



SARPANCH'S INTERVENTION IN PROMOTING QUALITY EDUCATION

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Abstract

Education is the backbone of any society. It is the long-term continuous process, involving values and ethics. Development of community or rural area is not an overnight process. Education is the cornerstone of socio-economic and cultural development for any country. It has emerged as the most important single input in promoting human resource development, in achieving rapid economic development and technological progress, and creating a social order based on the virtues of freedom, social justice and equal opportunity in the county. An appropriate education system cultivates knowledge, better skills, positive value and attitudes among people, especially those who acquire it.

In India, primary education is the concurrent responsibility of the central government and the states. In many states this responsibility is not adequately fulfilled, and education is underfunded. To achieve national policy objectives in education, states will need to improve their fiscal performance and devote more resources to education. And at least in the medium term, the central government will need to continue to support state efforts. An important challenge is to devise the most effective mechanism for this support. This support at village level is to be provided by the sarpanch.

Keywords: Education, Constitution, Political decentralization, Policy, Democracy.

Introduction

The village panchayat through its education committee, social justice committee and other such committees has a vital role to play in the development of primary and secondary education in the villages of our country. At the school level, the school management committee is also to play a pivotal role not only towards fund management, but also in terms of educational quality and managing the education and its supportive resources. It is at this functional juncture that the role of sarpanch, being the ex-officio head of the panchayat level committees and member to the school management committee becomes vital. If the sarpanch can duly perform the role, then the quality of education and resultant development of the students in the village, who in turn become responsible citizens contributing to rural development is upheld. A failure or negligence of this role performance may have detrimental effects not only to the primary and secondary education system but also on the entire rural development scenario as a whole.

Educational Initiatives in Gujarat

Over the past decades, the Government of Gujarat has initiated various programmes towards improvement of education in the state. It has led to improvements in both infrastructure and access to education, especially to the marginalised and minority groups. A few of the key initiatives in the state for education are as under:

- **Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan:** The Gujarat Council of Elementary Education (GCEE) is the state level implementing agency for Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan Mission (SSA) across the State. The sarpanch being chairman of the Village Education Committee of the schools under the jurisdiction of the gram panchayat and also the formal head of the panchayat, plays a vital role in facilitating the quality of education at the village level as per the guidelines of the Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan.
- **Kasturba Gandhi Balika Vidyalay (KGBV) Yojana:** The objective of Kasturba Gandhi Balika Vidyalay Yojana is to ensure that quality education is feasible and accessible to the girls of disadvantaged groups of society by setting up residential schools with boarding facilities at elementary level. The sarpanch's role is critical here not only to enroll such deserving and eligible girls in the scheme, but also to ensure that the implementation is carried out hassle-free. The sarpanch, therefore helps in identification of never enrolled girls to enroll them, school drop-out girls to bring them back to the education system and
- **Vidya Laxmi Bond:** Under this scheme, the sarpanch encourages the parents to send their girl child to school and to obtain education at least up to primary level. Through this scheme in village area the girl school dropout ratio reduces. The scheme is targeted towards villages with a literacy rate less than 35% and to such girls in urban areas belonging to the Below Poverty Line category. It is the role of the sarpanch to facilitate the implementation of this scheme in the village by identification of beneficiaries as well as supporting the achievement of the objectives.
- **Distribution of Cost free Text Books:** Resource provisioning for educational upliftment and attainment of educational goals is one of the prime responsibilities of the sarpanch. The activities need to be in tandem with the goals of the New National Education Policy as well as supportive to the cultural, social and economic necessities of village life. Hence, the resource mobilization for free textbook distribution in village level and other such initiative become important. This is one of the oldest scheme being run in the state to facilitate free of cost textbooks for children in the primary grades and also reduces drop-out on account of inability to buy the books.



