



Addressing Challenges of Primary Education

Mohamadhanif A Mir

Research Scholar (PhD), Baba Saheb Ambedkar Open University
Ahmadabad (Gujarat)

ABSTRACT

Education is considered as the process of development for individual and the nation as well. The rate of development of any country is depending upon the educated people of that country. Because education supplies skilled and trained manpower to the country, which in turns, contributes in the development of country. The quality of people depends upon the system of education. Strong education system helps to make nation strong. The success of any education system is stand upon the base of primary education. Primary education is the foundation on which the success of secondary and higher education is depending. If the foundation is strong than there is no problem, but if it is weak than there is need to pay more attention to it. Contemporary system of primary education is suffering from many problems and drawbacks. The author has identified these problems and drawbacks and discussed them in details. The author also suggested possible solutions to these problems in this paper. The author discussed problems such as, lack of teachers, burden of non academic works, burden of administrative works, poor infrastructure, fixed salary for young teachers, poor monitoring, ineffectiveness of CRCs and BRCs, and corruption.

KEYWORDS

Primary Education, Development, Corruption, Quality Education, Challenge

Introduction

India has witnessed different education systems at different times. The history of education is as old as the history of human development. India had very rich history of education. Education developed during the ancient time in India. In ancient period, the Vedic system of education was prevalent. The education was in the hands of Brahmins only. The members of royal families only avail the facility of education. Education was not divided into different sections such as primary, secondary and tertiary. The school was known as the gurukula, in which subjects like Vedas, Upanishad, Mathematics, Astronomy, Astrology, Philosophy and Languages were taught by the Brahmin teachers. Then came, Buddhist system of education, in which Buddhist philosophy was taught by the Buddhist monks. The most important gift of Buddhist system to the modern system is monitorial system of education. After Buddhist there came Muslim education system in which maulvis preached the verses of holy Quran along with Persian and Urdu. The mosques, mukhtabs and madresha were the schools, in which, only mohammadans can get the admission and avail education.

The foundation of modern education system in India was laid down by the Britishers. British people established the systematic and organized system of education in India. The Britisher had the large political and commercial empire in India. To govern this large empire the Britisher needed educated people in large number. That's why; they established the British system of education by opening primary schools in India.

The present system of primary education is more or less based on the British model with minor changes and modifications. If we closely observe the present scenario of primary education, we will find that it does not help us to achieve the pre established goals. The contemporary system of primary education does not makes students enable to master the basic skills of reading, writing and arithmetic. According to Gunotsav report, six lakh students of 6th standards don't know reading. That means that there is something wrong in our existing system. We need to find out the problem areas and removes them so that our student can have quality education.

Challenges of Primary Education

The system of primary education is suffering from many problems and drawbacks. There is an urgent need to identify these

problems and remove them as early as possible. Here in this section the author has discussed the problems and challenges of primary education.

Lack of Teachers

Teacher is the most important person who brings desired change in students' behavior and in society. A teacher is a person who brings positive change in students' life, society and in nation as well. Teacher is a person who shapes and moulds the young minds and prepares them for better future. A teacher is a catalyst who motivates and inspires the life of young students. A teacher is a guide, friend, philosopher, motivator, mentor, facilitator, artist and manager who always play multiple roles to make students life better. A teacher is the medium through which the curriculum is transected to student. So for any nation, it is very much essential to have trained, qualified and committed teachers in enough numbers. Reports of various committees, commissions and agencies of state and central government reveals that, there is a shortage of primary teachers not only in Gujarat but also in the whole country. That means we do not have enough teachers to teach in primary schools. We have many young educated people in our state who are waiting for teacher's job. But instead of recruiting permanent teachers the government has launched a new scheme of pravasi sikshak. I think recruiting pravasi sikshak on temporary basis is not the solution of this problem. If government is really concern about the quality of primary education than have to recruit permanent teachers.

Burden of Non-academic Works on Teachers

The condition of primary teachers is very worst today. Primary teacher becomes helpless today. Primary teacher is working under the pressure and fear. There is no one who can understand and listen his problems. There are several problems he faces everyday in school and classrooms. Nobody is ready to listen his problems. The life of primary teachers becomes miserable. The primary teacher feels pressure of non-academic works assign by the government. Primary teacher has to work for Election Commission of India. He has to perform the role of Booth Level Officer, in which he has to register, cancel and modified the names of people and submit them at the block level. All these works remains for the whole year. Whenever elections come, he has to perform the duty of Presiding Officer, Assistant Presiding Officer, Polling Officer, Zonal Officer and many other roles at dispatching and receiving centers.

