

Implementation of education for all: A study of officers of schools in Bhopal

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Abstract

Achieving universal and compulsory education is a major challenge for any nation. India has been trying to achieve this goal since it won independence in 1947. Although major advances have been made, data shows that India is way behind in fulfilling one of its major constitutional objectives even today. This study attempted to investigate what factors are responsible in implementation of universal education in the Bhopal district in India. For the purpose semi-structure interviews were conducted with officers managing various schools. Their opinions on a number of factors related to implementation of universal education were analysed. Findings shed light on various hurdles which are discussed along with suggestions. Limitations of the study and future directions are discussed.

Introduction

India begun its journey towards the goal of universal and free basic education little more than fifty years ago with Article 45 of the Indian constitution stating “The State shall endeavour to provide, within a period of ten years from the commencement of this Constitution, for free and compulsory education for all children until they complete the age of fourteen years” (Bakshi, 2003; Dash, 2000). The struggle to meet this basic commitment began forthwith. But conditions then were really dismissal. The overall literacy rate was 18 per cent and female literacy rate was only 9 per cent. The gross enrolment ratio at primary stage (classes I – V covering the age group 6 –11) was 43 per cent and corresponding figure for girls was only 25 percent. These are few of the problems plaguing the march towards attainment of the objective of universal and free education. Although much has been achieved in the five decades since independence they have fallen short of meeting the goal of *Education for All* (EFA) (Bhatnagar & Saxena, 2003).

The 1990s saw the primary education scene opening up to external assistance on a fairly large scale. Possibly, as part of the commitments made by the international donor community, at the Jometin Conference, the country saw the emergence of a large multi-state programme for EFA under the banner of the District Primary Education Programme (DPEP).

Another development in the last decade that forms a part of the backdrop for the review in the Supreme Court Judgment, which, interpreting the constitutional provisions, declared basic education as a fundamental right of every citizen, requiring the state to make necessary provisions as a basic obligation. Currently, a bill to amend the constitution is under consideration in Parliament to incorporate education up to 14 years as a fundamental right of every citizen. Simultaneously, at an international level, basic education found a prime place in the development discourse as a component of the Human Development Index (HDI), brought out by the United Nations' Development Programme (UNDP). These national and international developments have translated the status of UEE from merely a public sector activity of the state to that of a legal obligation, societal responsibility, and moral commitment.

Number of Schools

A key question in ensuring universal Education for All is 'Are there enough number of schools?' The network of primary schools has expanded significantly. An estimated 95 per cent of the rural population living in 826,000 habitations has access to primary school within the radius of 1 km. Though there are nearly 150 million children currently enrolled in primary schools, there were an estimated 35 million children who were not going to school in 1997; the number is likely to have increased to around 40 million by 2000. There has been substantial expansion of primary schools in the country in the recent decades. The number of primary schools increased nearly three times between 1951 and 1991. The increasing trend has continued during the last decade. This has, no doubt, helped spread basic education in some of the remote corners of the country. However, this may not imply that the entire population and habitations in India have been adequately covered and served by basic schooling facilities within reasonable distance, as prescribed for the children of these age groups. In fact, rural habitations not served by primary sections in 1993 stood at 16.64 per cent which meant that 176.523 habitations had still to be provided access to the facility of primary schooling. Of these unserved habitations, about 40,000, each with a population of 300 or more, need to be provided with primary schools as per existing norms. Thus, the establishment of primary

schools in small un\erved habitations became a major concern during the 1990s and considerable success could be achieved in this regard in some of the states. Another important question is about enrolment and continuation of school by those enrolled.

Universal Enrolment

According to a recent assessment, the country has achieved near universal enrolment as indicated by the gross enrolment ratios. However, examined against participation of age specific population, there is still a sizeable gap in the net enrolment ratios. Yet, low enrolment ratio is not a problem in all parts of the country. Several states show a net enrolment ratio of more than 80. Even traditionally underdeveloped states such as Madhya Pradesh show a significantly high net enrolment ratio of 79.2. Although female enrolment has shown a significant increase during the last few years, gender disparity does not seem to have reduced. Figures show that there are at least as many girls outside school as there are inside in the age group of 6 – 14 years.

Measures to improve access and enrolment should be coupled with suitable measures to retain children in school long enough for them to complete the full cycle of primary education. Though most states of India have done well in enrolling more and more children in schools, their inability to retain them has been a problem. Considerable efforts have been made during the last decade to ensure that children do not drop out of school after initial enrolment. There has been a significant decline in dropout rates between 1991 and 1999. This is particularly pronounced in the case of girls. Between 1991 and 1995 the dropout rate for girls declined from about 48 per cent at primary stage (classes I-V). If the same trend continues, as estimates indicate, 7 out of 10 girls who joined primary school in 1999 are likely to remain in the system for at least five years.

