

Major Issues and Challenges in Secondary Education under RMSA in Himachal Pradesh and Suggestive Measures for Further Improvement

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Abstract: The main aim of present investigation was to assess the major issues and challenges in secondary education under RMSA in Himachal Pradesh and suggestive measures for further improvement. For realizing the objectives of the study, survey was carried out of 85 government secondary schools and two to three teachers from each sampled school approached to ascertain their views about the implementation of Rashtriya Madhyamik Shiksha Abhiyan (RMSA) which were selected by employing procedure of cluster and multistage sampling along with random and purposive sampling technique. 233 teachers trained under RMSA were selected by employing incidental sampling procedure. The secondary school teachers enlisted major issues and challenges in effective implementation of RMSA and suggested provisions for improvement of secondary education in Himachal Pradesh. In the concluding part of the paper, findings have been discussed.

Key Words: Rashtriya Madhyamik Shiksha Abhiyan (RMSA), Secondary Education.

1. INTRODUCTION:

Since Universalisation of Elementary Education has become a Constitutional mandate, it is absolutely essential to push this vision forward to move towards Universalisation of Secondary Education, which has already been achieved in a large number of developed countries and several developing countries. As part of the central government's commitment to make secondary education of good quality available, accessible and affordable to all young persons, the Government of India in partnership with the State Governments has launched "Rashtriya Madhyamik Shiksha Abhiyan" during 11th five year plan to enhance access and improve quality of education at secondary stage. Now, it is important to all who are concerned with secondary education to know the extent to which Rashtriya Madhyamik Shiksha Abhiyan (RMSA) has achieved its objectives in terms of both quality as well as quantity. It is necessary to find out the improvements that have been made in infrastructural facilities and academic support in secondary schools. It also becomes essential to ascertain the improvements in teachers' efficiency and skills as a result of training provided to them under Rashtriya Madhyamik Shiksha Abhiyan (RMSA). An effort in the present study will be made to examine the developments that have taken place in curriculum transaction procedures and learning level of students on account of academic support provided under Rashtriya Madhyamik Shiksha Abhiyan (RMSA). These are the areas which require thorough and deep exploration. The present study is an effort to evaluate the improvements made in the quality of secondary education under Rashtriya Madhyamik Shiksha Abhiyan(RMSA). It will also try to find out the loopholes which are acting as obstacles in the noble cause of universalisation of secondary education. Hence, present study will be helpful for educational administrators, teachers, students and all others who are concerned with high quality secondary education.

2. REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE:

Neji et al. (2014) conducted a study on evaluating adequacy of laboratory facilities on students' academic performance in secondary school in Lalabar, Nigeria and findings of this study showed that laboratory facilities are adequately less

than expectation. Study also revealed that adequacy laboratory facilities do not significantly contribute to the variance in students' academic performance in Chemistry. Gunjeet Mahiwal and Dr. Parmod Kumar (2017) conducted a study on difficulties being faced by secondary school teachers during implementation of Rashtriya Madhyamik Shiksha Abhiyan in Jammu division. Descriptive survey method was used. Out of ten districts of jammu division, Only three districts-Jammu, Samba and Kathua were selected randomly using the lottery method and then 150 teachers (out of 30 sampled schools) that is 50 from each district were included in the sample on the bases of their availability and readiness to respond were selected. Tool used were self developed questionnaire to know the difficulties /problems faced by teachers during implementation of Rashtriya Madhyamik Shiksha Abhiyan. For the purpose of analysis of data, statistical techniques employed were the frequency, percentage and quartile deviation. The main findings of the study were: (i) Delay in receiving in schools grants, (ii) Duration of teacher training is not adequate as per the requirement, (iii) Non-functional guidance and counselling cell in schools, (iv) Non-teaching work hampers the teaching responsibilities, (v) Shortage of funds in schools to fulfil the needs of the school, (vi) Lack of health services and first aids facility in school, (vii) Non availability of guidelines regarding utilization of school grants, (viii) In convenient time of holding in-service training programmes, (ix) Lack of serious efforts from the central and state government for bringing out of school children and dropouts back to school, (x) No proper monitoring of in-service teacher training programmes. Akanksha Kapoor and De.Mohd.Ali Iman (2019) conducted a study on present status of Infrastructure facilities in RMSA schools in central Uttar Pradesh. Descriptive survey method was used. The population of the research includes the secondary schools in central Uttar Pradesh that mainly includes Barabaki, Hardoi, Kanpur, Lucknow and Sitapur. Checklist was used as tool to check infrastructural status, where as the reports from the project approval board of RMSA are also taken into consideration; to analyze the data percentage method has been used. Major findings of the study were: (i) The gross enrolment (GER) has increased from 67.75% in 2015-16 to 68.45% in 2016-17. The net enrolment ratio (NER) has increased from 41.98% in 2015-16 to 43.14% in 2016-17, (ii) Basic needs of the students like science laboratory, library, toilet, drinking water studied year wise and conditions were not satisfactory in the year 2011-12, (iii) There are only three schools which provide all these basic needs to the students and their staff, and (iv) In the year 2013-14 the situation has not improved much. One school of Barabaki district has to be equipped with all facilities where as in 2017-18 many schools which are approved by the government the work are still in progress. Major reasons for the physical facilities were: (i) Lack of funds, (ii) Delay in receiving the funds, (iii) Non-availability of guidelines, as to how to utilize the school grant.

3. STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM :

To identify Major Issues and Challenges in Secondary Education under RMSA in Himachal Pradesh and Suggest Measures for further Improvement.

3.1 OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

- To identify major issues and challenges in effective implementation of RMSA at secondary level.
- To identify suggestions of secondary school teacher's for improving the status and effectiveness of RMSA in Himachal Pradesh.
- To identify suggestions of secondary school teacher's to improve the status of secondary education in Himachal Pradesh.
- To analyze the opinions of secondary school teacher's about community participation in education.

3.2 DELIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

The present study was delimited to following aspects:

- The study will be delimited only to four districts of Himachal Pradesh which will be selected by employing cluster and random sampling technique.
- The study will be further delimited to 50% educational blocks from each of sampled four districts. The selection of educational blocks will be done by random sampling technique.
- The study will be delimited only to govt. High/Senior Secondary Schools where Rashtriya Madhyamik Shiksha Abhiyan is being implemented.

3.3 OPERATIONAL DEFINITIONS OF KEY TERMS:

Rashtriya Madhyamik Shiksha Abhiyan (RMSA): It is a centrally sponsored scheme launched in March, 2009 by Govt. of India with a vision of making secondary education of good quality available, accessible and affordable to all

young persons in the age group of 14-18 years. The objective of the scheme is to achieve the target of Universal Secondary Education (USE) by 2017 and improve quality of education at secondary stage with ensuring equity.

Secondary Education: It connotes the education of the children in the age group of 15-16 years studying in 9th and 10th classes in Govt. High/ Senior Secondary Schools affiliated to Himachal Pradesh Board of School Education, Dharamshala.

3.4 SAMPLE

In the present study teachers of secondary schools of four district namely; Hamirpur, Bilaspur, Kullu and Chamba of Himachal Pradesh constituted population. There are twelve districts in Himachal Pradesh. The sample consisted of 233 secondary school teachers out of 85 government secondary schools selected from 16 educational blocks of four sampled districts of Himachal Pradesh.

3.5 RESEARCH TOOLS USED

Questionnaire developed by investigator for secondary school teacher's to seek their views regarding effectiveness of Rashtriya Madhyamik Shiksha Abhiyan (RMSA) in secondary schools of Himachal Pradesh. Questionnaire concentrated on problems in appropriate implementation of various interventions under RMSA and suggestions to improve the status of secondary education in the state.

4. METHOD AND PROCEDURE

Keeping in view the nature and objectives of the present study, "Survey technique" under Descriptive Method of Research was employed.

4.1 SAMPLING TECHNIQUE

Procedure of cluster and multistage sampling along with random and purposive sampling followed. Procedure of incidental sampling applied to select teachers.

4.2 STATISTICAL TECHNIQUES USED

The following statistical techniques were used for the analysis of data:

- Frequency count & percentage analysis
- Content analysis for the open ended items (including logical and inductive analysis)

5. ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION OF DATA :

5.1 Major issues and challenges in effective implementation of RMSA at secondary level

In sampled secondary schools of four districts in Himachal Pradesh, major issues and challenges in effective implementation of RMSA as reported by sampled secondary school teachers in order of priority were; (I) Lack of time, proper infrastructure, staff and land (26.46%),(II) Improper time of organising in-service teacher trainings and were not effective(23.81%),(III)Delay in receiving funds and no guidelines regarding utilisation of school grants(17.99%),(iv)Less participation of SMC members and no training regarding implementation of RMSA activities(13.23%),(v) No detention policy and scholastic portion of teaching learning process suffer(6.88%),(vi) Assignment of non-teaching work to teachers(5.82%),(vii)Overcrowded classes and lack of additional classrooms &Need of ICT training to teachers(each5.29%),(viii) Transportation and halt problem at training centre(3.17%), and (ix)Lack of labs(ICT, Vocational, Science), overhead projector and physical education teacher(2.65%).

