

COMMUNITY PARTICIPATION IN IMPROVING ENROLLMENT, RETENTION AND QUALITY OF ELEMENTARY EDUCATION: A CASE STUDY OF ANDHRA PRADESH

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Abstract. The Government of India from time to time has conceived and implemented a number of programmes for improving the access and quality of elementary education. Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan is one such an effort. One of the major interventions of the programme is the community participation in management of elementary education. The present study was conceived to study the extent of participation of the community and areas of participation with the objective to identify the sections of the community participating in the management of the schools, awareness possessed by them in academic and non-academic activities such as grants received, resources and their role in enrollment, retention and re-enrollment of the dropouts, measures taken to regularize the students and teachers, extent of monitoring of mid-day-meals, mainstreaming of the differently abled and the problems encountered by them in managing the schools. Sample of the study constitutes Head teachers (300), Academic monitoring Committee members (900), educated youth/community

members (600) and their opinions towards the contribution and participation of community in enrollment, retention of the children in the schools and also their role in the school activities.

Keywords: Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan, community, academic monitoring committee, community participation, monitoring and evaluation, elementary education, academic and non-academic activities, curriculum

Introduction

The objectives of the Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan (SSA) includes all children in school, education guaranteed centre, alternative schools, back to school camps: All children complete 5 years of primary schooling by 2007: All children complete 8 years of elementary schooling by 2010: focus on elementary education of satisfactory quality with emphasis on education for all: bridge all gender and social category gaps at primary stage by 2007: elementary education levels by 2010 and universal retention by 2010. The basic features of the SSA includes Institutional reforms; Sustainable financing; Community ownership of school through decentralization; Improvement in quality; Effective monitoring with transparency; Planning at habitation level; Mainstreaming gender; Focusing on educational participation of the deprived sections; Making education relevant; Resource development among teachers.

Keeping in view of the objectives and features of the scheme, it has envisaged major areas of intervention which includes community participation and mobilization. The Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan has laid emphasis on community participation and mobilization for creation of effective system to decentralize the decision making mechanism by delegation the powers to the village education committee/panchayat. In view of this, the role of community in managing the schools and organizing them to provide quality of education has become an important aspect of SSA.

As the SSA is in operation, for a quite long period with the intervention of community participation and mobilization, very few attempts have been made to study the effectiveness of the intervention for improving the quality of the human resources. They are¹⁾: Hussain & Hazarika (2008), Kunwer & Sarmah (2009), Ghose (2006), Kackar & Sharma (2006), Singh & Pandey (2007), Patel & Awasthi (2006a; 2006b), Sharma (2004), Mahajan et al. (2008), Vinayak (2004), have conducted researches in the area and revealed that the community has awareness regarding their duties and responsibilities, but the stakeholders have some problems in discharging them effectively. However, these studies are very scanty and sporadic.

Hence the present study attempts to throw light on the quality of the activities organized at the school, role played by the community in shaping them. Further, the study also provides an insight into the success stories and obstacles faced by them for replication and rectification respectively. There is a need to understand the composition of the committees and the background of the community members, nature of the transaction that has taken place in the meetings, implementation of the decisions of the meetings, knowledge about the inside activities of the school, expenditure incurred under various heads, contribution of the community in mid-day meals, knowledge about the levels of attainment of the students, strategies adopted by the community in re-enrolling the dropouts etc., is required to know the effectiveness of the role of the community. In other words, the present study is intended to study the impact of the participation of the community in the management and strategies adopted for mobilization of the community for imparting the quality education. To be specific, the objectives of the study are as follows:

Objectives

(i) To identify various sections of the community participating in the management of the school; (ii) To study the awareness possessed by the

community about various academic and non-academic activities organized at the school; (iii) To study the awareness of the community about the grants received from governmental and nongovernmental sources and extent of their utilization; (iv) To scrutinize various resources generated by the community and extent of their utilization; (v) To study the role played by the community on the enrollment, retention and re-enrollment of the dropouts; (vi) To study the measures taken by the community for promotion of the regularity of the teachers in the schools; (vii) To study the participation of the community in organizing the mid-day meal scheme; (viii) To understand the role played by the teachers/headmasters in ensuring the participation of the community in management of the schools; (ix) To study the contribution of the community in mainstreaming the disabled; (x) To study the impact of the participation of the community in creating conducive environment for teaching-learning process; (xi) To identify the problems faced by the community in management of the schools.