The purpose of research is progress and good life. Good education has been recognized as the basis of individual and social development. Therefore, the need of research in educational practices and policies are being realized increasingly. Educationalists are constantly searching for more effective methods of instruction. Efforts are being made to find out more satisfactory techniques of evaluation, richer learning materials, better physical facilities, more efficient systems of administrative organization, and so on. This search is becoming more important due to the very rapid expansion and universalization of education during last few decades. We have conducted the following study with

the broad objective understanding a few hurdles that afflict the implementation of universal education in Bhopal district.

The success of any institution lies in its policies and its implementation. And the officers are either in the policy making body or see to the implementation of those policies. The officers have a major role to play in the field of education. When it comes to the day-today running or over all planning and functioning, it depends on the officers, how seriously they have taken their office and what they believe about the primary education. In this study we have, therefore, made a comparative study of their economic, social and educational standards and their view on the administration and governance of the primary education. Five each officers from either sector have been selected and interviewed. They are either managers or members of the Managing committee of the private education society or officers who have decision-making powers in the government department of education.

Method

Sample

The study has been done in both Government and private sectors that hold office level job. Five each officers from either sector was selected and interviewed. They are either managers of the Private Education Society or officers who have decision-making powers in the government department of education.

Procedure

Semi-structured interview was used for obtaining information from the participants. They were first asked demographic questions related to their religion, caste, monthly income and number of years they have been in service. The rest of schedule was semi-structured but focused on some major areas as described below. A short explanation of the theme is given against it.

1. *Level of rush in the schools*: This question meant how crowded the schools are. In other words are the facilities sufficient for all students.
2. *Purpose of Your Education Society*: What is the role of the education society of the participant in primary schooling?
3. *Number of The Schools in the Organisation*: How many schools are being run by the organization of the participant.

4. *Governance Of The Various Schools*: This question was related to the administration of the system of schools in the organization
5. *The Ultimate Authority on Policy Matters*: Who would ultimately take decision on the policy matters?
6. *Day-Today Academic Matters*: This question is equivalent to asking who does the administration.
7. *Criteria used to for the selection of the principal, teachers and other employees*: Recruitment criteria for various academic and non-academic staff in the school.
8. *The Division of Labour*: This question was about roles of various employees in the schools. It was expected to shed light on the functioning of the school.
9. *Regarding Suspension, Dismissing and Appointment*: Aspects of human resource policy especially 'hiring & firing' related questions were asked.
10. *Permanency of teachers*: What system was followed for regularization of teachers?
11. *Availability of trained teachers in schools*: What was the expertise of the staff of the school?
12. *Earning and job satisfaction of teachers*: What are the teachers' earning and how satisfied are they with their working conditions?
13. *Motivation of teachers in their organization*: What steps does the organization take to keep teachers motivated for their work?
14. *Opinion about governance and administration*: Participants' opinion about the working of the schools.
15. *Opinion on bribe for appointment and admissions*: Whether bribe is involved at any stage of appointment of teachers or for admission of children?
16. *Attracting public attention*: Steps taken to gain media presence. An indicator of how far the organization can reach out.
17. *Own job satisfaction*: This question pertains to whether the participants themselves were satisfied with their jobs.
18. *Expectations from the government*: This question inquired about participants' expectation from Government on policies related to framing of syllabus, appointment of teachers etc.
19. *Current System*: There a number of questions related to current functioning that tried to ascertain whether participant thought that the current system needed a change and how is that change to be implemented.

Findings

1. WHAT LEVEL DO YOU FIND THE HIGHEST RUSH?

Respondents were asked about their opinion regarding rush in the school for admissions. It is natural to have difference in the admission rush in private and government school as seen in the table as each has a distinctive crowd having different economic, social background.

40% of the respondents were of the opinion in the government sector, that the rush for admissions is more in the Higher Secondary level as schools are few comparing to the primary schools the government has. As the Higher Secondary school demands better facilities, qualified person and a minimum infra-structure and more so, the thrust is for primary education, the government has very few higher secondary schools to its credit.

Another reason for rush in the higher secondary level in the government school is because of the drop-outs in private schools. The private school does not keep a weak student. And the actual scanning starts at class IX level as they are to be promoted to a board class for the first time. This is done mostly for better results.

On the other hand situation in the private schools and background of the parents in private schools is entirely different. 100% respondents said that the rush is seen in the primary level. When I interviewed the officers, they were of the opinion that they need a standard school, which has up to Senior Secondary level so that they need not have to worry about their children for the whole of schooling. For the private school parents, it is not money that matters but more so the school and convenience. They worry more about the education of the child more than any other factors like, expense, distance, religion, syllabus etc.

2. WHAT IS THE PURPOSE OF YOUR EDUCATION SOCIETY?

The question is more concerned about the private sector. Though it pertains to the private schools, the government officers too were asked of their opinion regarding the private sector.

As we have more of the missionary and BHEL schools in study respondents agreed (60%) each that the schools are run for service of the people of the locality. A group agreed that it is run for money. Another group was of the opinion, mostly of the BHEL officers that the schools are run, out of compulsions, as they are not able to close down the schools altogether.

3. HOW MANY SCHOOLS ARE THERE IN YOUR ORGANISATION?

The question basically meant to know the priority of the organization, be it government or private. Whether they promote education or primary education as all are not able to higher levels.