5.2 Suggestions of Secondary School Teacher's for Improving the Status and Effectiveness of RMSA in Himachal Pradesh

Suggestions of sampled secondary school teacher's of sampled four district in Himachal Pradesh for improving the status and effectiveness of RMSA in order of gravity were; (i)Effective and less number of seminars/workshops should be organised by trained resource persons using teaching aids at beginning of session and facility should be provided at block level(39.73%),(ii) Provide funds and fund management training to teachers at beginning of session(18.72%),(iii)

Construction, repair and maintenance work should be handed over to other independent department like; HPPWD,BSNL(civil wing), HIMUDA, HPSIDC and teachers' should be free from non-teaching work(16.89%),(iv) Frame child centred Syllabus/Activities and provide subject oriented training to teachers(7.76%),(v) Ensure proper monitoring and increase SMC members participation in implementation of RMSA activities(6.85%),(vi) Improvement in infrastructure and sanction of funds should be according to strength and after proper inspection of school& Basic requirements like ICT lab, science lab, playground, physical education teacher and accommodation for halt at training centre should be fulfilled (each 6.39%),(vii) Appointment of teaching and non-teaching staff should be on regular basis selected through Himachal Pradesh Public Service Commission (4.57%),(viii)Impart ICT based training to teachers (2.28%), and (ix) Books and MDM should be provided to every student from class 9th-12th(0.91%).

5.3 Suggestions of Secondary School Teachers to Improve the Status of Secondary Education in Himachal Pradesh

Following provisions were suggested by sampled secondary school teachers in order of priority for the improvement of secondary education in Himachal Pradesh.

(i) CCE or Grading System should be abolished and curriculum should be according to age and learning level of students (55.70%),(ii)Free teachers from non-teaching work and increase SMC participation by fixing parents accountability (21.49%),(iii) Availability of teachers selected through Public Service Commission and infrastructure with ICT laboratory should be appropriate (11.84%),(iv) Update syllabus and take extra classes of weak students (11.40%), (v) Make two tier educational systems i.e. 1st-8th class & 9th-12th class, supplementing 1st class admission from nursery class and provide all subject teachers from 1st -8th class (9.65%), (vi) All in-service training programmes should be conducted at the beginning of session and selection criteria of resource persons should be authentic (7.46%), (vii) Teacher taught ratio should be as per NCTE norms i.e. 1:30 (3.51%),(viii) Interstate training sessions and better sports facility along with ground should be maintained (2.63%), and (ix) Provide RMSA funds timely and ensure proper utilisation (1.75%).

5.4 Opinion of Secondary School Teacher about Community Participation in Education

Sampled secondary school teachers provided a number of opinions about community participation in education, its strength and weaknesses which are as follow:

Almost all sampled secondary school teachers (99.14%) were of the views that SMC meetings were organised monthly and 98.71% sampled teachers accepted that meetings were organised after every examination of students. Similarly a very near to 100% sampled teachers (97%) were agreed with cooperation of community members in organising sports, cultural and other activities like providing active cooperation in construction work being carried out in schools.

Again almost all the sampled teachers (98.71%) were of the opinion that members of community and school management committee were provided special trainings for the implementation of schemes run by government and 94.85% teachers advocated that SMC members effectively monitor the activities being carried out in the school.

Further a very large sampled teacher (97.42%) were of the opinion that members of the school management committee monitor proper utilisation of grants received from Government/Local authority or some other sources. Sampled teachers reported weaknesses or strength regarding co-operation provided by community in secondary schools which are as following; **Strength:** (i) Active participation of community in all schools activities reduces burden of teachers and understand school problems easily (14.91%), (ii) Problems regarding construction work and teaching methods were solved (14.04%), (iii) Regular monitoring of school activities, understanding student's problems and their removal takes place (8.33%) ,(iv) Increased co-ordination between school and staff helps to diagnose and remedy of social problems of students and social development takes place (7.46%), (v) It becomes easier to implement various government programmes for schools and by good communication, talk to parents of weak students to motivate them & Strengthen quality education by participation and suggestions (each 6.58%),(vi) School activities run good by community members co-operation and improves teaching learning process (5.26%), (vii) School problems in Hard/Tribal areas were solved and our efforts for betterment of school were increased (2.63%), (viii) Parents come to know about students examination results as well as their participation in co-curricular activities and teacher becomes accountable towards good result of students (1.32%).

