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Looking for Alternative Way to Provide Free and Compulsory Primary Education, Financial Reason – A Case Study of Champhai District in Mizoram

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Abstract:

Primary Education under the studied area is passing through its transitional period in its management from Government to the Private Enterprise. The period now lasts more than two decades. Now the private institutions are booming and are mostly chosen by majority family. Meanwhile the state Government allocated a large amount of fund for providing free education through its established Educational Institutions. This article is highlighting financial benefits for the State if immediate shift is practiced, leaving all other factors for further studies. The expected financial gain is calculated from the sample District. To do this the sum total Government expenditure on salary of Primary schools in the District for a particular month is collected, it is then compared with the amount of average one month fee paid by the same number of Children in these school had they been sent to locally available Private Institutions. The result showed the significance of the study in State Educational Management and need to shorten the shifting period to stop unnecessary monetary lost for unpreferred type of education. The finding may also be worthwhile for consideration erstwhile in the developing states within or outside the country.

Keywords: Primary education, transition, government, private, free education, choice

1. Introduction

Realising the present situation the truth and thoughtful remark had been made by the state's Honourable Ex-Education Minister in 2012, that though theoretically Education at Elementary stage is to be imbibed through Mother Tongue. But most of the Intellectuals, Educationist and even teachers in Mizo (mother tongue of the state) Medium School themselves send their children to the English Medium Schools run by Churches and Individuals rather than to the Mother Tongued Schools run by the State or Central Govt. free of cost. This Phenomenon really implies that for educating our children we put more confidence upon English Medium Schools run by Churches and Individuals than to our Mother tongued Government Schools.

If one asks Parents of Govt. school student anywhere inside the country, whether he preferred Mother tongued school or English medium school to educate his or her child, the answer will always be English medium school. In spite of this fact, thousands of students are now still learning in these Mizo(mother tongue) Medium Schools financed and administered by the state government, which is their second choice Institution. This is true to parents living in remote villages, Sub-Divisional towns and even to those in District Headquarters all over the State. The only reason they joined the Govt. school may be that, first, they do not afford to pay fees, Second, there were no English Medium school within the village. Due to these problems large numbers of our young people are now spending their educative years with hesitation, half satisfied, half-confidence of their Education. Thus the present article is a burning issue for the concerned state as well as other states where Universal education is not yet achieved at Primary level.

The state Government is trying very hard to fulfill the policy of Free and compulsory Education to all children below 14yrs. Huge portion of State funds had been spent for years, further this policy is supplemented through the hands of SSA(Sarva Shiksha Abhyan) with large amount of money giving free text books, uniforms and mid-day meal. Moreover, dropped out students due to domestic work assigned by parents are pulled back in remote area to School providing free education including free boarding and free meal, the government is really tire of doing its goal. Of course, the task is more or less accomplished so far. But the kind and quality of Education provided with such large amount of funds is still questionable that really it is not yet the first choice of parents and teachers. No one knows they are made a right or wrong decision in doing so but the fact is they rather choose English Medium school for educating their child.

In general, Mother tongued schools are financed and administered by the state Government and English medium schools are financed and administered by Individuals and Churches in the state. Till now the reason of preference, whether because of administrative cause or medium of instruction is not known. Although few Government English medium schools are set up here and there that are likely for experimental purposes, but it seem that these schools had not attracted the affluent parents; student in these schools are generally from

low family backgrounds. Therefore, medium of Instruction alone cannot be the reason of preference. Internal as well as external administrative system of the Institution may be the ultimate reason of preference.

1.1. Two Alternatives

Thus, it is time to prepare for reconsidering our efforts for realizing the longtime goal of Universalizing Primary education in our state or country at large. To achieve this goal both in quantity and quality the Government seems to have two alternatives; Convert all its Primary school into English medium, or Sent all students to Privately and churchly run English medium schools and paid fees for them.

The first option had been tried in the pasts, but there was some problem as the teachers were unable to cope with such new system, besides they are appointed by the state department binding with various conditions to be fulfilled by Government that may raise problems in administrative activities. The second option is the only hope at this hour. Can we provide those government school going children with their rather choice education at free of cost, using the same amount of funds or even at a lower expenditure that we are now bearing? This is the main topic in this short and brief work.

It's been a long time since Government is giving help to its Below Poverty line citizens in other Departments like Agriculture, Food and Civil Supply etc. by way of providing them grants or by giving their needs at subsidized rate or giving them at free of cost. The same is done even in Education but grants are given so indirect that teachers received it in the form of Salary involving a rigid government service rules on the part of the teachers. The whole monetary credits goes to the teacher but not to the Children. What Children enjoy is free but second choice Education. The present study is pinpointed to the financial possibility to provide its degraded citizens with their first chosen Education within their respective area.

1.2. Defining of the Study

Thus it is thought provoking Educational planning policy for the Government that it can also achieve its goal of Universalisation of Primary Education at lower cost if all the present Primary Schools children are sent to the Private English Medium School (as most of English Medium School are run by Individuals and Churches) by allotting them reimburse their fees.

