

Quality of Primary Education: A Comparative Study of J&K and Himachal Pradesh

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Abstract:

The present study examined the interregional disparities in the quality of primary education in selected blocks of Udhampur (J&K) and Hamirpur district(H.P). It would become easy to find out that which state is providing quality education to the students through quality of education index. The Quality of Education Index (QEI) has been constructed using three indices: (i) Quality of Teaching Index (QTI) (ii) School Infrastructure Index (SII) (iii) Learning Achievement Index (LAI). It can be observed from the data that Himachal Pradesh is performing better than J&K. From block wise comparison, it can be observed that Nadaun block of Hamirpur District scored the highest in overall ranking. But Hamirpur block topped in QTI and LAI and Nadaun block topped in SII whereas, the blocks from Udhampur District were at the bottom ranking. At block level a high quality knowledge base on education system reform needs to be developed especially in Udhampur District (J&K) of study area.

Keywords: Human Development, Primary Education, School Infrastructure, Quality Teaching

Introduction:

The aim of education is the overall development of student. More often it has been observed that the elements of educational process are the teachers, students, curriculum and the infrastructure. Quality education need to be stressed at primary school level so that the overall development of the child can be enhanced in an effective manner. The last half century witnessed unprecedented advances in levels of education world over with increase in average school enrollment. But the worldwide improvement in educational indicators is confined to the quantity aspect alone. The learning achievements have been largely compromised. This has resulted in a huge gap between the market definition of required skilled manpower and the existing potential (D. A. Mehra et al., 2013)

Our present beliefs are based on historical events which make it important that the students assimilate the concepts and values appropriately. So, teaching has to be made vitally more interesting when teachers use student- centered methods. For achieving this, the teacher has to use various techniques and methods of teaching. We all are aware that in a class, students show individual differences in terms of intelligence, likes and dislikes, hobbies, learning styles, etc., so it is very important for the teacher to teach in a way that each student in the class finds the content interesting and appealing(Devendraswamy, 2018). It is said that every teacher has his or her own method of teaching. But the method should always be in accordance with the requirements of the age of students, their psychological level of understanding and their physical environment. A method is not merely a device adopted for communicating certain items of information to students. In the words of Pestalozzi, Education is a drawing out process and not a pouring out process, that the basis of all education in the nature of the child and that method of instruction must be sought and constructed to the end.

Literature Review:

Arora, Bali and Mehra(2012) the study has examined the various states of India. Among all Kerala scores the highest ranking in all three indices and most of the states like Bihar, Uttar Pradesh, Assam, Odisha, Jharkhand are at the bottom. The study suggested that at regional level high quality knowledge base education system reforms need to be developed. Patil and Jadhav (2017) sated that education is an important factor in social economic development to maintain economic inequality and low economic disparities. The author in his study has considered six literacy parameters caste wise, gender wise, different locations, regions etc. the results in the study has shown that Kerala is leading the highest rank and Bihar is at the bottom position and also the ST category has shown a larger variation in literacy rate.

During the phase of school education, primary education is one of the strong pillars which determine the development of all the faculties of the child. Even though the government is trying its best to uphold basic education for all, some issues remain unsolved(Jyothi, 2022)

In most of the rural areas many children do not get education due to the poor financial conditions of the family. To overcome the problem government should make compulsory education for all and provide free education to the masses. Also, the literacy rate of the female is less than the male because many parents do not allow their daughters to go to

school. To aware people NGOs and government should take initiative like introduce programmes, advertisements, campaigns etc. (Desai, 2013)

Primary schools are not showing good results in terms of educational management, educational achievement and basic facilities of these schools. Government schools don't have even basic facilities for learning (Bakhla & Kumari, 2020)

A three-level research-led approach that integrates teacher education, schooling and early learning. A systematic focus on the object of learning, whether in teaching in school, or educating entrants to the teaching profession at the university, or teacher educators inquiring into their practice, is one thrust of the approach. The principles of the Scholarship of Teaching and Learning (SoTL) movement, which holds inquiry as central, is proposed as a sustaining function. In this way we can arrive at what we would call 'learning classrooms' with 'learning teachers' at all layers of the system – from students to teachers to teacher educators – and 'learning pupils'. This process is incremental; it plays out over time. Most importantly, it is about teachers who bring the objects of learning to the fore in their teaching and their inquiry into teaching practice (Osman & Booth, 2014)

REFERENCE

Objectives:

1. To compare the quality of education in both the districts.
2. To find out the reason for less enrollment in government primary schools.
3. To suggest appropriate measures to improve the quality of primary education.

