

EFFECTIVENESS OF VILLAGE EDUCATION COMMITTEE ON PROMOTING UEE – A CASE STUDY

Ranjan Kumar Dash

B. N. Panda

The paper deals with functioning of village education committees set up by the government for improving quality of elementary education. The case study carried out in a tribal district of Orissa found it functioning effectively.

INTRODUCTION

In India, it was the Vedic days when education was almost teacher centred, the ancient *Rishies* were the pivot around which the whole system revolved. It was they who played the key role in whom to teach, what to teach, and who to teach. The other influential components of the then society had almost little involvement in deciding the policy of education. A number of prominent teachers of those days tried to maintain their uniqueness that is why we have got a wide range of Upanishads, preaching different variety of philosophies. Involvement of the society in the process of education was negligible. On the other hand, schools in the form of Ashrams were located far away from human habitation with a fear lest the social odds affect the process of education. There is a saying in Sanskrit, “*Yath Lokaaha, Tatha Shikshana Karmaah*”. As the people are, so is the education system. If the community is indifferent towards its teachers, its school and the educational system, it has no reason to expect its children to get good education. If people want their children to be educated properly, they should be willing and ready to put in their own efforts towards the all-round development of education system, beginning with their immediate neighbourhood. For successful implementation of elementary programmes of education, peoples’ participation is of the utmost importance. Further this involvement should be at the grassroots level which will as a result bring about participation of voluntary organizations and social activities. Till to-day we have anticipated that the school will transform the society and how we are anticipating that the same society to transform the school. However, the school and the community are related to each other in a cyclic relationship of mutual benefit. If the school serves the community through its education programmes, the community, in turn, will help enhancing the status of the school. On the other hand, if the community supports the school in implementing the educational progress, the school in turn will help in improving the community.

RATIONALE OF THE STUDY

Universalisation of Elementary Education (UEE) has been one of the most important goals of educational development in India since independence. One of the greatest weaknesses for poor progress in achieving UEE is the lack of community involvement in school programmes. The National Policy of Education 1986 gave stress on the community involvement in educational management. It states that local communities through appropriate bodies will be assigned a major role in the programme of school management. Community involvement would establish a close linkage between school and community and help in improving quality in education, reduction of absenteeism and irregularity. The Revised Policy in Education in 1992 also called for community participation in educational planning and management. With the enactment of the 73rd and 74th Amendment Act (Panchayati Raj Act), 1992 the focus is now concentrated on democratically elected bodies at the district, sub-district and Panchayat levels. These Panchayat Raj Bodies, which cater to adequate representation of women, scheduled castes and scheduled tribes, minorities, representations of parents, educationists and appropriate institutions, will have the responsibility of preparing development of plans and implementing educational programmes besides dealing with subjects closely related to education such as health, social welfare and

women and child development. Keeping with the view, the government has established Village Education Committee (VEC), in all elementary schools. They are the statutory bodies to see the educational development of the children in village schools. The role of VEC has become very vital in promoting enrolment, retention, achievement and school effectiveness. Although VECs have been constituted in almost all schools, their effectiveness is to be looked after. Of course some VECs have proved very effective and their role in the promotion of UEE is worth noting. So the study was proposed to establish the role of VECs to achieve universalisation of elementary education at the grassroots level.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

To find out the effectiveness of village education committee at the grassroots level of education.
To study the actions taken by VECs in generating awareness among the community members for participating in the school improvement activities and the strategies followed by them for the purpose of quality education.

METHOD

Analytical survey method was used for the study.

Sample

Nabarangpur district of Orissa has been taken for the present study for population purposively. On the basis of effective VECs of different areas 10 primary schools have been selected randomly. For the present study, 30 VEC members were selected and were interviewed by developing a structured interview schedule.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The VEC members were supposed to be involved in taking care of the school situation and assist the school in managing different activities.

All effective VECs were involved in construction of school building for primary schools satisfactorily. About 96.67 % of VECs were trying their best for improvement of school environment, 90.00 % of them were working satisfactorily for improving the school garden and plantation, and 93.33 % of VECs were working for development of TLM adequately and for its effective use. About 90.00 % of VECs were working for adequacy of care of other school materials to the best of their capacities. Thus care and management work for the VECs were quite adequate and appropriate.

