



Factors affecting Teachers' attitude towards the influence of welfare schemes on Quality improvement in Elementary Education in Andhra Pradesh

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Abstract

Elementary education is the foundation stage of formal education where learners learn how to think rather than gaining information about new facts. The Central Government and the States/UTs have taken up several quality initiatives that focus on improving quality in elementary education. *Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan*, a flagship programme of the Government of India aims to ensure access, equity and quality to the children at the elementary stage. The Right of Children to Free and Compulsory Education Act, 2009 has provided strength and acceleration to quality elementary education for all children in the age group of 6 - 14 years in the country. Several welfare schemes are being implemented by the State and Central Governments to bring about quality improvement in Elementary Education. The present study is intended to examine the factors that affect the attitude of teachers towards the influence of welfare schemes on quality improvement in Elementary Education in Andhra Pradesh in relation to certain demographic variables, viz., gender, teaching experience, type of school management and the medium of instruction offered by the school. Descriptive Survey method has been adopted in this study. The sample consisting of 400 teachers (150 Male and 250 Female) from 80 Elementary schools in Srikakulam district has been selected using Stratified Random Sampling method. The data were collected using a questionnaire to find out the factors that affect the attitude of teachers towards the influence of welfare schemes on quality improvement in Elementary Education in Andhra Pradesh. The data were analyzed using different statistical techniques such as means, standard deviations, t-tests and one-way ANOVA. The findings of the study revealed that the variables - gender, teaching experience, type of school management and the medium of instruction offered by the school have no influence on the attitude of teachers towards the influence of welfare schemes on quality improvement in Elementary Education.

Keywords: *Attitude, Welfare schemes, Quality improvement, Elementary Education*

Introduction:

The growth and prosperity of a nation depends on the development of its future generation through a vibrant education system. Education is the most important lever for social, economic and political transformation. A well-educated population, equipped with the relevant knowledge, attitudes and skills is essential for economic and social development in the twenty-first century. Education is an effective means of social reconstruction. It is the most potent tool for socio-economic mobility and a key instrument for building an equitable and just society. Education provides skills and competencies for economic well-being. It helps to increase the productivity, achieve national and emotional integration; and accelerate the process of modernization. Education strengthens democracy by imparting to citizens the tools needed to fully participate in

the governance process. Education also acts as an integrative force in society, imparting values that foster social cohesion and national identity.

Elementary education plays a significant role in the ladder of education, as it provides the foundation for the other stages of education. The Constitution of India clearly states that elementary education is a fundamental right of children in the age of 6-14 years. There are various problems such as poor enrolment, unhealthy working environment, lack of suitable measures for retention of children and a high dropout rate that confront the growth of elementary education in the country. The Central as well as the State Governments have taken initiative to introduce several cost-free welfare schemes with a view to increase the rate of enrolment of children in schools and reduce dropouts at elementary level.

The Constitutional Amendment of 1976, which included education in the concurrent list, was a far-reaching step in the growth and development of education in general and that of elementary education in particular. While the role and responsibility of the States in education remained largely unchanged, the Union Government accepted a larger responsibility of reinforcing the national and integrated character of education, maintaining quality and standards including those of the teaching profession at all levels, and the study and monitoring of the educational requirements of the country. Very recently, the Government of India introduced the National Education Policy-2020 across different states of the nation including the state of Andhra Pradesh with a view to restructure the entire system of education in the country.

Welfare Schemes initiated by the Government of India

In order to achieve Universalization of Elementary Education (UEE), the Government of India has initiated a number of programmes and projects (**MHRD: Higher Education: Status of Education in India, 2007**). The Government adopts an integrated approach in the implementation of the various centrally sponsored schemes, in tune with the principles of the National Policy on Education (NPE), 1986 and Programme of Action (POA), 1992 to ensure that the education of equitable quality for all to fully harness the nation's human resource potential in order to enhance access through the expansion of quality school education; and to improve the quality of education.

