

Causes Affecting the Academic Performance of Public Primary Schools at District Dir Lower, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Pakistan

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Abstract:

The present preliminary study was undertaken to assess those causes affecting the academic performance of public schools in District Dir lower. A close ended questionnaire was developed and was distributed randomly among teachers of twenty five public primary schools. In this descriptive nature study data was collected, analyzed and interpreted through percentage method. The results showed that there is lack of facilities, old assessment system based on memorization, no punishment or rewards on students' academic achievement and no rewards for teachers' academic performance and

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achievement. Weak supervision, bizarre educational policies and lack of education department autocracy has been hurdle in bringing identified positive changes in academic achievements and students' performance. Based on the current study, it is recommended that the academic performance can be improved by teachers' motivation and system accountability. Updated and standard curriculum should be designed and adopted. Advanced assessment system should be employed. Teachers should be awarded for their academic performances and their problems should be considered at the earliest.

Key words: Dir lower, teachers' satisfaction, students' achievements, curriculum, motivation.

1. Introduction

In modern world, it is impossible for any society to flourish without education. As every society need it for socializing its masses, so proper education policy is the core issue of any education system and developing a desired society. Education acts as a main pillar for any society (Zafar 2003). In education career primary education provide base for future education but unfortunately in Pakistan no proper attention is given to primary education. While a little attention is paid to private primary schools but public primary schools are in miserable conditions. Basic life needs such as pure drinking water, enough class rooms, seats or benches in class rooms, wash rooms, electricity and boundary walls are not available in these schools (Ali, 2013).

There are many government schools in district Dir (Lower). Some are educating masses up to primary level, some up to middle and some up to higher secondary level. Private sector is becoming the business of choice and no proper attention is given to the central aspect of education, the students and public primary schools are even in more despondent conditions. Many of the schools in the urban areas

are run by one to two teachers only and schools are used for everyday life activities. Therefore this survey was carried out to know about the causes affecting the academic performance of public primary schools. On account of limited time and resources, this study is still scanty and other researchers are motivated to work on the remaining aspects and update this specific aspect regularly. Still we are of the opinion that this study will provide useful information to the policy makers and will help to point out the problems that affect the academic performance of public primary schools.

2. Materials and Methods

This study was descriptive type survey. On account of limited resources and time, only twenty five male public primary schools of the district were selected during the study. Closed ended questionnaire was used during the survey as designed by Ali (2013) for his study with some modifications. The questionnaire was administered to fifty six primary teachers and their response rate was 100%. The data was analyzed and expressed in percentage method after arranging in a systematic way in table form.

3. Results

The questionnaire was consisting of twenty seven questions, divided into four parts as given in Table 1, 2, 3 and 4. Part one was consisting of nine questions regarding teacher opinion about students and schools' current status, given in Table 1. Part two was consisting of seven questions regarding teachers themselves, given Table 2. Part three was consisting of six questions regarding administration and part four was consisting of five general questions, given in Table 3 and 4 respectively.

S. No	Questions	Yes	%age	No	%age
1	Necessary facilities availability	8	14.28	48	85.72
2	Teacher availability per class	1	0.018	55	98.21
3	Co-curricular opportunities	40	71.43	16	28.57
4	Satisfied of the curriculum	13	23.21	43	76.79
5	Satisfied of teacher selection criteria	31	55.35	25	44.65
6	Students selection satisfaction	12	21.43	44	78.57
7	Appreciable changes in students' performance	31	55.36	25	44.64
8	Problems of multi-medium instruction for students	51	91.07	5	8.93
9	Assessment system based on memorization	52	92.86	4	7.14

Table 1. Questions regarding teachers' opinion about students and schools' current status

The above table is showing that only eight teachers of the total replied that the schools are having necessary life facilities such as chairs, washrooms, desks and drinking water etc. Only one school is having teacher per class. Forty respondents replied that their schools arrange co-curricular activities for the students. Only thirteen of all respondents answered that they are satisfied of the current curriculum. Of the total respondents thirty one and twelve teachers were satisfied of teachers and students selection criteria respectively. Of the total respondents thirty one replied that they are noticing appreciable changes in students' performance after some time in the school while the rest of the teachers replied in negation. A massive fifty one teachers' group replied that multi medium instruction is creating problems for the students. Only four teachers were in favor of the current assessment system. According to them the current assessment system is based on memorization of the students not on their performance.

S. No	Questions	Yes	%age	No	%age
1	Joining teaching by choice or by chance	5	8.93	51	91.07
2	Rewards on academic achievement of teachers	0	0	56	100
3	Satisfied of your salary	11	19.64	45	80.36
4	Teachers' grouping	41	73.21	15	26.79
5	Teachers involvement in aimless activities	44	78.57	12	21.43
6	Teachers involvement in extra activities	50	89.29	6	10.71
7	Teachers co-operate each other	45	80.36	11	19.64

Table 2. Questions regarding teachers themselves

Of the total respondents only five replied that they have joined teaching by choice while fifty one replied that they are attached to this field by chance. Some of them urged that they would leave it as soon as they find new permanent job, as all of them replied that there is no reward on their academic achievement. Eleven respondents were satisfied of their salary package. Forty one respondents replied that teacher grouping exist among teachers in their schools. Of all respondents, forty four replied that they are involved in aimless activities like written work, clerical work etc. and fifty replied that teachers are involved in extra activities like payrolls, clearance etc. Forty five teachers were of the opinion that staff members co-operate each other.

