IMPACT OF QUALITY MONITORING MECHANISM AT ELEMENTARY LEVEL SCHOOLS: A CASE STUDY

Dr. Shalini Rawat

Associate Professor
Department of Botany
Pt. L.M.S. Campus, Rishikesh
Sri Dev Suman University, Uttarakhand
Email: rawatshalini18041975@gmail.com

Abstract

The sustainable development Goals (SDG) also known as 'Global goals' were adopted by United Nations in 2015 as a universal call to action to end poverty, and protect the planet. The 2030 agenda for sustainable development goals is "a plan of actions for people, planet and prosperity". It comprises of 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Sustainable Development Goal 04 is the education goal.

The aim of SDG 04 is to "ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all". SDG 04 is made up of 10 targets. Target 4.1 of SDG 04 is "by 2030, ensure that all girls and boys complete free, equitable and quality primary and secondary education leading to relevant and effective learning outcomes.

Department of Elementary Education, NCERT developed monitoring tools to impart quality education at elementary-level schools by keeping in view of SDGs. The major objective of the implementation of quality monitoring tools was to promote understanding of various dimensions of quality of elementary education among state, district, sub-district, and school functionaries. Present paper deals with the implementation and outcome recommendations of such monitoring tools in one of the educational blocks of the Uttarakhand state.

Keywords

Sustainable development Goals, Quality Education.

Introduction

Education is the foundation stone of society. It brings reforms, helps in progress and acts as a catalyst for innovations. The more educated the society the more civilized it will be. From the minute details of an atom to the unlimited expansion of the universe had been explored in the vicinity of education. Still, in the 21st century, some countries are lagging behind in the race of acquiring quality education.

Education International (EI), a Belgium-based organization, defines quality education as one that focuses on the social, emotional, mental, physical, and cognitive development of each student regardless of gender, race, ethnicity, socioeconomic status, or geographic location. It prepares the child for life and not just for testing.

In 2012, the United Nations for the first time included 'Quality Education' in their Sustainable Development Goals (SDG). Further, education in modern times is highly influenced and dependent on Information and Communication Technology which has paved the way for students to attain school or higher-level education. Quality education not only prepares a student for a job but also develops the overall personality of an individual.

Monitoring information can fill some of the gaps between working and specific knowledge. If data are collected routinely from a variety of sources, then many regular information needs can be met more quickly. Monitoring data tend to cover a wider variety of topics than those obtained through evaluations, consultancies, or commissioned research. It can be used to diagnose strengths and weaknesses in pupils' mastery of curricular objectives, and therefore guide curriculum and instruction. It can be used to assess the effects of interventions implemented at the state, district, or school level. It can stimulate discussion about the goals of schooling, and give rise to new ideas that affect policy and practice. Monitoring data can also motivate administrators and teachers to improve performance and reduce inequities.

The National Policy on Education (NPE) 1986 (modified in 1992) envisaged 'universal access and enrolment, universal retention of children up to 14 years of age, and a substantial improvement in the quality of education to enable all children to achieve essential levels of learning. The policy document of NPE emerged after the nationwide debate on the National Policy on Education 1968, Challenge of Education 1984, and the curriculum frameworks of 1975 and 1988. The nation made

commitment to universal access to education for all children at elementary stage. Various schemes of education at national and state levels were launched. Operation Black Board (OB), Minimum Levels of Learning (MLL), Programme of Mass Orientation of School Teachers (PMOST), Special Orientation of Primary Teachers (SOPT) and District Primary Education Programme (DPEP) were aimed to improve universal access, retention and improve the quality of school education. The impact of these programs was visible and the quality of school education improved to some extent. The nation launched Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan (SSA) in 2000–2001 on a mission mode to accelerate universal access, retention, bridging of gender and social categories gaps and improving the quality of education.

