparison to the new upcoming charters being implemented? (4) How does your teaching influence black students and what do you hope they are learning from you? (5) Any tips on how blacks in the US can mobilize to fight for their rights to education?

Below are his responses to these questions.

(1) The traditional educational system at large is not designed for low-income Black Americans in particular. The school curricula is not designed to make low-income youth think differently and more broadly about the communities they returned to after school. Education for low-income Black youth is not formatted for actual liberation or enlightening of their minds and spirits, but instead, the education system is designed to sort and exclude those who cannot comport to established rules or social mores.

(2) I think the government should more aggressively create equal educational opportunities (up to or including the bachelors) for all children and youth in the country.

(3) Public schools are charter schools. These two entities compete for the same pot of money set aside for all public schools. I think it is important to better resource low-income public schools and we need to let local neighborhoods have more buy-in or make more of a contribution to curricula developed for their children.

(4) I think it is important for Black youth in college to see and receive instruction from a relatively young heterosexual Black male. These students will have a model of another perspective teaching and learning. Black students will want to know how to be and act in the academy in a way that works for them culturally. I am that example for them.

(5) Education, like politics, is local. Black parents need to begin to mobilize aggressively and locally. Black parents will have to organize around a specific issue or theme beginning in pre-k. This will be the best and quickest way for change to be created.

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