S. No	Questions	Yes	%age	No	%age
1	Problems solution from administration side	1	1.79	55	98.21
2	Autocracy of management or teaching staff	27	48.21	29	51.79
3	Advance increment given for higher qualification	0	0	56	100
4	Administration solve students' problems	2	3.57	54	96.43

5	Administration focus on students' academic performance	1	1.79	55	98.21
6	Administration solve teachers' problems	0	0	56	100

Table 3. Questions regarding administration

Only one among all respondents replied that administration understand and solve his problems. Twenty seven teachers responded that the schools' management and teaching staff are autocratic. No one of the respondents was of the opinion that they are paid with advance increment for their higher qualification. Only two and one replied that administration solve students problem and focus on students academic performance respectively, while all replied in negation when asked about administration involvement in solving their problems.

S. No	Questions	Yes	%age	No	%age
1	In service trainings/ workshops/ symposium	3	5.36	53	94.64
2	Political interference	30	53.57	26	46.43
3	Refresher courses effectiveness	48	85.71	8	14.29
4	Punishment or rewards for students' academic achievement	25	44.64	31	55.36
5	Parents' poverty hinder students' academic achievements	40	71.43	16	28.57

Table 4. General Questions included in the questionnaire

The above table shows that only three teachers were of the opinion that in service trainings, workshops and symposiums are arranged for them by Government and other Non Governmental Organizations. Thirty of the respondents answered that politicians are involved in the current education system while twenty six replied in negation. Forty eight respondents replied that refresher courses are effective while eight replied in no. Twenty five teachers were of the opinion

that students are punished or rewarded on their academic achievement while thirty one replied in negation. Forty respondents were of the view that parents' poverty and weak economical condition hinder their kids' academic achievements.

4. Discussion

All respondents were of the view that there is no teacher available per each class. The administration does not focus on academic performance of the students. Teachers are not receiving any reward for their extra efforts and are not paid with extra allowance for higher qualification and academic achievements. The criterion for teachers' selection is not satisfactory. According to most the respondents there is no refresher courses for the teachers while some replied that there are but ineffective. Teachers are involved in extra activities and duties. Management is autocratic type. No advance increments are given for high qualification of the teachers. Teachers are allocated clerical work during duty hours and their valuable time is wasted. Most of the teachers are engaged in solving their problems regarding service books, pay scales and arrears etc. Most of the respondents replied that they have joined this profession by chance not by choice.

According to some of the respondents there is political interference in education. The assessment system is based on memorization rather than performance. There is a problem of multi-medium instructions in the schools. Forty percentage of the respondents responded that there is co-curricular opportunities for the students but most of the time they travel or approach grounds and activities center that are very far. Among all the schools surveyed, 80% of the schools were lacking all basic necessities. Only 30% of the respondents were satisfied of the curriculum. Only twenty percent of the respondents were satisfied of their job. Half of the respondents were of the view that poverty does not affect students' academic performance.

All of the respondents answered that the administration is not paying any attention to solve students as well as teachers' problems. Only twenty percentage respondents viewed that there is an appreciable change in students' performance since last ten years.

5. Conclusion

Our study revealed that public primary schools in district Dir lower have lots of problems that adversely affect the students' academic performance. The short comings on account of school management and government is rendering the conditions even more miserable and making the environment non suitable for learning process. The basic necessities of life were missing from the schools visited, in fact all of the schools surveyed were at least missing two to three of the basic facilities. The scenario is worsen by political interruption in management, extra burden of work on teachers such as clerical work, polio campaign, exam duties, census duties, election, voter list duties and education board affairs etc. There is not such ritual of motivating teachers by rewarding them on excellent performance or paying them for higher qualification, and similarly there is no concept of punishment even to the law breaking staff member. The teachers' recruitment is not satisfactory as less qualified personals are selected due to political approach. Old assessment system is also playing its rule in devastating the learning abilities of the students.

6. Recommendation

The government should increase the budget allocation for primary education in order to provide the basic facilities to the students and a teacher per class. Incentives should be given to motivate teachers and attractive packages should be given to highly qualified teachers. The management should be

cooperative and democratic type and should focus on learning instead of memorization and academic performance. Teacher training programs and refresher courses should be arranged and the teachers should be kept to teaching only and engaging them in other useless activities should be avoided. Political interferences should be eliminated; curriculum must be revised on advanced and standard basis keeping in view the future challenges, needs and children age. Proper co-curricular equipments and opportunities should be provided in order to provide a healthy and more sociable environment.

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