The following Centrally sponsored programmes are being implemented in the Education Sector under Ministry of Human Resource Development, Government of India.

(i) Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan

Launched in 2001, Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan (SSA) is one of India's major flagship programmes for Universalization of Elementary Education (UEE). Its overall goals include universal access and retention, bridging of gender and social category gaps in elementary education, and achieving significant enhancement in learning levels of children. Under SSA India has not only been able to improve access to 99 per cent at primary level; but has also been able to reduce out of school children to 3-4 per cent of the age group of 6-14 years. Under this programme, special focus is on girls, children belonging to SC/ST Communities, other weaker sections, minorities and urban deprived children.

(ii) Kasturba Gandhi Balika Vidyalaya (KGBVs)

KGBVs are residential upper primary schools for girls from SC, ST, OBC and Muslim communities. These schools are set up in areas of scattered habitations where schools are at great distances and are a challenge to the security of girls. This often compels girls to discontinue their education. KGBVs address this through setting up residential schools, in the block itself.

(iii) National Programme for Education of Girls at Elementary Level (NPEGEL)

NPEGEL is implemented in educationally backward blocks (EBB) and addresses the needs of girls who are 'in' as well as 'out' of school. NPEGEL also reaches out to girls who are enrolled in school, but do not attend school regularly.

(iv) Mid-Day Meal Scheme (MDMS)

Keeping in view the Constitutional provisions to raise the level of nutrition of children and to enable them develop in a healthy manner, the National Programme of Nutritional Support to Primary Education (NP-NSPE) was launched as a Centrally sponsored scheme in 1995. Commonly referred to as Mid-Day Meal Scheme (MDMS), this was expected to enhance enrolment, retention, attendance of children in schools apart from improving their nutritional levels. This was extended to upper primary (classes VI to VIII) children in 3,479 Economically Backwards Blocks (EBBs) in 2007 and then universalized at the elementary level in the year 2008.

(v) Rashtriya Madhyamik Shiksha Abhiyan (RMSA)

RMSA is a centrally sponsored scheme with a funding pattern of 75:25 between Centre and States (90:10 for Special Category and North Eastern States), was launched in 2009–10. The major objectives of the RMSA are to: (i) raise the minimum level of education to class X and universalize access to secondary education; (ii) ensure good-quality secondary education with focus on Science, Mathematics and English; and (iii) reduce the gender, social and regional gaps in enrolments, dropouts and improving retention. The interventions supported under RMSA include: (i) upgrading of upper primary schools to secondary schools; (ii) strengthening of existing secondary schools; (iii) providing additional classrooms, science laboratories, libraries, computer rooms, art, craft and culture rooms, toilet blocks and water facilities in schools; (iv) providing in-service training of teachers; and (v) providing for major repairs of school buildings and residential quarters for teachers.

(vi) Beti Bachao Beti Padhao

In order to protect the birth of the child, to reduce gender discrimination and to facilitate girls' education, the Government of India introduced the scheme, 'Beti Bachao Beti Padhao' in 2015. The very objective of the scheme is to facilitate girls' education at all levels (**Ministry of Women and Child Development, GOI**).

Apart from the centrally sponsored schemes, the state governments also supported Elementary Education providing the children cost-free benefits. The following are some of the schemes initiated by the Government of Andhra Pradesh to enhance enrolment and retention of children in Elementary Schools.

1. Jagananna Amma Vodi

Jagananna Amma Vodi is a unique scheme launched by the Government of Andhra Pradesh to encourage parents to send their children to school. Under this scheme, the mother of the child is incentivized with Rs. 15,000/- per annum with the rider of 75% attendance. A sum of Rs.13,000/- will be deposited in the bank account of the student's mother towards financial assistance; and Rs. 1,000/- each should be contributed towards Toilets and School Maintenance Funds for the up keeping of schools. The scheme is applicable for the students studying between standard 1 to standard 12 in Government, Private aided or Private unaided schools.