Research questions

(1) Who are the contributors of the community for management of the schools; (2) Did the community is aware about the academic and non-academic activities organized at the school; (3) What are various sources of grants and extent of their utilization by the schools; (4) What are the resources generated by the community and extent of their utilization in schools; (5) How far the community has played a role in enrollment, retention and re-enrollment of the dropouts; (6) What are the measures taken by the community in promoting the regularity of the teacher; (7) What is the role played by the community in organizing mid-day meal scheme; (8) What is the role played by the teachers and headmasters in ensuring the participation of the community in management of the schools; (9) How far the community has contributed in mainstreaming the disabled; (10) What is the impact of the

community participation in creating conducive environment for teaching-learning process; (11) What are the problems faced by the community in managing the schools.

Methodology

Locale and area of the study

As the aim of the investigation is to study the level of participation of the community and mobilization strategies adopted for improving the quality of education of school going children in Andhra Pradesh, the locale of the study is Andhra Pradesh state. The state has been geographically divided into 3 regions viz., Telangana (10), Coastal Andhra (9) and Rayalaseema (4). For the purpose of the present study, from each region, depending on the number of districts, five districts i.e., 2 districts each from Telangana and Coastal Andhra and one district from Rayalaseema region will be selected randomly as area of the study.

Sample

The purpose of the study is to identify the level of community participation and strategies adopted for its mobilization in the functioning of the schools. Hence, the basic unit of the study is school and sample is the community associated with the school. In order to attain the objectives and to elicit the required information, the sample of the study was selected based on the stratified, multi-staged random sampling technique. In the first stage of sample selection, from each district, 3 revenue divisions were selected. From each division, five mandals were chosen randomly. Four schools were chosen randomly from among the schools of each mandal. School headmaster, academic monitoring committee members (3), community leader and educated (one each) constitute the sample of the study for each school and they were selected randomly. In addition to the above, the investigators have also interacted

with the students studying in the sample schools to find out from their point of view about the participation of the community in the school activities and also examined the minutes of the meetings of the academic monitoring committee

The sample frame of the study is as follows:

Districts	5
Revenue divisions 3 x 5	15
Mandals 15 x 5	75
Schools 75 x 4	300
Headmasters	300
Members of the AMC 300 x 3	900
Educated members/community	600

Tools devised

Keeping in view of the objectives of the study, the study requires information from both primary and secondary sources. The secondary information need to be gathered from the records maintained at the state, district and school levels. The primary information need to be gathered from the sample of the study. In view of the coverage of heterogeneous groups the investigator developed the following tools: (a) a schedule for the school teachers/headmaster; (b) a schedule for the community and educated members; (c) A schedule for the AMC members; (d) an interview guide to be used by the investigators.

Data collection

The investigators before administering the tools contacted the project officers of Rajiv Vidya Mission of Chittoor, Nizamabad, Khammam, Srikakulam and Vizianagaram and requested their co-operation. In this process the assisted monitoring officers of the districts were also contacted. Based on the secondary information collected, the investigator has selected the required sample by following the rigorous sampling procedure. Based on the conven-

ience of the PO and AMO of the concerned district, the research investigation team has visited the district and administered the tools for the concerned sample. In this process the team visited all the selected schools, interacted with the academic monitoring committee members and community with the help of the school headmaster. Before administering the data they have explained the purpose of the study and good rapport was developed with them. Further, they have explained the ways and means of filling the schedules to them and the tools devised was administered. In addition the investigators had in-depth interviews with the selected community members involved in the functioning of the schools to elicit information about their involvement in organizing the schools and in providing education to the children. This has been done to prepare the case-studies of the successful strategies of community participation.

The secondary information in terms of the statistical information about the school aged children, enrollment, retention, dropouts, efforts in streamlining the dropouts was gathered from the secondary sources. Further, the minutes of the academic monitoring committee meetings were studied and cross-checked with the physical progress to ascertain the real impact of the community participation.

