

Study of the awareness of responsibilities and participation of people's representatives at panchayat level towards sarva shiksha abhiyan- In depth study at a panchayat level

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Abstract

The present study conducted by the B.Ed. student of the Gyanveer Institute of management and science Sagar M.P. under the community living programme, in which village survey was taken up. It was taken up to study the awareness of the Panch and Sarpanch towards the responsibilities and participation in respect of education, with special reference to Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan. The study, A Survey, was conducted in Bhapel Gram Panchayat, some 10 km away from the district headquarter door to door family members were contacted and questionnaire was filled in after getting the responses of the head of the family, on the questions or information asked in the questionnaire. An interview schedule was prepared to interview the Panch and Sarpanch of the Panchayat of Bhapel. The Panchayat has a population of 4,984 people, and children in the age group of 6 to 14 years are 1,805, out of which 9,34 are boys and 8,61 are girls.

Keywords: Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan, Panchayat Level, Awareness, Elementary stage, Drop-Outs children, EFA.

Introduction

The problem of drop-out children and out of school children at the Elementary stage has become an eye score. Low literacy rate, High rate of drop-out, approximately 70% at Elementary stage, especially among the girl students and a good number of children in the age group of 6 to 14 are some of the alarming issues which any developing society cannot afford to overlook or remain indifferent towards it. Societies have to face these issues and plan out to solve it. With the aim of eradicating illiteracy and reducing the rate of drop-outs among boys and girls in the age group of 6 to 14 years, and to enroll children in the elementary schools, Government of Madhya Pradesh has committed itself to solve the problems and achieve Education for All (EFA) objectives within the specified time.

The Primary schools, the neighborhood schools, Shiksha Guarantee Schools are all functioning under the Panchayat Raj system to achieve the goals of Education for All. The people representatives at the Panchayat level: i.e. Sarpanch, Panch are made responsible to work for the attainment of the educational objectives of EFA.

Objective of the Survey

- To study the people's representatives sense of responsibilities and awareness towards their duties as Panch and Sarpanch.
- To study the awareness of the public representatives towards Education for All Program, and their role in this program to achieve the objectives.
- To study the innovativeness in enrollment of children, especially of girls, controlling of drop-outs, making physical and academic facilities in the school so as to keep students longer in school.

Hypothesis

People's representatives lack in awareness and sense of responsibility, which affects rate of success in the attainment of objectives of Education for all.

Sample and Population

The present study conducted by the B.Ed. student of the Gyanveer Institute of management and science Sagar M.P. under the community living programme, in which village survey was taken up. It was taken up to study the awareness of the Panch and Sarpanch towards the responsibilities and participation in respect of education, with special reference to Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan. The study, A Survey, was conducted in Bhapel Gram Panchayat, some 10 km away from the district headquarter door to door family members were contacted and questionnaire was filled in after getting the responses of the head of the family, on the questions or information asked in the questionnaire. An interview schedule was prepared to interview the Panch and Sarpanch of the Panchayat of Bhapel. The Panchayat has a population of 4,984 people, and children in the age group of 6 to 14 years are 1,805, out of which 9,34 are boys and 8,61 are girls.

Tools

For Survey, a questionnaire to get the response of the parents/guardians of the children from each household was prepared. An interview schedule for the Panch and Sarpanch was also prepared to get the reply/ responses of them, on (a) awareness of the EFA programme (b) on the state of affairs of the school in their Panchayat.

The Questionnaire was divided into four sub-head. The first sub-head pertains to the general information of the economic and family status of the household. The other pertained to parent's view on the Education of the girls, girl-child, early marriage, differentiation between male and female child, girls being liability or an asset, and so on. Another aspect of the questionnaire relates to the awareness of the common man towards school, its functioning, teaching and daily routine of the school and the teachers, academic attainment and enrollment of students, etc. The questionnaire also framed into the degree of participation in the affairs of the school of the

village people, in solving the problem of the school increasing enrolment, controlling drop out, truancy, short attendance etc. The interview schedule specifically pertained to Panch and Sarpanch's awareness of Education for All Programme and Panchayat responsibility in running and maintaining school, ever seeing and supervising school attendance, teachers' attendance, enrollment, drop-outs midday meal etc. Besides, the general up keep and quality of education imparted in school are important aspects of their concern on which their responses were collected. All these aspects were covered in the questionnaire and the interview schedule.

Findings

The Survey put forth the following facts:

The Panchayat of Bhopel, an urbanized village, having population of 4,986 people, of which 2,562 are male and 2,424 are female, are mostly agricultural labourers and bidi workers. Approximately 60% of the population is dependent upon for their livelihood on petty jobs of labourer of manual kind, besides agriculture and Bidi making is almost the common occupation and means of livelihood for most of the households. Another 10% have mercantile as their profession. Again 5% to 10% people are daily wage earners. Land owner class is approximately 10% of which 2% to 3% are well-to-do landowners having tractors and irrigated agricultural land. Remaining population consists of service class people: like doctors, compounders, teachers, sub engineers, and other village level workers of various department.