- **Gunotsav Programme:** As the formal village head, supportive monitoring, supervision and review are core responsibilities of the sarpanch. The school system assessment hence becomes a part of his role. The sarpanch is to continually evaluate schools and teachers associated to provide recommendations to improve the quality of education at the primary and upper primary levels. Ensuring enhancement of learning levels is a task that the sarpanch must support. With the Gunotsav programme assessing the reading, writing, arithmetical skills of school children, rankings/grades to schools are provided and further developmental/corrective inputs are designed. The sarpanch has a motivational role to play in these developmental and corrective inputs in case the school grading is low and supplemental role to play in cases where school grades are better.
- **Assistance for Infrastructure:** The sarpanch and gram panchayat are responsible for the overall development of the school and play a key role in providing basic services vital for the health and well-being of school children like, drinking water and sanitation and so on. The state government has also been providing assistance to build physical facilities at schools like building separate toilet facilities for boys and girls, drinking water facilities and making provision for computer labs. In the year 2015-16, facility of drinking water was provided in 43,589 schools. Other than this 42,642 boys' toilet, 48,382 girls' toilet, 37,085 ramps facility and 20,502 computer laboratory was provided. (As per the report of Socio Economic Review 2015-16, Gujarat State, Directorate of Economics and Statistics, Government of Gujarat).

Objective

To examine the role of sarpanch in providing infrastructure facilities, teaching learning material and monitoring the functioning of school.

Materials and Methods

The researcher has adopted descriptive research design for the current study, as it describes the various roles to be performed by the sarpanches with reference to rural development and guided by 22 areas of rural development as enshrined in 11th Schedule of the Constitution of India. Anand is considered as one of the most prosperous districts of Gujarat and the most developed and richest village of Asia – Dharmaj is from this district. Moreover, the district is home to the internationally acclaimed developmental diamond – The Amul, a success story of the cooperative movement and the home-ground for the White Revolution. Institute of Rural Management, a premier institute providing education and training for rural management is also located in Anand district and so is the acclaimed Anand Agriculture University. Even, the Gujarat's baccalaureate pioneering social work education school – Anand Institute of Social Work is in Anand district. These indicate Anand as a developed district and the role of sarpanches in this context of development is important to be understood, hence the universe of study includes all the sarpanches of Anand district.

Review of Literature

Vishal, K. and Ramakanta, M. (2017) conducted a study on "Role of Panchyati Raj Institution members in Managing Elementary Education in Bihar". The study was conducted a view to examine the role of Panchayati Raj Institutions members in providing infrastructure facilities, teaching learning material and monitoring the functioning of school. The study concluded that awareness and orientation programmes may be organised for the Panchayati Raj Institutions members on their roles and responsibility in managing the elementary education, especially in the context of the Right to Education Act 2009. Also, the Panchayati Raj Institutions members must be oriented about the process of developing school development plan as part of the Right to Education Act 2009. The central government has introduced a number of positive welfare schemes and many states of the country have put in their best efforts to implement the same in their respective jurisdiction. Mostly, in rural areas most of the students come from poor sections of society who may not have two square meals a day, this affects the academic result of the students because with unbalanced diet there is a major chance for a student to be irregular in the classroom and they will show little or no interest in their studies. The school has an important role to play in promoting the intellectual, physical and emotional development of the child.

Results and Discussion

Table No.1 Education including Primary and Secondary Schools (n= 185)

1.1. To provide supportive supervision for ensuring full enrolment of school age children.		
Particulars	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Strongly Agree	149	80.5 %
Agree	21	11.4 %
Neutral	12	6.5 %
Disagree	2	1.1 %
Strongly Disagree	1	0.5 %



1.2 To provide supportive supervision to the campaign for reduction in school dropouts.		
Strongly Agree	94	50.8 %
Agree	80	43.2 %
Neutral	9	4.9 %
Disagree	2	1.1 %
1.3 To support the assessment of school drop-outs and initiate appropriate action to reduce it.		
Strongly Agree	90	48.6 %
Agree	67	36.2 %
Neutral	22	11.9 %
Disagree	5	2.7 %
Strongly Disagree	1	0.5 %
1.4 To supervise the implementation of Midday Meals Scheme in schools.		
Strongly Agree	93	50.3 %
Agree	50	27.0 %
Neutral	31	16.8 %
Disagree	9	4.9 %
Strongly Disagree	2	1.1 %
1.5 To provide supportive supervision for pre-primary education and child-welfare activities.		
Strongly Agree	90	48.6 %
Agree	62	33.5 %
Neutral	26	14.1 %
Disagree	5	2.7 %
Strongly Disagree	2	1.1 %
1.6 To provide supportive supervision for spread of importance of education in village.		
Strongly Agree	76	41.1 %
Agree	66	35.7 %
Neutral	33	17.8 %
Disagree	8	4.3 %
Strongly Disagree	2	1.1 %