Analysis of the data

Keeping in view of the objectives of the study, the collected primary and secondary information was analyzed both quantitatively and qualitatively. The secondary information relating to the frequency of the meetings organized, number of members attended and the agenda items of the meetings, the minutes drafted, action taken on the earlier minutes were gathered and analyzed. In case of primary data the information collected from the Head masters, members of the AMC, Community representatives and educated was pooled together and analyzed as per the objectives of the study to draw the

inferences. As the collected information is of qualitative in nature no rigorous statistical techniques were applied.

Findings of the study

Study area

The study has been conducted in 5 districts of Andhra Pradesh viz., Chittoor, East Godavari, Srikakulam, Nizamabad and Khammam. The Khammam and Nizamabad are located in Telangana region and the East Godavari and Srikakulam are in Coastal area and Chittoor is located in Rayalaseema region. Among the selected districts, Khammam is the biggest district followed by Chittoor, East Godavari, Nizamabad and Srikakulam is the smallest district in terms of area. Chittoor district has largest number of mandals, i.e., 66 followed by East Godavari and Khammam. Nizamabad and Srikakulam have 36 and 38 mandals respectively. In terms of villages, Srikakulam has 1814 villages followed by Chittoor 1518. Nizamabad has lowest number of villages. In terms of density of population, Khammam has low density of population with 161 per Sq. Km. Whereas East Godavari and Srikakulam have 454 and 435 population per Sq. Km. In terms of growth rate, Khammam stood first with 15.78 percent of decadal growth followed by Nizamabad and Chittoor. The growth rate of East Godavari is only 7.3 percent.

Educational status

The literacy scenario of the state shows that 60.47 percent of the population is literates. Out of them, 70.32 and 50.43 percents of men and women are literates. In terms of area, 54.5 and 76.09 percent of rural and urban population are literate. Among the rural population 43.5 and 65.35 percent of women and men are literates respectively. In the case of urban areas, the literacy rate of men and women is higher than the state level i.e., 83.19 and 68.74 percents respectively. The literacy percentage among the districts of the study

area, Chittoor district stood first with 66.77 percent followed by East Godavari (64.58%), Khammam (56.89%), Srikakulam (55.31%) and Nizamabad (52.02%). In the case of rural areas, same trend prevailed. In the case of urban area, again Chittoor has highest literacy rate (80.24%) followed by Khammam (77.56%), East Godavari (75.92%), Srikakulam (74.26%), Nizamabad (71.4%). In the case of literacy among men in Chittoor, it is 77.62 percent and it is 74.2 and 87.94 percents in rural and urban areas respectively. In the case of Khammam, the men literacy rate is 61.31 and 85.1 percent among rural and urban population. In the case of Nizamabad, 80.23 percent of urban men and 61.39 percent of rural men are literates. The literacy rate among men population of Srikakulam is 67.19 and it is 65.05 and 84.1 among rural and urban respectively. The East Godavari literacy rate among men is 70 percent. On the other hand, it is 66.64 and 80.87 among rural and urban men respectively.

Decadal literacy growth

The decadal literacy growth in the state and selected areas shows that the growth rate is more in the case of Srikakulam (19.09%) followed by Nizamabad (17.84%), Chittoor (17.02%), East Godavari (16.69%) and Khammam (16.39%). The growth of literacy rates among men shows that it is lower than the state level in all the districts and state as a whole. It is lowest in East Godavari followed by Chittoor and Khammam and highest in Srikakulam and Nizamabad. In the case of females, Srikakulam stood first in overall literacy growth among women followed by Chittoor, East Godavari and Nizamabad. Khammam was found to be the district with low growth rate among the women.

Enrollments

There are 7124940 children in the age group of 6-10 years in the schools. On the other hand, there are 2525632 children in the age group of 11-

12 years enrolled in the schools. Among them, boys outnumbered the girls. In the study area, East Godavari occupies first place followed by Chittoor, Nizamabad, Srikakulam and Khammam in terms of enrollment of the children in the age group 6-10 years. Similar trend can be seen in the case of the gender enrollment. However, in the case of children in the age group of 11-12 years, East Godavari occupies first place and Nizamabad with last place. Similar trend can be seen among boys and girls in their enrollments.