2. **Jagananna Gorumudda**

Jagananna Gorumudda is a welfare programme launched by the Government of Andhra Pradesh on 21st January, 2020 to provide education to children below the poverty line. Under this scheme, quality nutritious food with daily changing menu is being provided to the students modifying the menu of mid-day meal scheme.

3. **Jagananna Vidya Kanuka**

Jagananna Vidya Kanuka kits with a school bag, bilingual textbooks, work books, notebooks, three pairs of uniform, shoes, two pairs of socks and a dictionary are being given to the students on the school re-opening day.

4. **Jagananna Vidya Deevena**

Jagananna Vidya Deevena is a scheme under which the students get the benefit of full fee reimbursement. The scheme is being implemented on a quarterly basis making reimbursement of fees at the end of each quarter.

5. **Jagananna Vasathi Deevena**

Jagananna Vasathi Deevena is a scheme that provides the students the hostel facility along with mess charges providing financial assistance to a tune of Rs.20,000/- per year.

6. **Manabadi Nadu-Nedu**

The Government of Andhra Pradesh has launched 'Manabadi Nadu-Nedu' scheme on 14th November 2019 to provide the basic infrastructural facilities in schools with nine (9) components, viz., (i) Toilets with running water facility, (ii) Electrification with fans and tube lights, (iii) Drinking water supply, (iv) Furniture for students and staff, (v) Paintings to schools, (vi) Major and minor repairs to the school buildings, (vii) Green chalk boards, (viii) English labs; and (ix) Compound walls in all Government Schools with a view to bring about transformation in all the Government schools in the State.

7. **Free tabs for students and teachers**

Books are provided to the teachers and the students of Class 8 every year to provide them access to study material and to improve the academic performance of students.

8. **English Medium Education from Primary stage**

English medium education with CBSE syllabus is provided to the students studying in Government schools from the Primary stage.

9. **Initiation for digitalization of education**

Steps are being taken to provide interactive flat panels in all the classroom from class 6 onwards in about 5,800 Government schools. Further, smart TVs are provided in 10,038 Foundation and Foundation plus schools as an initiative towards digitalization of education.

10. **Subject Teacher concept**

The Government has taken steps to provide subject teachers in schools from Class 3 onwards with a view to provide quality education for the students under the guidance of expert teachers in different subjects.

Review of Related Studies

The studies carried out earlier by the other researchers that aim at finding out the attitude of teachers towards the influence of welfare schemes on quality improvement in elementary

schools have been examined; and a brief review of the same is provided in the following paragraphs.

Sasikumar, S. & Balaji, P. (2020) conducted an exploratory study to understand the Government school students' perception towards cost-free welfare schemes of Government of Tamil Nadu. The researchers adopted survey method to gather the perception from school students those who were residing in Chennai city of Tamil Nadu and pursuing their school education at different Government schools. The data collected were subjected to analysis by using percentage analysis, descriptive statistics, mean based ranking, factor analysis and independent sample t test. The results indicated that four independent factors have been extracted out of 15 SEG variables. The Enrichment Factor is the most dominant one, followed by Amenities Factor, Cost-Free Welfare Schemes Factor and Sports Factor in the order of dominance. The respondents have given higher perception on awareness of various Cost-Free Welfare Schemes offered to school students as compared to accessibility to Cost-Free Welfare Schemes. The study concluded that school students are expecting more welfare schemes from Tamil Nadu school education department to increase the enrollment ratio across different Government schools. The students also expressed that the food offered in noon-meal system can be enriched with good quality to attract more number of beneficiaries in Government schools of Tamil Nadu.

