

Problems and Issues of Primary Education in Odisha

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ABSTRACT

To realize the importance of elementary education government now implementing several schemes and programs, with an aim of equitable access of education for all children at primary level irrespective of their caste, class, race, gender and place of origin. Still several children in our country are far away from efficiency, equitability and standardized pattern of education even if they continue their schooling. So many problems and issues are affecting the quality of primary education. In this context, the study was conducted to identify the problems and issues of primary education in government and private primary schools in terms of physical infrastructure *i.e.* school gate, number of permanent buildings, number of classrooms, play ground, number of playing instruments, drinking water facility, toilet facility, electricity and academic infrastructure *i.e.* library facility, computer facility, number of teachers, number of teaching aids, separate office and common room, and students' educational performance. The study has taken the interview of teachers and parents of the school going children about their perception and satisfaction on educational curriculum of schools and the performance of their children in the school. Interview schedule and observation method were used as the instruments of data collection. Total 112 respondents were selected for purpose of the study including six Head teachers/ Principals, 36 teachers and 70 parents of fifth standard school going children. The data collected through the primary source were analyzed by using SPSS. The study found that several problems and issues are affecting the quality of primary education in schools. While government schools have better physical infrastructural facilities but imparting very poor quality education in terms of the performance of the students. On the other hand the infrastructural facilities available in private schools are not comparatively better and running with very inadequate infrastructure more specifically, untrained teachers and high cost of education which forces the poor parents not to send their children to private schools. The type of school in which the child continues is associated with the status symbol of the parents.

Key Words : Primary education, Problems of education, Government schools, Private schools

INTRODUCTION

Education in general and primary education in particular occupies a crucial significance in the Developmental discourse. Due to the strategic significance education, it is placed as one of the necessary components of Human Development Index. In the age of globalization, education is regarded as one of the most effective instrument of National Policy (Salam and Sayem, 2011). As education serves as foundational to global stability, the development of multi-cultural awareness from an early

age may integrate ideologies sourced from various societies in order to arrive at well-balanced conclusion regarding issues that surround the world as a whole. With globalization some of the challenges for knowledge, education and learning will provide today's learners the ability to be more familiar and comfortable with abstract concepts and uncertain situations (Gupta, 2017). Every nations are now trying to give their best to educate their citizens in all possible modes (Khan, 2010). To foster educational accessibility Information and Communication Technology also now playing very important role.

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However, concerns related to the quality of education question the ability to cope with the demands of a globalized world.

With an aim to provide quality education and its equitable access to all section of the country and the vision of the Ministry is to realize India's human resource potential to its fullest in the education sector with equity and inclusion, the government is implementing a number of schemes and programmes (Press Information Bureau, MHRD, Govt. of India, July 18.7.18, 15:33 IST). A number of schemes and programmes have been formulated by government to universalize primary education such as- Operation blackboard, DPEP, Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan, Mid-Day Meal Scheme etc. behind these programmes the government has aim to improve educational status by increasing enrolment, retention, and nutritional status of children in primary classes. Ensuring universal primary education by 2015 is a part of Millennium Developmental Goals, of which India is also a signatory (Bhalotra and Zamora, 2006).

Odisha is a state where one can find increasing enrolment rates at primary education in recent decades. The state government now more obligated to Universalization of primary education in the state with the assistance of central government. To fulfill the need of Upper Primary Education, there has been expanded a number of primary and upper primary stage of school education in all over Odisha especially, in rural or backward areas. Total 35928 Primary and 20427 Upper Primary schools have in Odisha to provide education at elementary level in Odisha. With the provision of Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan (SSA) more 491 new primary and 490 new upper primary schools have established for the expansion of primary education. Total 66 lakh children of the age group of 6 to 14 years are in-school out of them SC children constitute 12 lakh and ST children constitute 17 lakh. Again 1.87 lakh children of the 6 to 14 years of age group are out-of school. Out of which 0.3 lakh are SC and 0.9 lakh are ST.

To access the quality education for all the state government has relaxed the norm for establishment of new primary schools at KBK district and Tribal Sub Plan areas in the habitats of having at least 25 children in the 6-14 years age group. And also government is focusing on the opening up new primary schools in village areas, hilly areas, river areas within one K.M distance. Free text book also provided by government to students in schools (government and aided) of all book including

class-VIII. (Dept. of School and Mass Education) (2011 Census), (D- 28/11/19).