The VECs are supposed to be involved in organising different activities in the school in cooperation with the teachers. It was found that 86.67 % of VECs organized different awareness programmes quite effectively. About 93.33 % of VECs coordinated different functions and meetings satisfactorily, 96.66 % of VECs coordinated mother welfare *samittee* activities spectacularly, 93.33 % of VECs organized enrolment drive meticulously, 90.00 % of VECs organized tribal conventions satisfactorily. Most of the VECs coordinated different awareness programmes satisfactorily for attitudinal change of the villagers.

The VEC members contributed some exemplar effort for improving schooling habits of children. All the VECs were interested in taking steps satisfactorily to identify the non-enrolment and problems of drop-out children in the tribal area. As many as 93.33 % VECs were planning fruitfully for changing the schooling habit of non-enrolment and drop-out children, 96.67 % of VECs were used to take steps effectively to maintain good relation and co-operation among parents, 90.00 % of VECs organized active steps for regular attendance, 96.67 % of VECs rendered adequate help to youth club and Mahila Samittee for school improvement and 86.67 %

of VECs developed suitable school map and organized micro-planning. Thus facilitation role of all the VECs were impressive.

The role of VECs in school improvement cannot be ignored at any case. In the district of Nabarangpur the role of VECs in school improvement programme. It was found that 96.67 % of VECs took satisfactory steps to maintain cordial relation and co-ordination among parents and teachers. Most of the VECs, (90.00 %) supervised work of the school system with intent for regular attendance of teachers, 93.33 % of VECs put forth satisfactory steps for good teaching in the schools, 86.67 % of VECs took satisfactory steps for good results in the schools and 66.67 % of VEC members used to take classes at the time of need. Thus effectiveness of VECs was quite constructive and were reciprocated by the teachers for school improvement.

The schools are in receipt of some financial assistance from different corners. For transparency of the utilization of the grant of VECs have to discharge some functions. All the VECs took steps for proper utilization of annual grant in the school. It represented that 93.66 % of VECs were used to take steps for utilization of TLM grant. As good as 90.00 % of VECs took suitable steps for collection of fees for school improvement and 96.67 % of VECs were taking interest to collect more funds from government and other agencies. Thus economic activities of all effective VECs in collaboration with the teachers for school improvement were satisfactory.

The headmaster / assistant teacher is the member secretary of Village Education Committee. The headmasters / teachers have the important role to create good school-community relationship. The headmaster organized meeting with the VEC members. Before conducting the meeting the teacher of the school sent notices to the VEC members through the students before three days. In this meeting the VEC members discussed school related programmes like enrolment of children, prevention of drop-out, school management and development of infrastructure, school environment cleanliness, preparation of TLM, taking extra classes and collection of funds for school improvement. All these programmes discussed in VEC meeting and after meeting it was recorded as resolutions in the minute / resolution book. The VEC members were taking some developmental work in collaboration with the teachers. Teachers play a vital role for establishment of school-community relationship.

DISCUSSION

Most of the Village Education Committees worked excellently for all round development of primary schools. All the VECs were took care and management work of primary schools satisfactorily. VECs organised different awareness programmes satisfactorily for attitudinal change of villagers. Facilitation role of all VECs were very impressive. VECs undertook different steps to improve the financial status of primary schools. Proper care and management of primary schools, taking steps to increase enrolment and to reduce drop-out rate, organising different cultural activities in schools, working for development of school environment and helping the teacher to prepare TLM were significant works of VEC, which significantly affected the environment of the local primary schools. Facilitation role, attitudinal role, school improvement role, economic activities and miscellaneous works have been performed by VECs effectively for all round development of the respective school.

CONCLUSION

The role of VECs is very essential and important for the improvement of primary education. The success stories of different VECs would certainly act as examples for the weaker VECs so as to improve working style for improvement of management system and effective participation. Since Nabarangpur is a tribal dominated district, it will be helpful for other tribal school VECs to learn to bring change in their mode of activities for all round development of primary school in respect to enrolment, retention, achievement and school environment etc. To achieve universalisation of

elementary education the role of community is quite significant. Education is the primary need of human being. So every body has basic fundamental rights to get compulsory primary education. To universalize the elementary education the function of community is proved to be effective in all kinds of activities in the school in relation to care and management, enrolment, teaching learning process, organizing different cultural activities, maintaining a clean school environment, preparation of TLM and sustenance of financial support to school.