The Bhopel Panchayat is close to the district headquarter just 10 km away and on the main state highway connecting Sagar with Bhopal, the capital of M.P. The flux and influx of population and being exposed to the city life, most of the parents and guardians were found to be aware of the importance of education, especially education of the girl child. They do not differentiate between male and female child and do not favour early or child marriage. But the social traditions, concepts and practices do prevail upon them and they succumb to those pressures and do not dare to oppose or counter it.

To know peoples' awareness towards education and working of the school in their Panchayat, questions were asked. The responses indicate that people are quite conscious of the working of the school. Attendance of their children, teaching in the school. In response to the question registered teachers attendance and regularity in coming to school, the response were quite discouraging. The teachers are not regular and mostly commute between Sagar and Bhopal; especially the female teachers. This is almost universal feature that teachers do not remain/ live at the place of their posting. Proper facilities and security are the main reasons especially for the female teachers for not remaining at the place of posting. This affects the school timings, teachers come late and go early depending upon the conveyance facilities.

The Operation Blackboard project has not made much progress here. The school building is pretty old and needs repair and upkeep. The surrounding well around the school is missing and this causes the stray cattle to take shelter in the school during night after the school hours. Truancy and drop-out rate is also alarming. After taking mid-day meals the students often run away. Truancy is quite rampant. In response to the question of their raising the issue, like teachers' late coming, or not residing in village, teaching in the school the parents/ guardians seemed to be aware but indifference, apathy and lack of initiative to

discuss in Panchayat or Gram Sabha meetings or take steps to solve these problems. No discussion or deliberation take place in Gram Sabha meetings held every month.

Though the Village Education Committee and Gram Vikas Samity are formed but are defunct. Neither the Sarpanch or the Panches seem to be interested in the reviving it. These committees of their own do not initiate any measure to improve upon the conditions of the school or solving problems related to education of their children. The Panch and Sarpanch had shown keen interest in the development and improvement in the conditions and academic affairs of the school. They expressed their concern for the constructing and updating the existing infrastructural facilities in the school building, but expressed their inability to do so, because, they said, it depends upon the Government grant or aid, which they do not get for it. The Sarpanch of Bhopel Panchayat Shri Tularam Patel, Shri Nek Singh, chairman Gram Sikhsha Samiti, and Shri Mohan Singh, Chairman Gram Vikas Samiti, were of the upkeep of the school building, provision of infrastructural facilities lacking in the school could not be fulfilled because Government grant is too meager and do not come forth easily. Though, in every Gram Sabha meetings it is resolved and district Panchayat is referred but it is of no avail. On asking them as to what can they do at their own level in this regard, it was very sad and discouraging to hear and to infer that they do not have the initiative to muster and generates interest and concern amongst the people to come ahead to contribute in kind or cash in improving upon the conditions of the school.

Though the enrollment of children in the age group of 6 to 14 years is to the tune of 95%, but the retention of children in school is less. The reason is that the school building, the facilities provided there, the teaching done, the time consuming process of mid-day meals, effect the teaching and learning activities in the school. The students do not get any interests in the monotonous school day. That is why the attendance is short and gradually this leads to drop-out.

The interview with the Panch and Sarpanch, and chairman of Gram Sabha Samiti, and Village Vikas Samiti have revealed that the leadership, organization and initiative the Gram Panchayat should have, were lacking. These representatives could not muster local participation, contribution and co-operation of the village population in developing facilities in the school, in increasing the enrolment, attendance, reducing drop-out rate, encouraging parents/ guardians in sending their wards or children, especially Girls to school, in providing housing facilities to female teachers who for want of it commute from Sagar. Drop out failure and truancy are the major problems which can be solved with the co-operation, participation and involvement of the guardians. This needs to be mustered through constant interaction, dialogue and contact of the Panchayat with teachers, guardians and the people at large. This can be done in the monthly meetings of the gram Sabhes Organised earnestly and not just a formalities. The school programme both curricular and co-curricular be organized and wider publicity, participation and sharing of the people in these be encouraged and developed.

The study has revealed the above facts and the finding helped to concludes that:

1. The people' representatives, The Panch, Sarpanch, Chairman of Gram Shiksha Samity, Gram Vikas Samity, are aware of the programmes of the of the Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan, but lack in initiative organization and leadership

in carrying out their responsibilities towards SSA. They fail to do any thing constructive in respect of enrolment, attendance, teacher's attendance, school programme and developing infrastructural facilities in the school. They simply depend upon Govt. Grant. Of their own they do not develop consensus, social motive so far as Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan is concern.

2. Peoples' Representatives awareness and participation in SSA is merely vocal and not constructive.

Conclusion

If the local leadership and peoples' representative become active and committed to the public cause the objectives of the national programmes, like SSA Population Control, Awareness of the ills of AID, etc. would be achievable and attainable.

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