Dropouts

The dropout rate of the state and the study area in the case of boys and girls for the year 2005-06 and 2009-10 was calculated and presented in the table. The figures clearly demonstrate that the dropout rate of the total children shows that it is 15.80 percent from class I to class V. In the case of boys the dropout rate is 16.34 percent and it is 15.24 percent in the case of girls. It clearly demonstrates that the dropout rate among the boys is more and girls are found to be regular to their schools. In the case of study area, the percentage of dropout shows that it is lesser than the state level percentage. The dropout rate in Srikakulam and East Godavari districts is zero indicating that the transition rate is 100 percent. Among the other three districts, Khammam has the highest dropout rate with 13.66 percent followed by Nizamabad with 11.22 percent. Chittoor has the lowest dropout rate with 7.91 percent. In the case of the dropout rate among boys and girls, at the state level it is 16.34 percent which is higher than the study area. In the case of Srikakulam and East Godavari it is almost zero, followed by Chittoor, Nizamabad and Khammam. In the case of girls, the same trend prevailed.

Teacher/students ratio

The teacher – student ratio of the state and the selected area in primary, upper primary and high schools shows that it is 31 without Vidya Volun-

teacher in primary schools, 25 in Upper Primary and 26 in High Schools. Along with the Vidya Volunteers (the Vidya Volunteer is a person selected with minimum honorarium to assist the regular teachers, where there is a single teacher in the school), it is 26 in Primary Schools and 21 and 25 in Upper Primary and High Schools. The above clearly shows that without Vidya Volunteers, the teacher-pupil ratio is more in Primary and Upper Primary schools. Similar trend can be seen in the study area also. In the case of Primary Schools in the study area, Nizamabad has the highest teacher-pupil ratio and it is lowest in the case of Chittoor without Vidya Volunteer. The schools having Vidya Volunteers has the lowest teacher pupil ratio in Srikakulam district and highest in Nizamabad. In the case of Upper primary schools, it is highest in East Godavari and lowest in Nizamabad and Srikakulam without Vidya Volunteer. Similar trend can be seen with Vidya Volunteers also. The above clearly demonstrates that the schools are being organized without sufficient teachers and the Vidya Volunteers who are the hired on *ad hoc* basis are filling the gap but they may not be committed to the job.

Profiles of the sample

AMC

The background characteristics of the members of the Academic Monitoring Committees shows that majority of them are women, middle aged, backward castes, low educated, married with 2 children, two of their children are in the schools, involved in one or other social groups, with membership in AMC for a longer period and half of them are trained.

Community representatives/educated youth

In the case of community representatives and educated youth, majority of them are in men, middle aged, backward castes, school educated, married

with 2 children enrolled in school, having membership in one or other social group.

Teachers

The teachers involved in the study are men, middle aged, backward castes, graduate with B.Ed qualification, married, travelling 2-5 KMs every-day, using motor cycle or bus for transport, 10 years of experience and working in the current school for more than 2 years. The background characteristics of all the three groups indicate that the sample was drawn from the universe as true representatives of the groups.

Awareness about the academic and non-academic activities

AMC

Majority of the members are frequently visiting the schools and have knowledge about the infrastructural facilities available in the schools, low cooperation extended by the community in strengthening the infrastructure of the school, satisfied about the teacher student ratio, students are regular to the school and the community has supported the school in increasing the student's attendance, knowledge about academic calendar and its implementation, teachers are informing the parents about the progress of their children and parents are also enquiring with the teachers about the progress of their children, utilization of AV aids during teaching and correcting the homework assigned to the children, conduct of unit tests, organization of drill classes and games and sports. The committee members also noted that the school is conducting regular health checkup camps, organizing competitions such as quiz, celebration of national important days and the members are also participating in such events, having knowledge about the grants received by the schools from the Government and the extent of grants received by the school and its utilization. Further, they informed that only 15.78 percent of the sample indi-

cated that the community has contributed for the infrastructural development of the school such as classrooms, black boards, seating facility, electric appliances, drinking water, toilet, play-ground, sports material etc., stop-gap arrangement during the absence of teachers by the community, contributing teaching learning materials to the schools, kind of contribution is in the form of service followed by kind and in very few cases, money has been donated for a particular cause. On the whole, it can be concluded that the participation of the community in resource mobilization is not significant.