Apart from election duty the government assigns the duty to conduct various surveys social, economical, educational, ration cards, aadhar cards and Census. Not only that, but when there is government program organized, primary teachers are appointed as route supervisor and volunteers in functions like Krishi-Mahotsav Garib Kalyan Mela and Sadbhaavna. You can imagine now how many non-academic works are carried out by the primary teachers. All these works creates a pressure in the mind of primary teachers. These kinds of works keeps teacher away from school and students for a long period of time, which directly affects the quality of education of students. If government really wants to uplift the level of primary education than government should reduce the burden of above mentioned non-academic works and make teacher free, so he gets enough time to teach in school.

Burden of Administrative Works

In primary schools teachers has to do many administrative works. Teachers are responsible for the enrolment of new students in the school. Teachers have to conduct the surveys to find out the children of six years and collect the necessary documents regarding age. At the same time parents are doing nothing to enroll his child in the school. All the responsibility of child's admission is on the shoulder of teacher only. So we can say that the entire process of admission is carried out by teachers and principal only. The government does not provide the clerk in primary schools. So all the administrative works related to admission, praveshotsav, scholarship, Gunotsav, and annual inspections are carried out by teachers and principals. The government does not provide peon and sweeper in primary schools. So all the works are carried out by teachers and students. According to the rules of government each and every student must have issue aadhar card. Teachers are responsible for issuing aadhar card of their students which brings more administrative works on teachers' side. According to the rules of government each and every students must open saving account in nationalize bank for the scholarship. Teachers are made responsible for opening an account of students. If all works of students are carried out by teachers only than what is the need of parents? What is the roles and responsibly of parents in their child's education? I personally believe that parents should have some awareness about their child's education. Parents should play an active role in child's admission, scholarship, praveshotsav, Gunotsav and annual inspection. The administrative works related to admission, praveshotsav, scholarship, Gunotsav, and annual inspection keeps teachers away from students and teaching. The principal cannot perform his supervision due to this administrative works. If government is really concern about the quality of primary education than government should recruit full time permanent clerk, peon and sweeper in primary schools, so that, teachers and principal become free from the administrative works and can concentrate on teaching. Apart from this, the teachers have to perform the roles of librarian and computer teacher. It would be better if government recruit full time librarian and computer teacher so that teachers become free and devote their full time in teaching related activities.

Poor Infrastructure

Proper infrastructure is very much essential to provide quality education at any level. Without appropriate infrastructure we cannot reach to the goal of quality education. Proper infrastructure means having the facility of language lab, science lab, computer lab with high speed internet connection, strong building having spacious classrooms, principal office, administrative room, separate sanitations for boys and girls, library with good books, big playground, staff room, assembly hall, modern kitchen for mid day meal and beautiful garden. All these facilities plays crucial role in developing conducive climate for learning in school premises. Apart from above mentioned facilities the government should also make available the facilities of smart class, virtual class, and smart school. Today, the concept of smart class and smart school is becoming very popular. This technology can also create revolution in the learning of primary students. It would be better if government provides these facilities to students of rural areas. This concept

helps to enhance the basic skills of reading, writing and arithmetic.

The reports of various committees, commissions and agencies reveals that in government primary schools there is a lack of proper infrastructure. There are many schools which do not have even basic facilities such as class rooms, playgrounds and sanitations. The condition of primary schools is very worst in some region today. Each year the government allocates budgets for it but the situation has remains the same. It is the duty and responsibility of government to provide all these facilities in government primary schools.

Fixed Pay for New Teachers

After the implementation of RTE in 2010, the government has started recruiting trained graduate teachers in upper primary. This is the much needed step taken by the government. After the implementation of RTE the education department included standard 8 in primary. According to RTE the primary education now divided in to two sections; from standard 1 to 5 is lower primary and 6 to 8 is upper primary. The government started recruiting B A Bed and B Sc Bed teachers in upper primary. Thus, highly qualified and talented teachers enter in primary schools. Even though they are highly qualified and talented the government paid them fixed salary for five years. By giving them fixed salary the government exploits the young and talented teachers of Gujarat. The government is not count these five years as their service. According to the government policy, after the completion of these five years, the teacher has given the order of permanent teacher, and his service started from that point of time. At the time of retirement the five years that he worked in fixed pay is not counted. This policy is not good for young and talented teachers. This is an injustice to the young and talented teachers. This is one kind of exploitation of young and talented teachers. During the first five years of career they work very hard, teach well, actively participated all the academic and non-academic activities assign to them. Even though they perform their duty well with at most honesty, commitment and devotion, they paid poorly by the government. The concept of fixed pay creates negative effects in the minds of young teachers, which directly affects their teaching activity in schools. The system of fixed pay kills the honesty, commitment, devotion and positivity of young teachers. So the government has to think over this issue seriously. In fixed pay it is very much hard to run a house. The honorable High Court of Gujarat also passed his judgment in the favor of teacher and ordered government to pay the full pay to all the new recruited teachers. But the government is not ready to give the full pay to teachers and now days this matter is pending in the Supreme Court.