Still quality is a big issue in primary education. Despite the focus of the government on improving the quality of inputs provided in schools, the efforts seem to be focused on enrolment and not on children's learning. There are several hurdles in achieving the target of primary education. On the one hand primary education is considered as a key to secure future and on the other hand lack of awareness among parents and teachers, negligence, lack of resources available in schools, distance of school these are the some basic issues, which kept children away from schools (Khan, 2010).

Literature Review:

Bajpai and Goyal (2014), their paper entitled as "Primary Education in India : Quality and Coverage Issues". The main objectives of their study to analyze the silent features of primary education in India as well as educational outcomes, both in terms of quality and quantity. The study uses various data sources and secondary research. The study found that the government has taken large step towards the spread of primary education. However it has become a cliché to say that a lot remain to be done. The poor girls, rural inhabitants and members of Scheduled Tribes and Scheduled Castes still face formidable barriers in acquiring basic education.

Shishigu (2016) conducted a research on "Teacher as a Key Role Player to Induce Quality Education: Challenges and Prospects". The paper aimed at examining the main challenges faced by primary schools in Addis Abada. The study selected two public primary schools in Addis Abada. A structured and semi structured interview was conducted with teacher participants and also an open and closed ended questionnaire was administrated. The study found that salaries of teachers are very low which is not sufficient to meet their daily needs. Teachers were also dissatisfied with the absence of good governance and school administration because of weak effectiveness to address teacher's demands. So, teachers greatest satisfaction can improve the quality of primary education.

Hashami (2016), published a paper titled as "The Main Problems of The students at Primary Level in Rural Areas of Tehsil: Ferozwala, District, Sheikhpura-Pakistan. The paper aimed to examine the main problems of the students at primary education level in rural areas of Tehsil: Ferozwala, District, Sheikhpura. The study selected only 100 students for interview. Out

of 100, 50 were male and 50 were female. The study found that several problems like lack of financial support from parents, inadequate facilities in schools and some other issues are the main reasons, which create hurdle to get quality education. In this regard most of students are deprived from getting the basic education.

METHODOLOGY

The study used both qualitative and quantitative methods. The qualitative data from field were collected through voice record and hand note and the quantitative data were analyzed and presented in tabular forms. The present study was based on both primary and secondary sources of information. The primary sources of information include the collection of data from the respondents through fieldwork with the help of interview schedule and observation method. The secondary source of information were collected through books, journals, articles, published and unpublished research work, internet browsing etc. The data collected through the primary source were analyzed by using SPSS (Statistical Package of Social Science).

Sampling:

The study used sampling method to facilitate collection of representative data for study purpose. The present study has been selected six government and private schools in Basudevpur block of Bhadrak district of the state of Odisha. As per the availability of the population in above mentioned selected area, the researcher has purposively taken 112 respondents including 42 teachers and 70 parents of school going children. Due to lack of time the study has taken only the parents of fifth standard school going children. Most importantly the researcher has selected these samples purposively on the basis of non-probability sampling in general and purposive sampling in particular.

Data source:

Researcher used separate questions for interview of headmasters/ principals, teachers and parents. The heads were asked about their socio-economic background *i.e.* name, age, gender, caste, religion, qualification, teaching and management experience, income etc. The questions about physical and academic infrastructural facilities in school, school management, instructions, planning of daily activities, arrangement of extra-curricular activities in school, policies to run the school

and problems and issues in primary education and their suggestions to solve the emerging problems in quality of primary education etc. were also included in the interview schedule.

Teachers were also asked about their socio-economic background *i.e.* name, age, gender, caste, religion, qualification, teaching and management experience, income etc. class size, area of subjects, lesson planning, and home work routines, their responsibilities in school, their satisfaction, teachers' perceptions about the problems and issues in primary education in public and private schools and some suggestions to solve the problems.

Parents were questioned about the perceptions and satisfaction regarding the effective functioning of school. It included the questions about teaching-learning environment in school, students' performance in class, assigning daily home work from school, policy, conduct of examination, communication of results, school management, and teachers' dealing with students and parents, cleanliness and maintenance of school discipline, improvements of their children and the problems, issues of quality of primary education in school and how to solve those problems etc.