Methodology:

The primary data has been used for present study where 120 primary schools have been surveyed from two districts Udhampur (J&K) and Hamirpur (H.P) . Further from each district four blocks have been randomly selected. Using these data, a Quality Education Index has been constructed for all the blocks and the ranking has been given according to which a best performing block and worst performing block could be identified. As per the calculations, the QEI is a simple average of 3 indices namely: Quality of Teaching Index (QTI), School Infrastructure Index (SII) and Learning Achievement Index (LAI) i.e.

$$QEI = \frac{QTI + SII + LAI}{3}$$

The QEI index will indicate the quality of primary education in all the sampled blocks based upon these three indicators. In this view, each indicator considered in QEI first required to normalize. Each normalised value range between 0 and 1, a value near one represent better provision of particular indicator and the value near to zero represents dismal performance of the selected blocks of the states. Thus, in case of each indicator, in view of its nature, the best value and worst values are identified which are then used to transform by using the formula:

$$\text{Dimension of Index } X_i = \frac{\text{Observed Value of } X_i - \text{Minimum } X_i}{\text{Maximum } X_i - \text{Minimum } X_i}$$

Among these indicators, the QTI represents Quality of Teaching which has been constructed using (i) pupil-teacher ratio (ii) Percentage of female teachers (iii) Percentage of school with single teacher. Another component of QEI is School Infrastructure Index (SII), constructed using set of eight variables namely (i) percentage of school without drinking water (ii) percentage of school without toilets (iii) percentage of school without girls toilets (iv) student classroom ratio (v) percentage of school without boundary walls (vi) percentage of school without computer labs (vii) percentage of school without play ground (viii) percentage of school without separate library. The third component of QEI is Learning Achievement Index (LAI) which includes variable like (i) percentage of appeared children passed (ii) percentage of children passed with $\geq 60\%$ marks (iii) percentage of teachers without professional degree (iv) Repetition rate (v) Dropout rate

Quality of Teaching Index (QTI)

The QTI as given in Table 1 comprises of pupil-teacher ratio, percentage of female teachers, percentage of school with single teacher. There were many schools in especially in blocks of Udhampur district which have single teacher. It becomes difficult for a teacher to manage even if the pupil teacher ratio was 13:1 in Ramnagar block and it was maximum for Nadaun block of Hamirpur district. Maximum percentage of schools were from Majalta block of Udhampur district which were having single teacher.

Table 1: Quality of Teaching Index (QTI)

Block	Pupil Teacher Ratio	Percentage of female teachers	Percentage of school with single teacher	Quality of Teaching Index (QTI)
Udhampur	0.66	0	0.39	0.35
Chenani	1	0.32	0.39	0.57

Majalta	0.16	0.32	0	0.16
Ramnagar	1	0.16	0.19	0.45
Nadaun	0	1	0.79	0.59
Sujanpur	0.33	0.44	0.6	0.45
Bhoranj	0.16	0.88	0.79	0.61
Hamirpur	0.33	0.54	1	0.62

Source: Calculated by author based on primary data

Learning Achievement Index (LAI)

Another important factor that affects quality of education is the learning achievement of the students. According to World Bank (2011), in the primary years, quality teaching is critical for giving students the foundational literacy and numeracy on which lifelong learning depends. Knowledge and skill contributes to an individual's ability to have an healthy and educated family and engage in civic life. In the present study, different indicators for LAI has been taken, they are falling under following categories: percentage of appeared children passed, percentage of children passed with $\geq 60\%$ marks, percentage of teachers without professional degree, Repetition rate, Dropout rate. The state government of Himachal Pradesh, by giving incentives to teachers has made efforts in reaching the nomads in the hills in order to teach their children (Chugh, 2009). The teachers mostly without professional degree i.e. B.Ed were from Chenani and Majalta block. The dropout rate was maximum in Ramnagar block. Major reason found out was that the students were forced to leave schools to earn livelihood.

Table 2: Learning Achievement Index (LAI)

Block	%age of appeared children passed	%age of children passed with $\geq 60\%$ marks	%age of teachers without professional degree	Repetition rate	Dropout rate	Learning Achievement Index (LAI)
Udhampur	1	0.68	0.5	1	0.8	0.79
Chenani	1	0.72	0	0	1	0.54
Majalta	1	0.86	0	0	1	0.57
Ramnagar	1	0.82	0.25	1	0	0.61
Nadaun	1	0.90	0.72	1	0.92	0.9
Sujanpur	1	0.56	1	0.8	0.64	0.8
Bhoranj	1	0.64	0.72	0.8	0	0.63
Hamirpur	1	0.70	1	1	1	0.94

Source: Calculated by author based on primary data

School Infrastructure Index (SII)

The another important constituent of QEI is school infrastructure which facilitates motivation for increase in school attendance and improves academic performance of students. SII includes indices like (i) percentage of school without drinking water (ii) percentage of school without toilets (iii) percentage of school without girls toilets (iv) Student classroom ratio (v) percentage of school without boundary walls (vi) percentage of school without computer labs (vii) percentage of school without play ground (viii) percentage of school without separate library. Hamirpur block has topped in overall SII ranking whereas Ramnagar block of J&K is at bottom ranking of SII. From the table below it can be observed that there is no sampled primary school from the study area that have a library. There is not 100 percent toilets facilities in the sampled schools and the sampled schools from all the blocks do not have separate toilet facilities for girls. The matter of concern is that all the sampled schools from Chenani block and Ramnagar block do not have drinking water facility.