Educated youth and community

Majority of the sample accepted that the community is co-operating with the schools in providing physical and infrastructural facilities required for the school, they have knowledge about the adequacy of the teachers, regularity of the students, community support to the schools in increasing the students' attendance, teaching, regularity of the teachers and their interactions with the parents and parents are enquiring about the ward's progress with the teachers. The teachers are using AV aids during the teaching, assigning the home works, correcting the home works, conducting regular classes, organizing games and sports. The community is requesting the teachers to conduct extra classes for the educationally backward children and their participation in the activities organized at the schools and the nationally important days. The teachers are taking adequate measures to improve its quality and to make it as attractive as possible for the children. Three fourths of the sample informed that they have enquired with the teachers about the grants that the school has received. Further, one third of the sample is aware that the teachers have accepted the donations from the community for the development of the school. In the case of expenditure incurred, about 60 percent of the sample has enquired with the teachers about the expenditure incurred out of the grants received by the school. 57.83 percent are aware that the community has sup-

ported the school in creating infrastructural facilities. Further, 29.17 percent informed that they too contributed towards teaching learning materials required by the schools. The form of contribution made by the community shows that it is in terms of services (52.17%) followed by the materials (40.50%). The schools have also received contributions in the form of cash. On the whole, it is clear from the community and educated that the schools are being supported by the community in the areas of creation of infrastructure, enriching the teaching learning materials and also supporting the school activities through services and by supplying the required materials.

Teachers

The schools have AMC members ranging between less than 10 to more than 26 members. The membership in the AMCs shows that 86.67 percent of the teachers indicated that they are the members in AMCs and 12.33 percent indicated that they are nothing to do with the AMCs. Further, two thirds of the teachers (63%) indicated that they have undergone training for conducting the AMC meetings and 37 percent indicated that they have not exposed to such training programme. The duration of the training was found to be 3 days in the case of 97.67 percent and for rest of them it is more than 3 days. The teachers also indicated that (63.67%) the members are attending the meetings regularly. On the other hand, 36.33 percent of them felt that they are not regular to the meetings. The reasons given by them for the irregular attendance of the members are personal work, seasonal work, agriculture, labour and migration for employment. The number of AMC meetings conducted in the schools for the last 3 months are ranged between 1 to 3 i.e., 13.67 percent of the schools have organized AMC once in the last 3 months and one third of them have organized two times in the last 3 months. 55.33 percent of the teachers felt that the community is extending its co-operation in creating the facilities required in the schools.

Regularity of the students and teachers

AMCs

Half of the sample felt that there is awareness among the community about the education and two thirds of them felt that the community has participated in the enrollment drive of the children. The efforts of the community have yielded the enrollment of about ten children in each school (53.77%) and encountered problems during the enrollment drive of the children, 83.11 percent of them indicated that they have not shown any gender bias during the enrollment. The Academic Monitoring Committee members also made efforts to increase the attendance of the children in the school and motivated the parents to send their children to the schools on regular basis (67.89%). In spite of the above, the sample also accepted (29.11%) that there are dropouts in the vicinity of the school and they have made efforts to mainstream them (41.33%). The AMCs are aware about the teacher's leave co-teachers and vidya volunteers are found to be alternative source of teaching. Teachers are performing their functions effectively in terms of using AV aids while teaching, assigning the home work to the students, attending prayers, conducting additional classes and mingling with the community.

Educated youth/community

They have participated in the campaigns conducted for enrollment of the children, for increasing of the attendance, for creating awareness among the parents about the girls enrollment in the schools, mainstreaming of the dropout children. The credit of involving the community in the activities of the school largely goes to the teachers who have taken initiatives to involve the parents in the education promotion activities. The performance of the teacher as viewed by the community shows that 61.83 percent of the community is aware about the teachers' leave and the number of days availed for the

leave, the co-teacher is the main source of alternative arrangement during the absence of the teacher, followed by the co-teachers, teachers are using the AV aids during the teaching, providing notes to the students, assigning the home works, also attending the prayers and mingles with the community and also conducting additional classes for the educationally backward children. Further, the community also informed that the keys of the school will be left with the headmaster followed by teacher, student leader, attender, cook etc., Further, the sports materials will be under the supervision of the teachers and sometimes it has been left with the student leaders.