The table is clearly indicative of the purpose of government schools. 78% of the schools are middle schools and are aimed at primary education of the people. We also find from the table that 91% of the schools are either primary or middle that too interestingly in the city. In other words Government has the clear vision about spreading elementary education among the people. Most of these schools are established as primary/middle school. The children who pass out from here has to seek admission in a high/higher secondary school.

The case of private sector is different. It is not just the primary schools that they run but may be the beginning stage of a bigger scheme. The intention of the private school in the campaign for universalisation of elementary education is doubtful. It is a part of the mission each organization has taken up that matter them more than the government policies.

4. HOW IS THE GOVERNANCE OF THE VARIOUS SCHOOLS DONE?

Governance enters the context of educating because of the need to control the meaning that events are to have as educative events. Our main concern is with what we should think, feel and do in order to control the meaning. Governance is power in a social setting which is required to bring together, teaching, curriculum and learning.

The most telling question for governance is this: How do we secure cooperation among people so that mutually shared purposes can be achieved? A second potent question is this: what concepts and procedures settle conflicting claims in the context of educating? The first question can be taken as assuming that power over others is derived from shared experience. The second question assumes that derived power can in turn be used to make decisions, to order claims, to direct further experience such that educative events will continue to take place.

From the above table it is clear that it is the Chairman who is the sole authority in the government system. It is the Chairman of the Educational Department that make rules, regulations, issue orders and takes decisions. One of the most important aspects of governance is the decision making for the society and in particular for the institution.

The table shows that there is division of labour in the private sector. It is not just a single person that makes the decision in the system but it is the society along with its officers, Bodies or committees - the principal or manager or anybody concerned with the administration that is responsible. The study shows 80% participation in the system.

5. WHO IS THE ULTIMATE AUTHORITY OR HAS THE SAY IN THE POLICY MATTERS?

This is actually the continuation of the previous question, namely who governs the schools? This is mostly the highest authority or committee who has to set the vision for the society or Govt. The policies are mostly set on the basis of the vision of the particular organization. For example, Rajiv Gandhi Education Mission. This has primary education as their priority and so they work out policies that would promote primary education and that alone. In the case of Govt. it depends under what scheme a school is opened and it tries to meet out its aims and objectives. Take for example the Five Year Plans. It had fixed amount allotted for various fields as per priorities.

In the Government schools, it is the Minister in-charge or the Chairman who finally signs on documents regarding policies or the major decisions. The table too shows that. But this is not the case with the private schools. Here we find either a committee (40%) or a Chairman above the Principal and they have the right to form policies or decisions for the institutions. It is worth mentioning that there is very few institutions that understand Principal as having authority over the policy matters. In other words Governance as understood is not the role of the Principal.

6. WHO TAKES CARE OF THE DAY-TODAY ACADEMIC MATTERS?

In other words this is equivalent to asking who does the administration. For, administration means the day today running of an institution, more of the day-today academic activities. It includes fixation of time table, fixation of curriculum, functioning of the staff etc. The unwanted interference of the authorities on the day-today running of an institution weakens the whole system.

There is cent percent (100%) unanimity in the matter of Govt. schools. The respondents agree that the principal does the day-to-day running of the Govt. schools. This has been asked exclusively about the administration, which means academics and points related to it.

There has been unanimity also regarding the academic matters in the private schools. 80% of the survey shows that it is the principal that sees to the academic running of the schools. In other words we can say that the administration is the duty of the principal and therefore he is appointed either by promotion after certain years of experience or one who is with extra administrative quality.

Now this is worth noting that the school is adjudged with the principal. But in Govt. schools, though a principal is capable, he is not able to show his capability due to lack of personnel, over loading of works or of limiting policies. Like for example, it is the Govt. rule that no children is allowed to fail in primary classes, whatever the capacity of the child be. This makes the principal frustrated at times and is not able to function, as he wants. There are cases even of principals being suspended or withheld salaries for the failures of children in primary sections.

On the hand in private schools, the management looks out for capable administrators as principals and pay huge amount for a good principal and gives a free hand. He could be either with years of experience or with administrative qualities. This may be one of the reasons why the private schools excel in educational field. They give condition for better result than anything else.

7. WHAT IS THE CRITERIA USED TO FOR THE SELECTION OF THE PRINCIPAL, TEACHERS AND OTHER EMPLOYEES?

It is very important to know the procedure of selection of principals, teachers and other employees, because this constitutes able hands in the day today running of an institution. Any malpractice with the students is playing with the future of children as well as the country. It is seen all over, that though there are rules set up for the selection of principal and teachers by the Govt. or the organization, its done the other way. Recommendations play a very important role in selections, in the government and private institutions. The influential lot are appointed in the government reputed schools and as a result the principals are not able to run the way it should. In private schools too, the norms set up by the organization remains a norm and underground work is done to promote or appoint influential people in the post. The recent appointment of ShikshaKarmi by the Madhya Pradesh Government is a clear example for this. The officers were paid heavily for the appointment of teachers whereas all formalities were done for formality sake.