The researcher personally visited the above mentioned schools one by one and with the consent of school administration, started recording interviews from the principal / headmaster, teachers and the parents of school going children. However, interviews with parents were recorded at their homes after getting a prior appointment from them. It was not possible to record the interview of all the parents of the school going children. So, only parents of fifth class school going children for competency test were selected for interview.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The study has taken six schools including two government schools, two private Odia medium schools and two English medium schools. While government schools have good physical infrastructural facilities, lack the academic infrastructural facilities. Most of private schools have good academic facilities but running with inadequate physical infrastructural facilities. Present study found that most of schools are running with inadequate infrastructural facilities including physical infrastructural facilities such as, no school gate, boundary wall, permanent buildings, proper electricity facilities, drinking water facilities, separate toilet facilities for boys and girls, play ground, adequate playing instruments for

children, furniture etc. and academic facilities such as, lack of teachers, adequate teaching aids for all students, library facility, sufficient books, computer facility etc.

The study also collected opinion and perception of teachers and parents to identify the quality of education in public and private schools and the perception of teachers and parents on various problems and issues of quality of primary education. The study also made a comparison of educational performance of school going children. Most of public school teachers were satisfied with their job but not with their salary they paid. In case of government school, teachers are neither satisfied with their job nor with salary, so they are mostly dependent on other sources of income *i.e.* tuition. All private school teachers are assigned daily homework to students, they completed their syllabus in time, they are also used teaching aids in classroom, arranged class test, extra-curricular activities and teacher-parents meeting in a regular basis to create a studious atmosphere in school and to motivate students' for learning but these activities are not happening regularly in public schools. The study found that most of parents of private schools were satisfied with school educational standard, medium of instruction, administration and management of schools and also with the result of their child but most of public school parents were not satisfied with these factors. The study revealed a number of problems, issues and suggestions on quality of primary education emerged by teachers and parents of government and private schools.

Government Schools:

The study showed that Government schools have

large, spacious, permanent and according to standard school buildings. Teachers are permanent highly qualified and trained. Teachers are also highly paid by government. The school provides all infrastructural facilities including building, hall, furniture and utilities like electricity, water supply, toilet facilities and library etc. are provided and financed by government. The primary education is imparted there in totally free of cost. Basic problems in Government schools are that most of students there are belonging to middle and lower middle class families and also rural areas. So parents awareness level is very low there. Although schools are not providing daily homework for students, parents and teachers interaction also not happening there in regular manner. And educational performance also very low in government schools.

Private Schools :

Many private schools do not have large spacious and permanent buildings with small classrooms. Private schools have less qualified or untrained teachers. But the teaching method in private schools are really satisfactory for the parents. Homework is assigned and checked regularly. Guardian meetings are conducted regularly and the academic performances of the students were discussed with the parents and also suggestive measures of performance were discussed with the parents and the progress reports of the students were discussed. Students become more dependent and careless because of more attention of teacher. Private schools are profit-earning institutions; so these provide: education to those who have sound financial position. The number of the students in a particular classroom is below 40 and

Table 1 : Teacher's Opinion on Problems of Quality of Primary Education

Problems of Quality of Primary Education	Government Schools	Private Schools	Total
Lack of awareness among parents	2 (4.8%)	3 (7.1%)	5 (11.9%)
Blind believe among parents	0 (0.0%)	3 (7.1%)	3 (7.1%)
Political interference	1 (2.4%)	5 (11.9%)	6 (14.3%)
Non-academic involvement	2 (4.8%)	2 (4.8%)	4 (8.5%)
Students absenteeism in school	3 (7.1%)	1 (2.4%)	4 (8.5%)
Lack of educational support to the child	1 (2.4%)	1 (2.4%)	2 (4.8%)
Problem of no detention policy	1 (2.4%)	3 (7.1%)	4 (8.5%)
Lack of teaching and non teaching staff in school	1 (2.4%)	0 (0.0%)	1 (2.4%)
Lack of coordination between teachers and parents	1 (2.4%)	3 (7.1%)	4 (8.5%)
Poor SEC of the teachers	2 (4.8%)	1 (2.4%)	3 (7.1%)
Poor SEC of parents	1 (2.4%)	3 (7.1%)	4 (8.5%)
Inadequate infrastructure in school	0 (0.0%)	2 (4.8%)	2 (4.8%)
Total	15 (35.7%)	27 (64.3%)	42 (100%)

Source : Primary data

where the numbers of students are more, the class is divided into various sections which is not available in government schools.