The purpose of this work is therefore to highlight the apparent Expenditure difference for the two systems within Champhai District – One, the present way of educating Primary children in Government School free of cost; Another, Sending these children to Private Schools and paying fees for them. Then the procedure of study attempts

1. To obtain the total enrolment of Primary students within the sample district. i.e. Champhai District for a particular month ie September 2012.
2. To obtain simply the sum total Salary of all Primary Teachers in the Sample District for a particular month on which the total enrolment is available. And to calculate Government Expenditure per student per month.
3. To know average one month Tution Fee charged per student in Private/Church/Paid School within the District.
4. To compare the above two different expenditures and hence to ascertain the financial difference.

2. Body of the Topic

The data are mostly collected from primary sources. To obtain the sum total Government Primary teachers' salary of the District for the particular month ie September 2012, the Researcher went to the only two Sub-Divisional Offices in the District, namely Champhai Sub-Divisional Education Office, and Khawzawl Sub-Divisional Education office. The office workers in charge of the data are met and from them the required data is collected. This is done with both the state fund in charge of Regular Primary Teacher and with that of the SSA fund in charge under the District. Regarding the present Monthly fee collected by various paid Schools within the studied district, Owners and Principals of 64 Private unaided schools are asked through telephone interview, average of all these is then taken into consideration.

It was found that total enrollment in September 2012 in Government Primary School within the district is 10,129. Total number of teachers in the District is 527, of which 470 teachers draw their salary from State fund and 57 from SSA fund. Out of these SSA teachers 44 of them are assigned to Primary School drawing Rs 20000/- each per month, and remaining 13 are substituting teacher both for Primary and Middle School drawing Rs 25000/- per month. The total fund spent from SSA fund for Primary School Teacher Salary per month is Rs 1205000/- per month. Meanwhile, total Salary funded from State Source is Rs 107,32,865/- Thus, total Expenditure under Government Undertaking for salary alone for educating 10,129 student per month comes out as Rs 119,37,865. Moreover, Beyond salary other recurring or non-recurring grants need to be sanctioned from time to time for smooth progress of the Government schools, implying that additional funds beyond salary are yet to spend by the Government. But these are not included in these study as they are difficult to obtain for one month alone. Calculating alone from the Salary it is found that expenditure in government school per student per month is found to be Rs 1179/-

On the Other hand, Education/Tution fee at Primary School collected per student per month by various Privately and Churchedly run Institutions ranges from Rs 200/- to Rs 400/- and it can be positively aggregated at Rs 300/- for only few private Institution collects more than Rs 300/- per student per month. Regarding Admission fee, Private Institutions generally charged a little more than those of Government Schools, but being collected only once in the academic year, it is negligibly small as the present comparison is done for a month only.

Comparison Table Between Expenditure by Government in Govt. School and Parents in Private Schools for one Student within Champhai District in September-2012.

Government Undertaking				Govrnmnt's Average One month Expen diture per student (Salary) in Rupees	Parent's Average One month Expen diture per student (Tution Fee) in Rupees	Excess fund per student spent by Govt. Per Month in Rupees
State	SSA	Total	Enrol ment Sept 2012			
Total Salary	Total Salary	Total Salary				
107,32,865	12,05,000	119,37,865	10129	1179	300	879

3. Result and Discussion

Now, comparing the two Educational costs from the available amount viz. staff salary spent by the Government School and Monthly fee paid by Parents to Private Institution, Government School spent extra amount of 879/- per month per student. Suppose all the 10129 these students admitted in Govt. Schools within the District were sent to Private Institutions, which most of the Parents rather choose for their child, Government would have save Rs 89,03,391/- every month in Champhai District alone. One can speculate what a huge amount of fund would have been saved if this fact of calculation is extended for the whole state and for the whole year.

Thus, shifting our Primary Education from the hand of Government to Churches and Individuals had enough reason on financial ground, as well as on the choice of majority of parents and teacher. Therefore, it really deserves to review the present mode of effort to universalize Primary Education in the state or even throughout the country as a whole. Thinking of parental satisfaction and financial benefits of the state shifting Education from the hands of Government to the Private Institution is not a risk but will be a well visioned action. Immediate shift will rescue thousands of Govt. school children from their dissatisfactory Educations.

4. Conclusion

These Government Primary School Students are now trespassing their educative years; seeing neighbourhood friends in rather standard Institution is hard to tolerate, but have never a right or afford to express their inferior and envious feeling due to their family financial problems. They had no other choice but to spent up their moulding years under the institutions which they do not preferred but very costly, although they didn't paid by themselves but by the State Government. Here there is scope for innovative thought somehow these poverty-ridden children be financed with lesser amount of money and sent them to their first choice reachable Schools. The present work, although showed the practicability of the complete shift, there might be some difficulties for immediate practice. Firstly, Immediate shift might raise certain issues like career problem of Teacher working in Government Schools. Secondly, the financial gain due to shift by the Govt. might not happened as exactly calculated above for the teachers are somehow to be dispose of by keeping them voluntarily retired with certain funds, though would not be a thoughtful amount to fear for introducing the new system. Instead, a little study in advance before introducing the new system might be helpful for the policy makers. Thirdly, In absence of competitive atmosphere any institution is likely to become dull and reluctant toward progress. Thus, in reality complete shift from Government to Private undertaking might require limitation to towns and larger villages only where atleast two or more Institutions exist so that competitive atmosphere would ever hount between Private Schools to maintain quality.

5. References

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