Weaknesses; (i)Less participation of community members results in low learning level of students(25%), (ii) School management committee(SMC) members have no concern for school activities, teachers respect but want to take only

school grants sanctioned for school development (5.26%), (iii) Due to busy schedule of parents and organisation of less RMSA awareness programmes, School Management Committee(SMC) and selected panchayat members consider burden of monthly meetings and this hinders the progress of the school (3.07%), (iv) Political influenced members of community and negative attitude of peoples towards school create problems & Due to knowledge gap between parents and teachers, community members don't care student's study at home and create problems in the path of students achievements (each 2.63%), (v) Some less educated parents are not interested in knowing their wards performance, parent's help to teachers is less and teacher can't give good result in this situation & Less participation of School management committee (SMC) members, lack of monitoring school activities by SMC and got no feedback about their wards progress (each 2.19%), (vi) Only parents of intelligent students comes in meetings and participation of parents in teaching learning process is zero (1.75%), (vii) Parents involve student's in agricultural work at home, don't know their wards progress and their learning level effects & Only school management committee(SMC) members participate in meetings and co-curricular activities and this deteriorate quality education(each 1.32%).

6. MAJOR FINDINGS OF THE STUDY

(i) Effective and less number of seminars/workshops should be organised by trained resource persons using teaching aids at beginning of session and facility should be provided at block level, (ii) Provide funds and fund management training to teachers at beginning of session, (iii) Construction, repair and maintenance work should be handed over to other independent department like; HPPWD and teachers should be free from non-teaching work, (iv) CCE or Grading System should be abolished and curriculum should be according to age and learning level of student's, (v) Free teachers from non-teaching work and increase SMC participation by fixing parents accountability, (vi) Availability of teachers selected through Public Service Commission and infrastructure with ICT laboratory should be appropriate, (vii) Active participation of community in all schools activities reduces burden of teachers and understand school problems easily, (viii) School Management Committee (SMC) solve problems regarding construction work and teaching methods, (ix) Regular monitoring of school activities, understanding student's problems and their removal takes place by active participation of community.

7. EDUCATIONAL IMPLICATIONS

In the light of the findings of the present study, the following educational implications can be laid down:

(i) Education department should conduct effective and less number of seminars/workshops by trained resource persons using teaching aids at beginning of session and facility should be provided at block level so that students got benefitted, (ii) The school grants should be provided to schools timely and the guidelines regarding utilisation of funds should be made available to all schools so that funds can be utilised properly, (iii) District project officer should hand over Construction, repair and maintenance work to other independent department like PWD or construction company, (iv) Abolish CCE or Grading System and frame curriculum according to age and learning level of students, (v) The teacher should not be engaged in non teaching assignments because these activities hamper the teaching responsibilities of the teacher, and fix parents accountability towards their wards, (vi) Select teachers through Public Service Commission and ensure appropriate infrastructure with ICT laboratory, (vii) Ensure active participation of community in all school activities because it reduces burden of teachers and understand school problems easily, (viii) participation of community in schools infrastructure development should be increased because it solved the problems regarding construction work, and (ix) Involve school management committee in regular monitoring of school activities because it understands students problems and can be removed easily.

8. SUGGESTIONS FOR THE FURTHER RESEARCH

On the basis experience and insight acquired from conducting the present study, following suggestions are offered for the prospective researchers:

- The present study was conducted only in four districts of Himachal Pradesh. Similar studies may be carried out in other districts of the states as well as in other states of India.
- Case study may be undertaken to ensure deep into the implementations of Rashtriya Madhyamik Shiksha Abhiyan (RMSA) in secondary schools and identifying the hindrances in its appropriate implementation
- The impact of RMSA related training programmes for secondary school teachers in terms of enhancing their awareness and improving the functioning of RMSA may be studied.

- The perception of secondary heads, district and block level functionaries regarding functioning of RMSA at secondary level may be studied to have their insight in this regard.
- Studies can be done for other schemes like Samagra Shiksha Abhiyan.

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