The study made a review on teachers of both government and private schools about various problems for poor quality education in schools. Most of teachers said political interferences in school campus, lack of awareness among parents, lack of coordination between parents and teachers, no detention policy, some blind believe among parents, non academic involvement of teachers like, census survey, election duty etc. taking most of times of them. So these are the basic problems for low quality education imparting by primary schools.

The study also interviewed to parents of school going children in both government and private primary schools about various problems for imparting low quality education in schools. Parents also addressed several problems like,

most of government schools parents said there socio-economic background is not much satisfactory so they have not sufficient money to give better education to their children, then government school teacher's involvement in various non academic programs hamper educational activities in schools, political interference in school campus, lack of teachers in schools, inadequate infrastructure in schools, unsatisfactory teaching standards in schools etc. these are basic problems which affecting educational quality in schools.

The study showed several issues are responsible for low quality education. Gender issues, political issues, enrollment issues, economic issues, midday meal issue, political issues, caste issues and parental issues, these are primary issues which are affecting quality of primary education.

There is an ongoing debate that who are responsible

Table 2 : Teacher's Opinion on Problems of Quality of Primary Education

Problems of Primary Education	Public schools	Private schools	Total
Poor SEC of parents	3 (4.3%)	9 (12.9%)	12 (17.1%)
Teachers absenteeism	3 (4.3%)	1 (1.4%)	4 (5.7%)
Lack of teachers in school	2 (2.9%)	2 (2.9%)	4 (5.7%)
Non academic involvement of teachers	5 (7.1%)	2 (2.9%)	7 (10%)
Political interference	3 (4.3%)	12 (17.1%)	15 (21.4%)
Inadequate infrastructure	0 (0.0%)	5 (7.1%)	5 (7.1%)
Management issue	2 (2.9%)	2 (2.9%)	4 (5.7%)
Medium of instruction	0 (0.0%)	3 (4.3%)	3 (4.3%)
Lack of efficiency of teachers	4 (5.7%)	3 (4.3%)	7 (10%)
Unsatisfactory teaching standard in school	0 (0.0%)	2 (2.9%)	2 (2.9%)
Lack of financial aid	0 (0.0%)	5 (7.1%)	5 (7.1%)
No response	1 (1.4%)	1 (1.4%)	2 (2.9%)
Total	23 (32.9%)	47 (67.1%)	70 (100%)

Source: Primary data

Table 3 : Issues of Primary Education

Issues of Primary Education	Teacher's View			Parent's View		
	Government School	Private School	Total	Government School	Private School	Total
Gender issues	2 (4.8%)	1 (2.4%)	3 (7.1%)	2 (2.9%)	7 (10%)	9 (12.9%)
Caste issues	1 (2.4%)	5 (11.9%)	6 (14.3%)	4 (5.7%)	7 (10%)	11 (15.7%)
Economic issues	2 (4.8%)	7 (16.7%)	8 (19%)	6 (8.6%)	7 (10%)	13 (18.5%)
Enrolment issues	1 (2.4%)	5 (11.9%)	7 (16.7%)	1 (1.4%)	6 (8.6%)	7 (10%)
Attendance issues	3 (7.1%)	0 (0.0%)	3 (7.1%)	1 (1.4%)	5 (7.1%)	6 (8.6%)
Midday meal issues	4 (9.5%)	0 (0.0%)	4 (9.5%)	5 (7.1%)	3 (4.3%)	8 (11.4%)
Political issues	1 (2.4%)	4 (9.5%)	5 (11.9%)	1 (1.4%)	10 (14.3%)	11 (15.7%)
Parental issues	1 (2.4%)	5 (11.9%)	6 (14.3%)			
No response				3 (4.3%)	2 (2.9%)	5 (7.1%)
Total	15 (35.7%)	27 (64.3%)	42 (100%)	23(32.9%)	47 (67.1%)	70 (100%)