Dr. Nimmi Maria Oommen (2019) conducted a study on the 'Issues and Challenges of Elementary Education in India'. The researcher felt that though the Constitution of India made elementary education a fundamental right of children in the age group 6-14 years, there are still several constraints that come in the way of improving quality in elementary schools in the country. The investigator enumerated some of the issues and challenges that come in the way of fulfilling its mission of upholding basic education for all. These issues include: (i) defective educational policies; (ii) lack of suitable teachers in elementary education; (iii) shortage of funds; (iv) defective educational administration; (v) faulty curriculum; (vi) wastage and stagnation at elementary level; (vii) lack of infrastructural facilities; (viii) differences in the geographical conditions; and (ix) poverty and ignorance of parents. The study recommended though several issues have been addressed earlier by the then Governments, still we have to work hard to solve the issues and challenges for the development of elementary education in the country.

Mrs. Kesang Sherpa and Dr. Rihunlang Rymbai (2018) conducted a study to focus on identifying the educational schemes that are available for women's education at different levels and to analyze the schemes that are available for women. The study is limited to the schemes of UGC for Girls/Women in Higher Education; Central Government schemes for Girls/Women education; and West Bengal schemes for Girls/Women education. The descriptive method and document analysis has been used for the study. Data has been collected from various government e-sources viz., Ministry of Human Resources Development (MHRD); Ministry of Women and Child Development; Department of School Education and Literacy Government of West Bengal; Department of Women Development and Social Welfare Government of West Bengal; University Grant Commission (UGC) Guidelines 2012-17; Press Information Bureau- Government of India; Census Report 2011; and e-newspapers.

The study revealed that the Governments are putting forth their efforts in implementing different schemes for the progress of women in education. All the objectives of the schemes have focused to support the education of the girls' by providing them scholarships, constructing hostels, opening of saving accounts etc. The financial assistance provided by the governments is meeting the educational needs of the girl child especially those belong to

disadvantages group and low socio-economic status. Besides supporting the education of women, the schemes have also put great endeavor to empower the women socially; make them become self reliant and economically independent. The study also suggested that there should be change in the mindset of people in the society towards girls' education. The study emphasized that it is the duty of the society, institutions and organizations to arrange the awareness programmes for people to make them understand the schemes available for the education of women and their well-being.

Dr. Kusum (2016) made an attempt to study the attitude of elementary school teachers towards Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan. The researcher used Descriptive survey method for the present investigation. Keeping in view the nature of the present study, the investigator developed and standardized an attitude scale consisting of 40 items on different aspects of UEE. For the present study, purposive sampling method was used to select a sample of 100 teachers from Government and Private schools located in rural as well as urban areas. The data collected from the teachers were analyzed using different statistical techniques such as Means, Standard Deviations and t-tests. The findings of the study revealed that there was no significant difference between the attitude of rural and urban Elementary School teachers towards Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan. There was significant difference between the attitude of male and female Elementary School teachers towards Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan. The results also revealed that there was no significant difference between the attitude of arts and science stream teachers towards Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan.

Need and Importance of the study

In spite of the efforts taken by the Governments – both the Central and the State to achieve Universalization of Elementary Education (UEE), the purpose has not been achieved completely even today. Several research studies reveal that UEE is possible only with the intervention of several welfare schemes made available to the students at elementary level. The researchers felt that the attitude of teachers towards UEE also plays a significant role in the enrolment and retention of students in elementary schools. It is also thought that quality improvement in elementary education is possible when the teachers in elementary schools work with commitment and dedication; and possess a positive attitude towards achieving the goals of UEE. In this context, it is felt by the researchers to study the factors that influence the attitude of teachers towards the welfare schemes being implemented by the Government on quality improvement in elementary education. The present investigation is an attempt in this direction.

Objectives of the study

1. To study the attitude of teachers towards the influence of welfare schemes on quality improvement in Elementary Education.
2. To examine the influence of demographic variables – gender, teaching experience, type of school management and the the medium of institution offered by the school on the attitude of teachers towards the influence of welfare schemes on quality improvement in Elementary Education.