The respondents are of the opinion that the Govt. schools have their employees appointed through interviews and as per Govt. rules (40% each). They are sometimes to clear a written examination too

whereas the private respondents vary in their opinion. They are scattered. 20% agree that it is done by the Committee, another 20% agree it is through written tests and 60% is of the opinion that it is done by interviews. And it seems to be so. In missionary schools, the principal can be anyone from the organization with the required qualification or sometimes even otherwise. But in other organizations like BHEL it is the committee that takes the interview and decides the selection. It is also worth mentioning that in missionary schools, it is mostly the principal entitled to appoint the other employees. Rarely do they have a committee and if at all one, the final decision is taken by the Principal himself.

8. HOW IS THE DIVISION OF LABOUR DONE IN YOUR SCHOOL?

This is another way of asking about the functioning of a school. This is another important aspect in running of a school. When the roles are not known to the people concerned, manpower may not be made used as it could be. This is important for one to know what is expected of oneself clearly for the functioning of a school. Ezekial (1966) studied the problems of teacher's participation in school administration and reported that democratic school administration facilitated improved communication, whereas the authoritarian method violated the principle of science. He observed that participation is essentially an attitude of mind and not a form of organization.

There is no fast and bound rule in the Government schools regarding the portfolios. 40% agrees that it is done as per need of a place and school. And another 60% is of the opinion that it is done as per the Government rules. This is more so, because in most of the cases Government appoints the employees as per their rules. Like for example, the number of employees would tally with the number of sections and children studying in a school. But the problem with most of the Government schools is that they do not have adequate employees and so the Principal is compelled to see the administration, teaching and even of 3rd and 4th class employees works, all by oneself.

I can give you an example for this. I do get children from village schools in my school every year and their standards of studies is much behind that of ours and when we enquire from their principals they have the same excuse from years that they lack personnel, posts are vacant, no appointment is done and so the Principal is compelled to do all class of works in a school.

This is not the case with the private schools. Most of the private schools have adequate number of employees; it could be seen from the point of Government rule. Now they have some set rules

regarding the posts and their responsibilities and they follow it with the true spirit of the word. The private schools also see to the need of an institution. Like if the school is too big, and if they need a vice principal they do appoint as per need. In many of the missionary schools when the work of a principal is too much and the school is too big, the management sees that a manager is appointed to see to the physical needs of the institution like construction, maintenance etc. There is also sufficient number of office clerk, peons etc appointed as per need. 60% of the private respondents agree that it is done as per vacancy.

9. DO YOU FIND PROBLEMS IN SUSPENDING, DISMISSING OR APPOINTING TEACHERS?

This has been a clear question. And it may not be a major problem in many of the schools because the terms and conditions for working in a school, be it private or Government is made known and signed up before appointment. Now all that is needed to terminate or suspend an employee is to do it as per rules. A procedure is to be followed.

The respondents are clear about their opinion. The respondents from the Government sector have said that there is no problem in any of them with 100% agreement. There is a slight difference in the opinion of the private sector. 20% say that they find problem in suspension /dismissal of teachers. It could be because the private management keep changing teachers for undue reasons and play foul of the service done by the employees.

The common thing done in private institutions is that, they make the employees to work as temporary and then after a few years of service terminate them and get their new appointments and this cycle is repeated. This is not a good sign for the employees because they are deprived of their perks and incentives as a permanent employee and job security is not there at all. On the other hand it is a money making technique of the management by giving low salary and by not paying their incentives as a teacher. This is done in most of the private run schools. This has not been in the case of the missionary run schools. They always try to pay the maximum they can for the teachers and try to get the maximum out of them. Because there is still the spirit of service in them.

10. DO YOU KEEP CHANGING TEACHERS OR MAKE THEM PERMANENT?

The frequent change of teachers in a school matters a lot in the over all performance of the school. In some schools it is seen, that the teachers are changed more than once a year and that abrupt the

studies and playing with the lives of the children. This may be due to the incapability of the teacher, availability of a better job, personal or domestic reasons or part of the management techniques.

The respondents of the Government schools are of the opinion that there is less change of teachers in comparison to the private schools. The system has however changed today. Now we find that the Government itself is not clear about its educational policy, that they have not made permanent the ShikshaKarmis for the last ten years and so they too look out for better job facilities, better payment and for better perspectives.

Respondents from the private sector say that there is no permanency (60%) and 40% says that there is permanency. There is an opinion that making a teacher permanent is a kind of obligation and the private sector wants to keep away from any such obligation. It is to be remembered that the very fact of an employee working for more than a year in a particular institution and one's pay slip as evidence makes one permanent by the virtue of one's service.

11. DO YOU FIND DIFFICULTY IN GETTING TRAINED, EXPERIENCED TEACHERS?

The recent appointment by the government for the teacher-ship was neither on the basis of experience nor training. Though they marked for it, many who were untrained and inexperienced were appointed. The scenario today is that there is no shortage of teachers as many are educated and trained.