Table 3: School Infrastructure Index

Block	%age of school without drinking water	%age of school without toilets	%age of school without girls toilets	Student classroom ratio	%age of school without boundary walls	%age of school without computer labs	%age of school without play ground	%age of school without separate library	School Infrastructure Index (SII)
Udhamp	1	1	0.33	0.31	0.44	0.34	0.44	0	0.55

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Chenani	0.5	0.48	0.11	0	0.22	0.34	0.33	0	0.28
Majalta	1	0.48	0.22	0.31	0.44	0	0.44	0	0.41
Ramnagar	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0.14
Nadaun	1	1	0.88	0.49	1	0.66	0.89	0	0.84
Sujanpur	1	1	0.78	0.59	0.77	0.34	0.78	0	0.75
Bhoranj	1	1	0.55	0.29	0.88	0	0.66	0	0.62
Hamirpur	1	1	1	0.88	1	1	1	0	0.98

Source: Calculated by author based on primary data

Results and Discussion:

Development signifies both qualitative and quantitative achievements. Quality of teaching, availability of infrastructure and learning achievements plays a very significant role in determining overall quality of education. Lacking of any component may adversely affect the quality of education. Table 4 shows the QEI of various blocks. Blocks of Hamirpur district were at top ranking and that of Udhampur district were at bottom ranking. Mostly focus is required in proper management of education system of Udhampur district so that the quality of education is achieved.

Table4: Quality of Education Index

Block	QTI	Rank	SII	Rank	LAI	Rank	Quality of Education Index
Udhampur	0.35	6	0.31	7	0.79	4	6 (0.48)
Chenani	0.57	4	0.30	8	0.54	8	7 (0.47)
Majalta	0.16	7	0.71	2	0.57	7	5 (0.57)
Ramnagar	0.45	5	0.32	6	0.61	6	8 (0.46)
Nadaun	0.59	3	0.73	1	0.9	2	1 (0.74)
Sujanpur	0.45	5	0.5	4	0.8	3	4 (0.58)
Bhoranj	0.61	2	0.57	3	0.63	5	3 (0.60)
Hamirpur	0.62	1	0.46	5	0.94	1	2 (0.67)

Source: Primary Data, figures are calculated by author.

Conclusion and Policy Implications:

Several projects and programmes have been launched by Government of India and various states. The first major initiative was commencing of District Primary Education Programme (DPEP) in 1994-95 and then Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan (SSA) in 2000-01 now Samagra Shiksha. Kerala, Punjab and Himachal Pradesh have showed considerable progress in developing school infrastructure under these programmes. But Bihar, Uttar Pradesh and the eight states of North East India have not reaped the benefits of these centrally sponsored schemes. Where the educationally backward states like Bihar and U.P lack the financial capacity to fund the programmes, the states of North East region adopted the SSA only in 2002-03. Thus, In order to deal with their education deficit, allocations should be made corruption free, timely and also require proper governance (A. Mehra et al., 2018). Many families do not send their ward in Government schools because of lack of infrastructure which includes toilets facilities, drinking water facilities, proper classrooms, lack of libraries and computer labs. Under RTE (2009) schools are required to have playground, boundary wall, store room etc. but in many of the sampled schools lack in these facilities. Another important reason found out that there is lack of teachers in the schools. There were many sampled schools with single teacher and dropout rate was maximum in

Ramnagar block.

Several policy measures can be taken to improve the QEI:

- Primary schools must have basic facilities like toilet facilities, 4-5 classrooms, drinking water facilities, one computer lab, library, playground, boundary wall etc. These facilities are basic rights of children in schools and therefore cannot be compromised.
- An ideal pupil teacher ratio is required to enhance the quality of education. It becomes difficult for a single teacher to take five classes and five subjects for each class.
- A well qualified teacher will impart better learning to students. Also, better incentives to teachers will reduce teacher absenteeism.
- Parents need to send their students to schools so that the dropout rate can be reduced. Both teachers and village level committee can contribute to enroll maximum students in primary schools.
- The education sector needs to give more weight to the transparency and accountability factors so that no misuse of financial allocation of resources can be made and funds can be used accordingly.

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