Hypotheses of the study

1. There is no significant difference in the attitude of male and female teachers towards the influence of welfare schemes on quality improvement in elementary education.
2. There is no significant difference in the attitude of teachers with an experience of less than 10 years and those with 10 years and above towards the influence of welfare schemes on quality improvement in elementary education.
3. There is no significant difference in the attitude of teachers working in Government and

Private schools towards the influence of welfare schemes on quality improvement in elementary education.

4. There is no significant difference in the attitude of teachers working in English and Telugu medium schools towards the influence of welfare schemes on quality improvement in elementary education.

Limitations of the study

The study is limited to find out the attitude of 400 teachers (150 Male and 250 Female) towards the influence of welfare schemes on quality improvement in elementary education from 80 selected Elementary schools of Srikakulam district in Andhra Pradesh. Further, the study is confined to find out the influence of four demographic variables, viz., gender, teaching experience, type of school management and medium of instruction offered by the school on the attitude of teachers towards the influence of welfare schemes on quality improvement in elementary education.

Methodology

(a) Method of Research

The researchers followed the Survey Method of the descriptive research for the present investigation.

(b) Sample

The sample of the study consists of 400 teachers (150 Male and 250 Female) from 80 selected Elementary schools located in Srikakulam district of Andhra Pradesh using Stratified Random Sampling technique.

(c) Research Tool

The researchers used a well prepared and standardized questionnaire consisting of 45 items to collect data for the present investigation.

(d) Administration of the Tool

The tool was initially administered to 40 teachers (15 Male and 25 Female) in the schools located in Srikakulam town under Pilot study. The measures of reliability, validity and objectivity of the tool have been calculated. Further, the researchers conducted item analysis for the items included in the tool. Out of 43 items selected for the tool, the discriminating power of 40 items has been found positive and is found negative in respect of 3 items. The items whose discriminating power is negative have been removed; and the final tool consists of 40 items which are pool proof in all respects. The final tool has been administered to 400 teachers (150 Male and 250 Female) working in 80 Elementary Schools located in Srikakulam District of Andhra Pradesh.

(e) Statistical Techniques Used

The investigators used different statistical techniques such as Mean Score values, Standard Deviations and t- tests for data analysis and interpretation.

Table showing Mean, SD and t-values on the perceptions of teachers towards the use of Blended Learning approach in secondary schools

S. No.	Variable		N	Mean	S.D.	t-ratio	Result
1	Gender	Male Female	150 250	130.37 131.46	34.53 37.08	0.29*	*Not Significant at 0.05 and 0.01

							levels
2	Teaching Experience	Less than 10 yrs. 10 yrs. & above	220 180	130.77 130.06	35.19 33.73	0.21*	*Not Significant at 0.05 and 0.01 levels
3	School Management	Government (Local Bodies) Private	270 130	132.94 130.96	33.75 34.59	0.54*	*Not Significant at 0.05 and 0.01 levels
4	Medium of instruction	English Telugu	120 280	130.66 131.64	34.11 34.04	0.26*	*Not Significant at 0.05 and 0.01 levels

Findings of the study

The following are the findings of the present investigation:

1. There is no significant difference in the attitude of male and female teachers towards the influence of welfare schemes on quality improvement in elementary education.
2. There is no significant difference in the attitude of teachers with an experience of less than 10 years and those with 10 years and above towards the influence of welfare schemes on quality improvement in elementary education.
3. There is no significant difference in the attitude of teachers working in Government and Private schools towards the influence of welfare schemes on quality improvement in elementary education.
4. There is no significant difference in the attitude of teachers working in English and Telugu medium schools towards the influence of welfare schemes on quality improvement in elementary education.

Conclusions

From the findings of the study, it is concluded that the gender, teaching experience, type of school management and the medium of instruction offered by the institution have no influence on the attitude of teachers towards the influence of welfare schemes on quality improvement in Elementary Education.

Recommendations

The study recommended that the teachers should possess a favorable positive attitude towards achieving the goals of UEE in providing quality elementary education to the children.

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