Teachers

Teachers informed that they are creating awareness among the parents about the importance of education for the children and involving them in the enrollment drives (98.33%), the community has actively participated (80.67%) in increasing the rate of attendance among the students who are not regular to the schools by participating in the drive taken up by the schools, they often (87.33%) have organized special drive for enrollment of girls in the schools, the community has co-operated in their efforts in mainstreaming the dropouts(89.00%), they are regular to the school, the co-teachers, Vidya Volunteers, headmaster and the teachers deputed from nearby schools are the source of alternative arrangement during their absence. In the case of headmasters, the co-teachers have maintained the schools followed by AMC members. In few cases, the classes have been handled by the student leaders. In order to improve their performance, the teachers are using A-V aids (98.67%), the teaching aids have been prepared by them followed by adopting the readymade aids. In majority of the cases, the keys of the school have been kept by the teachers themselves followed by cook of the mid-day-meal. The teachers are adopting and following the time table and also following the school calendar during the beginning of the year. The sports and games material have been

kept in the school but, it is under the control of one of the senior students who is responsible for giving and taking back from the students. Almost all the teachers are assigning the home work (98.33%) and they are correcting the assignments with signature. In the case of the teaching method adopted by teachers shows that majority of the teachers are adopting group teaching (78.00%) followed by class teaching.

Community participation in managing the schools

AMCs

Majority of the AMC members are aware about the mid-day-meal programme. The number of students availing the mid-day-meal shows that 50 percent of the sample indicated that about 25 students are getting benefit from the programme followed by 27.22 percent, indicated that 51 and above students are getting benefit. 30 percent indicated that self-help groups are involved in preparing the food followed by different agencies (22.19%). With regard to the co-operation extended by the community in the case of mid-day-meal shows that about 20 percent indicated that the community is supporting at school level in the areas of cooking, distribution, managing the children, supply of firewood, cleaning of vessels etc., It is understood from the above, that the community is also supplying the provisions to the school for the cooking purpose and distributing special items on special days for the benefit of the students. More than 93.57 percent of them expressed their satisfaction towards the programme and its quality (88.31%), adequacy of funds (69.28%) and adequacy and quality of food (81.65%). The above clearly demonstrates that the mid-day-meal programme is a grand success as per the AMC members and at the same time, there is a dearth of community participation in the programme. Hence, there is a need to create awareness about the need for participation of the community in the programme for its successful implementation.

Educated youth/community

The responses shows that the teachers were made all the efforts to invite the community people for the activities undertaken in the schools such as organizing sports, prize distribution, discussion about the progress of the children, creation of physical facilities, inviting the educated to deliver lectures, procuring the teaching learning materials and in organizing the educational tours. With regard to the Mid-day-meals, more than 95 percent of the sample felt that they are aware about the programme, the range of the children availing the programme is about 25, other than school agencies such as private agencies, self help groups etc., are preparing the food, community is co-operating in preparation of the food, the community is extending its support by providing firewood, distribution of food, supervising the preparation, donating vegetables and special items etc.

Teachers

The teachers have invited the community for the activities organized at the schools, informing about the children's performance and interacting with the parents. The teachers revealed that the community is has co-operated the schools in acquiring the land for the schools, donations, services for the constructed buildings, electrification, water pumps, arranging fans, distribution of eatables, prizes, construction of girls toilets etc., AV aids for the teaching. With regard to the mid-day-meal programme, the teachers informed that the community is helping the school in preparation and distribution of the food. Further, they informed that it has extended its suggestions for improving the quality of food, distributed the plates and glasses, sweets, fruits, provisions, etc.

Role of community in mainstreaming the disability

AMCs

About 57.56 percent of the members are aware about the presence of differently abled school aged children in the village, three fourths of them enrolled these children in the schools, they got parent's co-operation in enrolling these children in the schools. Further, only 14 percent indicated that they have barrier free environment at the schools, the type of facilities are special teachers, tri-cycles and ramp. The peer group support for these children is found to be more in the aspects of treating them equal, supplying the food to their seats, mingling with them, carrying their bags, helping them in maintaining themselves etc.

Educated youth and community

60 percent of the community indicated that the prevailing of school aged differently abled children in their village and their enrollment in the school. 30.50 percent of the sample indicated that the schools are providing facilities required for these children and not by the community. The peer group support is high for differently abled children and teachers are taking adequate care.

Teachers

58 percent of the teachers indicated that the differently abled children are enrolled in the school, able to create additional facilities (34%), there is no community support in creating facilities (62.5%), peer group and teacher's support is there in the school for the differently abled children.