Quality Monitoring Programme

NCERT identified quality dimensions for the elementary education and developed Quality Monitoring Tools (2005) in collaboration with the States/UTs and MHRD which were implemented throughout the country. These are Basic Infrastructure and other facilities, Management and Community Support , School and Classroom Environment, Curriculum and Teaching Learning Materials ,Teacher and Teacher Preparation , Opportunity Time (Teaching Learning Time), Classroom Practices and processes, Learners 'Assessment' Monitoring and Supervision

Objective and Methodology

Considering these views of above mentioned SDGs, SDG 04 and its target 4.1, quality monitoring tools, developed by the Department of Elementary Education, NCERT to impart quality education at elementary-level schools in India. The present study was conducted in the year 2019 on the basis of the primary data of educational Block-Kirtinagar, Tehri Garwal, Uttrakhand, India.

Uttarakhand was formed on 9th November 2000 as the 27th State of India. Located at the foothills of the Himalayan mountain ranges, it is largely a hilly State. Uttarakhand is comprised of 13 districts which include 95 developmental blocks. The school Management Committee (SMCs) has been constituted under the chairmanship of the Headmaster of the school and a teacher as a secretary. As per the 2011 census, the Uttarakhand literacy rate is 78.82% as against the national average of 74.04%. Though the literacy rate is on the upper hand but quality education is required most.

To fulfill the objectives of Sustainable Development Goal (SDG)- 04 which is the education goal and its target 4.1, a study was conducted in all the 10 clusters of the block- Kirtinagar, district Tehri Garhwal of Uttarakhand during 2018-2019.

Two primaries and two upper primary schools were selected in each cluster as a sample of the study. In three clusters, only one junior school was in existence, thus making the sample size to 37 schools. The information on perceptions of the School Management Committees (SMCs) about school functioning was also a need of the study. Therefore, the sample also included 37 SMCs corresponding to all the schools of the sample.

For this study, five tools were prepared for data collection. These were:

- School Monitoring Format (SMF);
- School Management Committee Format (SMCF);
- Cluster Monitoring Format (CMF);
- Classroom Observation Schedule (COS);
- Block Monitoring Format (BMF).

According to the need of the study, both quantitative and qualitative data were collected from schools, school management committees, clusters, and blocks. Tools/parameters were used for quality monitoring in sampled elementary schools are as follows

- School and teacher position
- Students' Average Daily Attendance
- Children with Special Needs (CWSN)
- Textbook Availability in Schools,
- Constitution of SMC
- Training to SMC Members
- Status of Development of School Development Plan (SDP)
- Meetings of SMC in Schools
- Representation of Women in SMC
- Learning Assessment and Children Achievement,
- Classroom Process and Teacher Effectiveness
- Teacher's attendance

Specific Objectives of The Study

Given the research questions, the study has the following specific objectives:

- To analyze the level and patterns of student attendance and community participation in interventions and activities aimed at improving student outcomes.

- To examine the relationship between teachers' content preparation, classroom practices and classroom processes in the overall development of the students.
- To look into the association between the level of coverage of curriculum and use of teaching-learning materials (TLM) and learning outcomes.
- To study how teachers use learners' assessment data to support students left behind and improve their own instructional practices.

Observation and Results

1. **School and Teacher Position**

   The RTE Act 2009 has provided criteria about the number of teachers required in primary and upper primary schools corresponding to the number of students. The study reveals that the number of teachers in 5 percent of the sample schools falls short of the required number as prescribed in the RTE Act. 2009.

2. **Students' Average Daily Attendance**

   Students' attendance emerges out as a matter of great concern as only 62 percent of schools reported good attendance of students. Boys' attendance reflects more alarming situations as 49 percent of schools are in the "need improvement category"; while in the case of girls' attendance, 35 percent of schools reported need improvement. Some schools have taken several steps to improve students' attendance like meetings and personal contacts with parents, meetings with SMC, and awareness of parents about different government schemes for the welfare of students, students with full attendance should be awarded and their parents should be honored at annual functions of schools, increase interest in the classroom by using audio/visual aids and monitoring of irregular students by the Headteacher and continuously informing their parents.

3. **Children with Special Needs (CWSN)**

   Most of the sample schools have reported zero enrolments of children with special needs (CWSN); and only 19 percent of schools reported enrolment of children with special needs (CWSN), while the overall range of enrolment of CWSN in the sample schools was 0 to 1 per school.