It has been and is the case that there is rush for Government job whatever be the initial salary offered. May be thinking of the future benefits like pension, airier clearance etc. that they would get. And it is a credit to work in a Government school and be a Government employee. Therefore we find in the chart that (100%) Government respondents say that there is no difficulty in getting trained, experienced teachers.

The case is not much different according to the survey in private schools too. Earlier it was a problem to get trained teachers. Today the percentage of unemployment has gone so high that there is long queue for selection of teachers. The urban people are ready to go and work in villages too. The training is possible in very many colleges of the city and so training has become very easy.

12. ARE THE TEACHERS IN GENERAL SATISFIED WITH YOUR ORGANISATION REGARDING THEIR EARNING AND JOB SATISFACTION?

The two prerequisites for any job in any place are, proper earning and job satisfaction. Proper earning makes man self satisfied and stable in his thoughts. One is able to run the family decently. One will be emotionally stable because one does not have to worry about what one would eat or drink. And dedicated, sincere work for the institution gives job satisfaction. If these two conditions are met in any field of job, I think, the working place becomes heaven for the employee. For example, when the payment is not done properly, the employee will surely be worried about his day today living and the work will not be as much as it should be.

In the case of the Govt. schools it is 40% agreed that they are satisfied where as 60% are not. Actually this should have been the other way. The Government employees should have been satisfied with their earning. Now the reality is, the Government teachers are paid in one or two installments in a year. This makes their life uncertain.

Fortunately the private employees seems to be 100% satisfied with their earning and seem to be working steadily. Since they have their proper earning they have a feeling of dedication towards the institution and put in their best for its betterment. It could be because I have chosen mostly missionary and B.H.E.L. schools, that pay Government scale.

Basically, it is to be understood, that a person works for earning and if one is not paid for livelihood, the work becomes an obligation than a moral duty and that pulls down the morale of the teachers for teaching and to the organization. From the table, one may get the impression that this may be one of the reasons why the private schools have been performing better in the field of education.

13. HOW DO YOU MOTIVATE YOUR TEACHERS? DO YOU CONDUCT SEMINARS AND BRIAN STORMING SECTIONS?

Motivation is an ongoing process in the field of administration. This can be done through seminars, brainstorming sections, promotions, enriching programmes, encouragement etc. Without motivation the system may not function as effectively as it should be. Seminars bring in motivation. This should be conducted as often as possible so that the teachers are made aware of the modern trend of education, its methods and purposes etc.

The table clearly shows that the teachers are not taken care, as they should be. According to the respondents 60% agree that there is no motivation at all for the teachers. Now 40% agree that

motivation is done through encouragements. Encouragement would mean giving promotions on time, giving added perks for their additional work, or words of encouragement from the administrators. This could be helpful to work better but may not be aware of the modern trends of education.

In private organization it is the other way. 60% of them do agree that it is done through encouragement. Here it is through double promotion, double increments, words of encouragement, awards and public recognition etc. And as usual many of the missionary schools do conduct brainstorming sessions to motivate their teachers from time to time, mostly in the beginning of the year. This opinion is held by 40% of the respondents.

14. WHERE IS, ACCORDING TO YOU BETTER GOVERNANCE, ADMINISTRATION AND FUNCTIONING?

This is a question asked time and again in the field of education. Why is such a rush in the private schools for admissions? Is it because of the better governance and administration thus a good result or just a craze?

It's been surprising to see that there is no difference of opinion among the respondents regarding the administration and governance of the schools. They all agree that it is better done in private schools. This does not mean that there are no experienced, capable teachers in Government schools. Their talents are not extracted as it should be. There are children topping the examinations in Govt. schools. But in the case of punctuality, dedication, and discipline, the private schools lead.

It is true that once one gets into a Government job one becomes stagnant and gets rotten, whereas in private establishments, the administration sees to the performance of employees in their own capacity. This could be because of the interest of the Management or free hand that the private school principals have, in the day today running of the institution.

There is a fear of punishment in private employees that has been observed. But this is not the case with the Govt. institutions. It is very hard to get an employee out from the job once appointed in the government set up. On the other hand there is a constant fear in the mind of a private employee regarding his work everyday and that motivates him.

15. DO YOU TAKE BRIBE IN YOUR INSTITUTION FOR APPOINTMENT AND ADMISSION

Bribe is a part and parcel of most of the organisations be it government or private. It has come to a stage that makes everything possible with money and impossible without it. There is no limit to anything when there is money. There is no barrier on the way when there is money. It is therefore said that ‘Money makes mare go’.

The Government and private officers have out-rightly rejected the blame of bribe. But it is to be understood here that bribe is no more bribe when it is taken open handed. The bribe is not taken and asked directly. But lot planning is done regarding the way it should be taken.

Now regarding missionary schools, a word may be appropriate here, since I have taken number of schools for study. There were cases the management was blamed for taking bribe for admissions and later it was found that the middleman who took bribe was known to the management and had taken in the name of the principal. When proved once, it happened to be a teacher of the same school. But the fact remains that there are missionary and private schools that take bribe in the name of donation, contribution etc.