From table 1.1 it is seen that 80.5 percent (n=149) respondents were strongly agree to provide supportive supervision for ensuring full enrolment of school age children, 11.4 percent (n=21) have agreed to provide supportive supervision for ensuring full enrolment of school age children, 6.5 percent (n=12) have Neutral to provide supportive supervision for ensuring full enrolment of school age children, 1.1 percent (n=2) respondents have disagree to provide supportive supervision for ensuring full enrolment of school age children, 0.5 percent (n=1) respondent have strongly disagree to provide supportive supervision for ensuring full enrolment of school age children. Thus, it can be concluded that most of the respondents have agree to their providing supportive supervision for ensuring full enrolment of school age children i.e., 80.5 percent (n=149)

With reference to role of providing supervision for campaign for reduction in school dropouts 50.8 percent (n=94) respondents were strongly agreed to their role, 43.2 percent (n=80) have agreed it, 4.9 percent (n=9) are neutral said role. A meagre 1.1 percent (n=2) respondents disagreed to their role in the above mention aspect. Hence, we concluded that from table 1.2, most of the respondents agree to their supportive supervision for the campaign for reduction in school dropouts.

The table 1.3 concludes with a majority of the research subjects i.e. 48.6 percent (n=90) strongly agreeing to their supportive supervisory role in assessment of school drop-outs and initiate appropriate action to reduce, 36.2 percent (n=67) have agreed it, 11.9 percent (n=22) are neutral said role, 2.7 percent (n=5) respondents have disagree to role performance, 0.5 percent (n=1) respondent strongly disagreed to provide support the assessment of school drop-outs and initiate appropriate action to reduce it. Which the researchers believe that most of the respondents have to support the assessment of school drop-outs and initiate appropriate action to reduce it.



In table 1.4, there is found to be a striking 50.3 percent (n=93) respondents were strongly agree to supervise the implementation of Midday Meals Scheme in schools, 27.0 percent (n=50) have agreed to supervise the implementation of Midday Meals Scheme in schools, 16.8 percent (n=31) have Neutral to supervise the implementation of Midday Meals Scheme in schools, 4.9 percent (n=9) respondents have disagree to supervise the implementation of Midday Meals Scheme in schools, 1.1 percent (n=2) respondents have strongly disagree to supervise the implementation of Midday Meals Scheme in schools. Hence, we concluded that a large majority respondent have to supervise the implementation of Midday Meals Scheme in schools i.e., 50.3 percent (n=93)

The data as shown in table 1.5 it is seen that 48.6 percent (n=90) respondents were strongly agreed to provide supportive supervision for pre-primary education and child-welfare activities, 33.5 percent (n=62) have agreed to provide supportive supervision for pre-primary education and child-welfare activities, 14.1 percent (n=26) have neutral to provide supportive supervision for pre-primary education and child-welfare activities, 2.7 percent (n=5) respondents have disagree to provide supportive supervision for pre-primary education and child-welfare activities, 1.1 percent (n=2) respondents have strongly disagree to provide supportive supervision for pre-primary education and child-welfare activities. Hence the researcher see that a large majority of the respondents have to provide supportive supervision for pre-primary education and child-welfare activities i.e., 48.6percent (n=90)

From table 1.6 it can be seen that most of respondents i.e. 41.1 percent (n=76) have strongly agreed to provide supportive supervision for spread of importance of education in village, 35.7 percent (n=66) have agreed to provide supportive supervision for spread of importance of education in village, 17.8 percent (n=33) are neutral to provide supportive supervision for spread of importance of education in village, 4.3 percent (n=8) respondents disagreed to provide supportive supervision for spread of importance of education in village, 1.1 percent (n=2) respondents has strongly disagree to provide supportive supervision for spread of importance of education in village. Thus, it can be concluded that most of the respondents agreed to their role of providing supportive supervision for spread of importance of education in village i.e., 41.1 percent (n=76).

Conclusion

In the rural area, the panchayat institutions led by the sarpanch can play a vital role in development of primary education and sustaining development of rural area. The primary education is the main instrument of all round development of the village people; it develops various skills among the students to face the challenges of life. The sarpanch, through the panchayat institutions can play an important role in implementing the governmental interventions pertaining to education in all the villages. The sarpanch can play a vital role in eradication of illiteracy and facilitating the primary education to a large extent, with him/her being the formal leader at the village level.

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