Source : Primary data

Table 4 : Responsible for the Poor Quality Education

Who is Responsible	Teacher's View			Parent's View		
	Government schools	Private schools	Total	Government schools	Private schools	Total
Government	4 (9.5%)	6 (14.3%)	10 (23.8%)	5 (7.1%)	12 (17.1%)	17 (24.3%)
Teachers	0 (0.0%)	1 (2.4%)	1 (2.4%)	6 (8.6%)	15 (21.4%)	21 (30%)
Parents	5 (11.9%)	7 (16.7%)	12 (28.6%)	0 (0.0%)	2 (2.9%)	2 (2.9%)
Both government and parents/ teacher	6 (14.3%)	7 (16.7%)	13 (31%)	8 (11.4%)	12 (17.1%)	20 (28.6%)
Both parents and teachers	0 (0.0%)	3 (7.1%)	3 (7.1%)	1 (1.4%)	2 (2.9%)	3 (4.3%)
No response				3 (4.3%)	2 (2.9%)	5 (7.1%)
All	0 (0.0%)	3 (7.1%)	3 (7.1%)	0 (0.0%)	2 (2.9%)	2 (2.9%)
Total	15 (35.7%)	27 (64.3%)	42 (100%)	23 (32.9%)	47 (67.1%)	70 (100%)

Source : Primary data

for imparting low quality education in schools. Parents are blaming to teachers and government and teachers are blaming government and parents. But question is who are really responsible for this? This is still a question mark.

Discussion and Conclusion :

India has been among the fastest-growing economics in the world in last decades. However, concerns related to the quality of education question the ability to cope with the demands of a globalized world. Despite the focus of the government on improving the quality of inputs provided in schools, a number of problems and issues are decreasing the quality of primary education. The study confounds that there is a stark differences in the availability and maintenance of infrastructural facilities *i.e.* buildings, school gate, number of classroom, furniture, electricity facilities, drink water, toilet, play ground, teaching and non teaching staff, library, computer facilities in public and private schools.

The study shows basically lack of awareness among parent's and teacher's is the main problem behind the poor quality education. Still education is very lag behind in most of rural areas. A healthy and literate family can strengthen the educational status of a child as well as a nation. So parents should change their old age beliefs and they should encourage their children to learn more and more. Most of families indirectly encouraging gender discrimination like they give more preference to their son than daughter. Other issues like, most of time teachers in schools give more importance to a specific group of students like, more talented students, higher caste or class students and boy students, these type of partial attitude of teachers harassed other students and create disparities among students. Strict rules should be taken by government against these types of partial attitudes. On

the other hand government should also give positive attitude towards the educational system of country. Only formulation of such programs and polices is not important but the proper implementation of those programs is most necessary. And government should always make reviews on the school curriculum like, on the matter of educational performances of both students' and teachers', recruitment of adequate teaching and non-teaching staff in schools, infrastructural facilities in schools, teacher's efficiency regarding study, should free them from any type of extra responsibilities.

There is a trending going on among parents to prefer private schools for their children. Which gives opportunity to private institutions to demand more and more money. No doubt private schools educational performance is good than government schools but their attitude towards society brings negative impacts. Most of times they are encouraging competition among students to give negative outlook towards government school student's. So, there is needed a strict review on this matter. Both government and private educational institution should go hand in hand. Because due to the vastness of population it is not possible for government to provide education alone and without government interfere a private sector cannot grow. So, a complementary attitude should be developed between government and private sector.

There is an increased demand for private players in education. Because government alone can't able to provide education to a large mass have led to grater demand for private schools. There also private schools are imparting very good quality of primary education. Many parents are now preferring the private schools because they are English medium that would provide a competitive edge to their wards in the globalized economy. Along with other public services, involvement of the

private sector in education is a growing trend in many developing countries. India has experienced a tremendous growth of public and private schools in developing countries over the past decades (Joshee, 2014). These private schools are now like a trend of hope for parents which gives a guarantee of their child's higher educational achievement. Because generally it showed that private schools are more effective than public schools. So now low income rural households are also preferred private schools.

Both public and private sector has taken responsibility for the Universalization of primary education. The need of private sector in the provision of education was again realized. Because government is not able to provide quality education to a wide spread population. Education as the concurrent list of constitution not only central and state government have involved to providing education also private sector has taken an important part in the provision of education in recent decades. Privatization in primary education is closely related to the concurrent reevaluation of decentralization since delegation of educational responsibilities to private organizations has many of the same advantages and disadvantages has many of the same policy issues as does delegation to local communities (James, 1987). Many research have also showed the privatization of education strengthens the quality of education. Which meets the ability of learning and develops the skills and knowledge. Privatization of education brings the global sharing of knowledge, skills and intellectual assets that are necessary to multiple developments at different levels.

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