16. WHAT IS THE WAY TO ATTRACT PUBLIC ATTENTION?

Education has become a business in the market. People open schools not for imparting knowledge but for livelihood. In the name of English Medium schools, and naming after Convents the people try to crowd admissions and take unproportionate fees to the facilities provided in the school. They attract attention not by their performance but by publicity, familiarity etc. There are principals and employees who go from house to house calling and pleading parents to admit their children in a particular school. And parents oblige in certain cases due to familiarity. This is actually killing the future of the children in many cases.

There is difference of opinion in the Govt. and private respondents. Some believe that attention is drawn through media and publicity. In both sectors 20% of respondents believe it. But most of the respondents believe that the best advertisement is the result of the school. A school attaining good result would mean, there is good atmosphere of study and proper teaching. 40% of the Government and 20% of the private respondents believe that being a modern age people look out more facilities and better standards not only in the field of academics but in other realms too. But the question is: how many percent of people in India are able to afford such standard and facilities. A number of

private schools opened in cities with international standards, like swimming pool, horse ride facilities, ask for lakhs as donations. Who can afford this? Is it the common public?

I would like to make a comment here about the media publicity. It is always been my experience that the schools with no standard of studies needed media advertisements (except on occasions when it is opened for the first time). But the best publicity will be oral (by word of mouth). If a parent can say positive about a school in his friends' circle or in the village or in any other public place that would attract public to a particular school. But this would surely demand some credibility in the field of education (in other words good results and discipline).

17. SHOULD PRIMARY EDUCATION BE COMPULSORY FOR INDIANS?

There is a clarion call for literacy in India. Even after 50 years of independence, India has not been able to reach out to the people in the interior villages. There has been so many commissions set up to revise the Government's educational policy and special drives for literacy. It has not been implemented as in the case of any other Government schemes but been able raise a kind of awareness among the people towards primary education. It also needs to be understood that the Government has succeeded in setting up number of primary schools all over India especially in villages, the functioning of which is questionable. A recent attempt by the Government towards this end is the Rajiv Gandhi Mission, which has an exclusive package for primary education.

The respondents are of the opinion that it should be compulsory for the people of India to learn to read and write. The world has become such a small family with help of the media, that without the help of reading and writing one feels out from this family.

Today social illiteracy is considered to be a social evil that need to be eradicated. There are very many schemes introduced by the Government. Five-year plan has a major portion of it, set for the education in common and for primary education in particular. I think, what is needed now is, not to open more schools but to run the existing schools in a proper manner so that the target group profits from it.

There could be another way of effectively spreading primary education i.e. through privatization of education. The Government so far has failed in this field to execute what it intends to do and so number of the government schools are not functioning. They would apply better skills and deploy

more efficient working system, which would bear better fruit. But the question is: will it reach to the ordinary man of India?

18. WHAT IS THE REASON FOR HIGH ILLITERACY IN OUR COUNTRY?

One of the major problems India facing today is illiteracy. Government and NGOs are trying their best towards a solution by introducing new schemes. The root cause of illiteracy could be 1. Population, 2. Casteism, 3. Bonded Labour. The high rate in population has made things impossible. The speed of development and growth of population does not tally. The casteism is another evil that keeps children from studies. The bonded labour system adds to it.

The Government officers have attributed the reason for illiteracy to poverty of people (60%) and another 40% has attributed the reason to unemployment. People think of education in terms of job and when they do not find a bright future even after education they are not motivated to study. It is different response from the private sector. Poverty (40%) is considered to be the major cause of illiteracy. Another group (40%) has said costly education and 20% has agreed population as the major cause of illiteracy.

19. DO YOU THINK YOU ARE DOING JUSTICE TO THE EDUCATION THROUGH YOUR ORGANISATION?

Now the question needs to be asked is what does one mean by justice. Is it collecting money for education that is injustice or even after collecting the amount from the students, not imparting knowledge is injustice? Else, can we say, being unjust to one's duty is injustice? In both cases, the teachers are paid sufficiently well. One from the government fund and another from the Management fund.

The government officers differed in their thinking. 60% said that they do justice to the education where as 40% accept their weakness and acknowledge the actual situation. It is possible that the officers are doing their level best for education but may not be reaching to the people, as the way, it should be. In private schools they believe that they are doing justice to the education though they do collect money from the people, often said to be unfair as common man is not able to afford it.

However one thing is clear that the private schools fair better than the government schools in their performance both in teaching and results. Mostly private school teachers work hard or are made to

work hard for a good result. In government schools, leave alone facilities, there aren't teachers for months in some schools. Nor, are the vacancies filled by the government on time. As a result the standard of education is so low.

20. ARE YOU SATISFIED WITH YOUR WORK?

Job satisfaction is one of the major aspects of any work. If there is no satisfaction of one's work at the end of the day, then, it will only be a moneymaking system. I have seen literally people leaving their jobs from organizations for no other reason but for job satisfaction.

80% of the government respondents have expressed their opinion that they do have job satisfaction. And 20% has expressed their opinion that they are not satisfied with their pattern of work. It is much different in the case of private correspondents. They are fully and completely (100%) satisfied with what they do and their work. They have the job satisfaction. They feel that they are doing something for building up of the nation.