Role of community in creating conducive environment

AMCs

The community can create awards for the meritorious students to increase the competitive spirit among the students, regular interaction of the teachers with the parents to improve the performance of the students, increase the co-operation of community in mainstreaming the dropouts, attendance of the students, participation of the community in the academic activities, handling of the classes by the community, monitoring the facilities and the regularity of the teachers by the community will enhance the learning environment of the schools.

Educated youth/community

The community is participating in the school activities in terms of parents interaction with the teachers, community involvement in the school activities, distribution of awards to the meritorious students by the community, increased attendance of the students, timely provision of mid-day-meal, the regular parent teacher meetings, community monitoring has lead to the regular attendance of teachers and all these are reflected in increasing the efficiency of the schools. The perception of the youth and community about the functioning of the schools will go a long way in strengthening the bond between the education and community.

Teachers

The teachers have accepted that the community participation in terms of parent-teacher meetings, participation in school activities, increased competitiveness among the students and school efficiency, increased attendance, quality of teaching learning, etc. have significant impact on the performance of the schools. At the same time, the teachers have also accepted that the community has not contributed for procuring the required teaching learning

aids, mainstreaming of the dropouts, utilization of the educated manpower in the village, in providing mid-day-meal in time and the attendance of the teachers.

Problems of the community in management of the schools

AMCs

The AMC members have checked only important problems of the community in managing the schools. However, it appears that, inadequate monitoring of the higher authorities, motivating the students through lectures, poverty of the parents, inadequate AV aids are found to be major problems of the community in managing the schools

Educated youth/community

The important problems attributed by the community and educated youth are supply of books to the students, inadequate physical facilities, grants, A-V aids and class rooms. Further, they also noticed that due to lack of regular monitoring of the schools by the higher authorities, spending the school grants, inconvenient location of the schools, lack of parent support to the mid-day-meal scheme, parents' apathy towards education, lack of academic environment, poor surroundings of the school, lack of interest among the students, motivating the students through expert lectures, inadequate teachers, political involvement etc., are some of the important problems.

Teachers

The teachers were of the opinion that poverty of the parents is an obstacle for their children. In the case of management of the schools, the teachers opined that inadequate monitoring of the schools by the higher authorities is and felt that inadequate funds for the development of the schools. Inadequate involvement of parents in the mid-day-meal scheme, political involve-

ment, lack of educative environment etc., is also affecting the involvement of the community in management of the schools. Further, two thirds of the teachers felt that the buildings are not adequate for running the classes to the students and half of them felt that there is no adequate teaching learning materials and facilities for maintaining them.

Recommendations

(A) The stakeholders of the schools should be involved in all the academic and non-academic activities of the schools.

(B) The Academic Monitoring Committee meetings should be organized in an effective manner and the members' participation should be elicited.

(C) The school should publicize the grant position and invite the suggestions of the community for its utilization.

(D) Community should be involved in identifying the community resources relevant to the schools and efforts should be made to utilize them in co-operation with the community.

(E) Creation of awareness about the quality of education provided, infrastructural facilities available, quality of manpower available in the Government schools in the community and it should be encouraged to enroll their children in the Government schools

(F) There is a need to monitor the regularity of the teachers in the schools by the higher authorities.

(G) The community should take the responsibility in implementing the mid-day-meal scheme.

(H) The headmasters / teachers should devote their time to create awareness in the community about its role in management of the schools.

(I) Community should be encouraged to contribute liberally their services, materials and money for improving the quality of the environment in the schools.

(J) Community should be encouraged to take initiatives to create barrier free environment in the schools for the differently abled children.

NOTES

1. *Learning-teaching problems of tribal children and development of strategies* Institution of Media Studies, Bhubaneswar, Orissa, 2077; *Report on feedback analysis on Teleconference Programmes*. Institution of Media Studies, Bhubaneswar, Orissa, 2007; *Involvement of VECs in the quality aspects of elementary education*. Institution of Media Studies, Bhubaneswar, Orissa, 2007; *Assessing capacity of VEC and SMC to manage SSA programmes with special reference to ECCE, MDM and financial management*. J.P.S Associates Pvt. Ltd, New Delhi, 2006.

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