4. **Textbook Availability in Schools**

   It is found that in large number of schools, textbooks became available to children within one month and after a month. There are some schools where

textbooks become available within one week. The delay was mainly caused due the late release of free textbook (FTB) money to students from the Government; late availability of textbooks in the market; sometimes, late availability of a few subjects' textbooks in the market; disinterested behavior of parents in buying textbooks even after receiving FTB amount; and parents from far-flung areas could not approach the book market.

5. **Constitution of SMC and Training for SMC Members**

   All schools have constituted SMC and training had been given to SMC members for their roles and functions.

6. **Status of Development of School Development Plan (SDP)**

   Around 35 percent of schools did not prepare their school development plan and of those schools which prepared their SDP, 17 percent of them did not involve SMC members to develop SDP.

7. **Meetings of SMC in Schools**

   Around 38 percent of sample schools have reported about irregular monthly meetings of the SMC. The reasons given for irregular meetings were the engagement of SMC members in agricultural work, less interest of SMC members in school functioning, etc.

8. **Representation of Women in SMC**

   In 19 percent of schools, women's representation in SMC is more than 80 percent. Similarly, in 19 percent of schools representation of women in SMC is less than 50 percent.

9. **Learning Assessment and Children's Achievement**

   (a) Primary Stage

   There are fewer gaps in the number of schools with 'good student achievement' and 'need improvement' at the primary level. In fewer subjects and classes, the percentage of schools with 'good student achievement' and 'need improvement' are equal, and in most subjects and classes, the number of schools showing 'good achievement' in achievement is higher than the number of schools showing 'need improvement' in respect of all classes (I to V) and all subjects namely, language, Mathematics and Environmental Studies.

   (b) Upper Primary Stage

   A close look into the achievement data collected and analyzed indicates that the number of schools showing 'good achievement' in the language (Hindi,

English, Sanskrit) Mathematics, Science and Social Science in classes VI, VII and VIII is lesser than the number of schools showing 'need improvement'. There is a larger gap in the number of schools with 'good student achievement' and 'need improvement' in all classes and in subjects like Science, English and Mathematics.

10. Classroom Process and Teacher Effectiveness

Most of the classroom processes in schools and majority of teachers are found "effective" and very few teachers come under the "very effective" and "need improvement" category.

Figure: Percentage of teachers in respect of "very effective", "effective" and "need improvement" category in class room processes
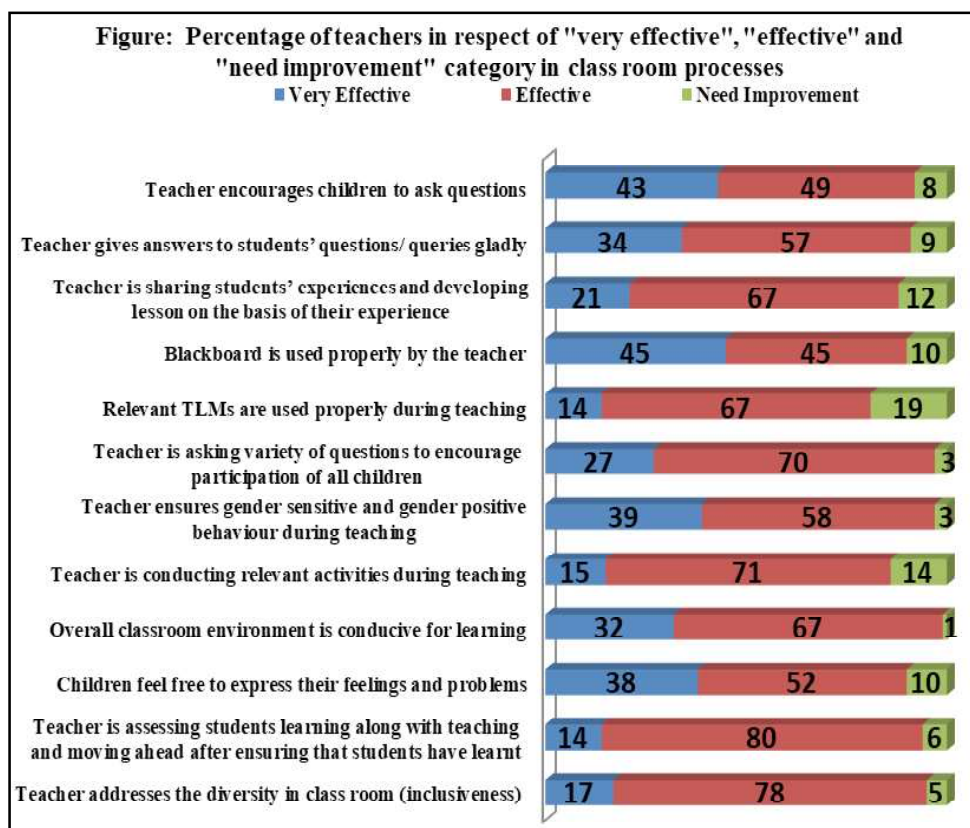
Only the following two classroom processes are found very effective amongst majority of teachers:

    (i) Teacher encourages children to ask question

    (ii) Proper Use of Blackboard.

11. Teachers' attendance

Teachers' attendance was recorded in the month of November, 2019 in percentage and categorized as 90 percent and above "very good" 70 to 89 percent "good" and below 70 percent "very poor". Teachers' attendance taken in the month of November, 2019, reflects that the attendance of 18 percent of teachers is in the "very poor" category.

Recommendations

1. Schools where the number of teachers is short of the required number as prescribed by the RTE Act, are required to appoint teachers immediately and rationalize the posting of existing teachers in schools.

2. Low attendance of students needs the immediate attention of parents, teachers, SMC members, public representatives, system-level officials, policymakers and implementers. These schools need to make concerted efforts to improve the student's attendance in schools.

3. Several children with special needs (CWSN) are not in school. Sincere efforts are needed by the schools and SMCs in identifying all CWSNs in the locality and bringing them to the schools. The district and sub-district functionaries are required to provide proper resource support to the schools is in this endeavor.

4. Although NCERT textbooks are part of the state's curriculum but the state should also prepare its own textbooks to teach the state's art, culture, geography, history, disaster etc.

5. Although Learning Outcomes knowledge and a checklist of Los are available to every teacher but teaching processes and relevant activities and TLM to deal with Los are grey areas where more work is to be done. In Service Teacher Training (ISTT) could be a good plate form to deal with this.

6. Progressive School Development Plan should be prepared by every school according to their physical, cultural and academic need. For the preparation of SDP, all stakeholders of the school (students, teachers, parents, community members, public representatives, and system-level officials), and other non-stakeholders (social activists, intellectuals, NGOs) should be involved.

7. More representation of women in SMC should be ensured because women can actively participate in school functioning.

8. The learning achievement/outcomes of students largely depend on how effective are the classroom processes.. Sincere efforts are therefore required towards improving the classroom processes.

9. Improvement in the classroom process depends on many factors including the teacher's competence, teaching-learning material, physical resources, appropriate methodology, proper understanding of students by the teacher, inclusive classroom environment and teacher's willingness among several others. Development of an able school leadership, proper supervision of classes, proper training and onsite support to teachers by competent professionals also contribute to improving the classroom process leading to enhanced learning achievement.

10. Conduction of monthly tests, delivery of question papers, and their assessment by teachers should be done in a very transparent manner.

11. Like students attendance, concerted efforts are needed to improve the teachers' attendance in schools. States are required to find ways and means to avoid and exempt teachers' engagement in 'other than school activities' except under the circumstances mentioned in the RTE Act.

Conclusion

To cater to the objectives and target set by SDG 04 and further 4.1, we need a well-defined quality monitoring system for elementary schools. All stakeholders of the school system should be made an integral part quality monitoring mechanism for proper implementation of quality monitoring system.

Acknowledgment

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