My personal comment about this feel good factor of the government respondent is, because they are involved in corruption and malpractices, they have no other option but to agree. The 20% that has said that they are not satisfied, are the real people who work from their heart and may be called the 'uncorrupt'. The present situation of the government education does not indicate that things are well with the school and education. Therefore, anyone claims to be doing well, need not be wholly correct. If the authorities work well, the system should also work well.

21. WHAT IS YOUR INDIVIDUAL CONTRIBUTION IN THE FIELD OF EDUCATION?

Though we like to speak of education from a common point of view, I think, every teacher has to take education from an individual point of view and be personally responsible for one's work. Though one may not be able to change a system by oneself, one can change oneself. If each one can do one's duty in its proper manner I think the things would be easier and system better. There is an old saying "it is better to light a lamp than cursing darkness".

There are two different schools of thought. The government respondents believe in their dedicated work in the schools for many years, be it in the village or in the towns. The people with less hold in

the political circles must have worked for years in the villages and that is really a hard. Though the output is less, they have the conviction, what they are doing is a real service and are trying to do their best in the worst conditions.

On the other hand we find the private employees just fulfilling what the management is asks them to do. They are just like a machine, “we are paid and work for the earning”. Their performance may be better in the situation they are, but may not be in the same, in a situation as of a government employee.

In a loose system like in the Indian government set up, one needs a lot of personal dedication and conviction to do one’s work. And this, I feel, is a real challenge in the field of education.

22. DO YOU THINK THAT THE MEDIA INFLUENCE EDUCATION?

Media plays a major role in common man’s life today. It has made the whole world into a small family. And the media in past two decades has made a tremendous change in the attitude of the people and have influenced the life of the people, in thinking, changing attitudes, and culture etc. People have learnt to think for themselves after hearing the various aspects of the same problems from different viewpoints. This is applicable to a great extent both urban and rural areas.

The government officers have difference of opinion about the influence of media on education. 60% of them are of the opinion that there is influence whereas 40% of them do not agree with this. In private sector the tally is 80% to 20%. All in all, people believe that media do affect the children and education.

23. IF THE RESPONDENTS ANSWER IS YES THEN HOW?

Though there was a difference of opinion in the government and private employees regarding the influence of media, it is clear that the people have access to the media. But there is some truth when we say, it is not accessible to the common man. For example, when the whole media were announcing through the T.V. that Chhattisgarh sweep was for Congress in the election of 2004 but the result was just the opposite. The common people probably did not know about the opinion and

exit polls nor did the media people really approach the people who made the result. The sampling is sometimes very poorly done.

Advertising or publicity through media has gained attention of the people. There is a saying that the Indian adds are the most thought out adds in the world. And it is also very innovative and creative. People come to know about the product and its good aspects. And may be through another add the defects of the same product. There was a study about the impact of add and found that there is a vast difference in sale of the advertised product and unadvertised product. Which means, people are influenced by the adds. The Documentaries and Discovery Channels are very informative. The internet has made communication very easy. The best of things are available in CDs and cassettes. Good movies also influence people and there can be change of attitudes and changes in the society and thinking of people.

The Print Media also play a major role in education. In T.V. the news are in short and cannot be attained at our convenience where as in the case of print media, it is very handy and can be read at our leisure. The print media cannot be replaced and so the number of dailies and weeklies, have increased in number considerably.

In the survey, most of them have expressed their view about Electronic Media dominating the world of today. The government respondents have expressed it in 100% for electronic where as in private it is 60% that believe that it is through electronic media. Others think, it is through print media.

In America they have studies through computer and study packages in the school and classrooms where as this may not be the case in our schools in India.

24. WHAT ARE YOUR EXPECTATIONS FROM THE GOVERNMENT?

It's after all the State Government that controls the educational policies. It is the government that decides upon the syllabus and various promotion policies through its Education Department. That has the right to decide the various stages of education and also the pay-role for its teachers. The government takes care of the appointment of teachers and filling up of vacancies. Therefore it is normal to ask this question and get the opinion of the teachers regarding this.

40% of respondents both from government and private sector expect better policies from the government. 40% of the government employees are for more facilities for schools in various places. It is natural because there is no infra structure for many schools in the villages and furniture for the day today functioning of the school. There are no facilities like teacher's quarters in the interior villages, no drinking water facilities for children, no urinals etc. This does not make an environment of education in any way. This is felt more in the government schools and the private schools have mostly the minimum facilities available.

Government employees have expressed the desire for education for all. In the city the rich students have the facilities for studies, whereas the poor are deprived of it. There must be some policy for selection and admission. Emphasis should be on the performance of the child than in the economic status.

Private respondents have expressed concern over job openings. Most of the children, who study in private schools, paying such high fees, study for some jobs and when they do not, they become frustrated and as a result, many even commit suicide. So there is a demand for more job opportunities.

People also have expressed their view on strict government policies. Much of the policies are in the paper. For example, the permission for schools. There are number of conditions laid by the government for getting the permission for a school. 2 acres of land is a prerequisite to start a school. But we find many schools without the minimum requirement. How is this permission possible?