Poor Monitoring

What teacher is teaching? How he is teaching? And when he is teaching? Should be measured and monitored. There should be strong and proper monitoring system to keep close watch over the teaching of primary teachers. We often reads in news paper and we often watch on television that teachers from particular interior areas are not teaching properly. They are not going to school regularly. Primary teachers need proper supervision, attention, respect and guidance from the government and society. Primary teachers also need proper training because you know that new concepts and innovations are emerging in the field of primary education. So to master new skills and to sharpen the skills that they already possessed they need proper training from the expert. There are some bad teachers in some primary schools. For them we need to establish strong and proper monitoring system. The government of Gujarat started bio-metric attendance device not only for teachers but for the students also. Close circuit cameras should be implants in all the primary schools and should be monitors by the district and state level. Today, the inspection is carried out once in year and that is for half day only. During this half day the inspector come to school checks general register, teacher register, some dead stock register, grant register and important files. They only check the administrative aspect of the school. Very few inspectors go to the class talks with

teachers and students. The most important aim of inspection is to measure and assess the level of knowledge of the students and quality of education provided by the school. Very few inspectors do this. Most of the inspectors are just checked the administrative works of the school. Most of the inspectors do not know how to carry out inspection. They don't know the syllabus. They just ask questions from here and there and somehow complete their inspection within an hour. Inspection should be carried out every month. The government should recruit highly qualified and trained inspectors to monitor the teaching of primary teachers. Proper training should be provided to inspectors. Inspectors should be made aware about the new concepts, innovations, trends, methods, and approaches of primary education. Inspectors should have to perform the role of a guide and motivator. He should talk with teachers and students and should discuss the problems faced by them and provide proper guidance. If we really want to improve primary education, then we need to reform the monitoring system and bring changes and innovations in it and to make it more and more advance.

Ineffectiveness of CRCs and BRCs

According to rules and regulations, the government has to recruit cluster resource coordinators at cluster level. A cluster is a group of 8 or 10 primary schools, in which one CRC is appointed. The duty of CRC is to work as a resource person for the schools of his cluster. He is responsible for providing proper guidance to the teachers of his cluster. He is also responsible for conducting various training programs for the teachers of his cluster. He is responsible to make teachers aware about new concepts, approaches, methods and innovation of the primary education. His duty is to visit each school once in a week, visit classrooms, talk to students, teachers and principal and discuss issues which create problems in schools. He has to provide proper guidance and motivation to students, teachers and principal. But the situation has gone worst. The CRC works as a postman who comes in school once in a week or month to give some G.R., circular and official orders. Same is the case with BRC. He is always busy with the administrative works of schools of his block. To resolve this problem the government should cancel the post of CRC and BRC and the responsibility of training programs should be assigned to DIETs and Bed colleges.

Corruption

Corruption is the most dangerous threat to development. The field of primary education is full of corruption. We often read in news papers and watch in television about the blunders and scams that happened in primary education. The higher authorities themselves involve in corruption. Corruption happens in various things such as purchasing stationeries, distribution of scholarship, transfer of teachers, promotions, recruitments and in various administrative works. We often read in news papers and watch in television that principal of particular school use school grants for personal means. We also heard that BRC and CRC of particular block use grants for personal means. We also come across the news that by giving a bribe you can transfer your job to the school you like. The government has to stop all these things as early as possible. The government is doing nothing to stop corruption. The government has to take strong steps to stop the corruption from the primary education. Corruption is the most dangerous factor which needs to be addressed well to develop a conducive climate at the primary level.

Reference

1. U K Singh and K N Sudarshan. (1999), Quality Education, Shipra Publication, New Delhi
2. K. K. Vijayan Nambiar: (1995), Methods for Quality Education, First Edition
3. K. C. Chakrabarty, (Aug-2005), Indian Education System-Issues and Challenges, Noida
4. Santosh Kumar Raout, (Aug-2009), Globalization and Quality Education, Edutrack, Vol.8-No.12
5. Ajay Deshpande and Sayan Mitra, (June-2006), Primary Education in India: Key Problems
6. Anju Gupta, (Oct-2013), Education Status Report- Gujarat Primary, Middle and Secondary Education

7. P. V. Patel, Director, GCERT, (March-2001), A Study in School Education: Status, Issues and Future Perspectives
8. Website
9. Retrieved report from <http://www.gunotsav.org>
10. Retrieved information from <http://www.gcert.gujarat.gov.in>
11. Retrieved information from <http://www.gujarat-education.gov.in>