25. WHAT NEW POLICIES WOULD YOU SUGGEST FOR PROMOTION OF PRIMARY EDUCATION?

Every time there is a new scheme there is a package for school education. And Rajiv Gandhi Shiksha Mandal is one of the latest examples for it. This was introduced keeping in mind free primary education for all. Its reach to the target group is questionable. Even if it does, its workability is questionable. After so many years of effort by this organization we do not know the feasibility and performance part is questionable.

60% of government respondents and 40% of private respondents suggested that the primary education must be made free for all. It is not only the fees but also the books, uniform, and even mid-day meal for all, so that the poorest of the poor should feel that he could also educate his child. It seems to be there in papers.

It is also suggested that the unwanted syllabus should be eliminated and so there is no unwanted burden on parents and children. It should be a classroom study method and teachers should take real interest.

26. DO YOU THINK THAT THE PRESENT EDUCATION SYSTEM NEEDS CHANGE

Whenever there is lapse in a system we are tended to look into the policy that is the backbone of any system. And it is natural when it is said by the respondents that the system is not working as it should have been working, we are tended to look straight into the policy and see what can be done towards this end. Therefore the respondents were asked whether they feel the need for a change in the existing system.

80% of the government and private respondents agreed that there needs a change in the educational system. Now they were not able to specify whether we need a change in the hierarchy or in the policy or functioning methods. Anyway they recommend a change. 20% of the respondents in the either group agreed that there needs no change in the system, but need to be made functional. Now the question is whether it can be made functional without a change in the existing system?

What is important for us to understand from this study is that people in general feel, that the system is not working as the way it should work and so we need to make it result oriented and for that do we need change? What level and what changes are to be made need to be studied separately and considered.

27. IF YES, HOW CAN THE CHANGES BE MADE POSSIBLE?

Now the question before us is: how can we make this change possible. And the respondents were asked about their opinion and they have made suggestions and their opinions regarding the way the change should take place.

It is obvious from the previous point that it is the policy that needs a change. Because they had said that they side the motion for change in the educational system. So any change in this possible only if the policy is changed. Therefore, there should be balanced framework while forming the policy. Now for example there was a controversy soon after the Congress government took over. What should the school syllabus be and there was a overnight change in the whole of C.B.S.E. syllabus.

Many are of the opinion that there should be new rules regarding the education like compulsory education for all, setting up of more schools in the rural area etc.

28. ARE THE GOVT. POLICIES FOR PRIMARY EDUCATION On SUCCESSFUL

There are policies promulgated by the government from time to time. But the question is regarding the implementation of the policy. And what would be the code to know its success. I think no policy can be called a success unless it is reached to the target group and they profit out of it.

The survey shows to a great extent, the feelings of the people. The government respondents are of the opinion that it is not successful (80%). 20% of the government and 40% of the private respondents believe that it is successful. And it is true that the private sector has succeeded to reach primary education to more people than the government sector.

29. HAVE YOU HEARD OF RAJIV GANDHI EDUCATION MISSION?

Hundred percent of the government respondents have heard about the Rajiv Gandhi Education Mission. This too has been a semi-governmental programme for the promotion of primary education. There are hundreds of primary schools opened under this title in urban and more in rural areas and have introduced their own curriculum and system of functioning.

In government circle all know about this noble mission and in the private it is 80% people who have heard about this mission. 20% of them expressed that they have not heard about it at all. May be because, it is not concentrating much in cities, or else, not talked about much in the private circles.

Discussion and conclusion

The study on officers shows that they are very positive about the development taking place in the field of education. They know for sure that they are not doing as much as they could but are of the opinion that they are discharging their duty to the maximum possible in a given situation. They repeatedly point out that there is so much interference and compulsion from the higher-ups that they are not able to do full justice to their duty.

The officers said that they work for the betterment of education and try to implement the policies in the most practical way. But while asking about the efficacy they had their own doubts. While asking about their opinion for a change in the educational system, respondents from either sector, unanimously agreed there needs to be a change in the complete pattern of education system. This change needs to be wide-spanning from the Central Schools all through the remotest village school. They also made concrete suggestions for promotion of primary education. In general, they said that the education should be free for all, should eliminate the unwanted syllabus and need to standardize the whole system.

The officer respondents expressed their opinion that there will be disparity until the present system is demolished. The reason being double standards in syllabus, payments, incentives, training, facilities etc. For this, the education system should have one single roof under which people of all class and place can attain the same knowledge and obtain the same competency.

In this study we have attempted a comparative study of the economic, social and educational standards and the view on the administration and governance of the primary education of education officers. The broad objective being identification of the hurdles in implementation of universal education.

Limitation and Future Directions

An objective of the sort this study has tried to achieve cannot be achieved with a single study. It requires a multi-dimensional analysis covering possibly all sectors and stake-holders. We have made a small step in achieving that by examining the perceptions of education officers. Future work needs to focus on perceptions of other stake-holders such as teachers, parents and perhaps even the students.

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