



Minimizing the problems of secondary education: A critical reflections on new educational policy

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Abstract

Secondary Education is a gate way to the opportunities and benefits of economic and social development. Demand for access to higher levels of education is growing dramatically as countries approach universal primary Education. Secondary Education is characterized by transition from primary education for minor to tertiary, Post secondary, or higher education. The present paper has an empirical attempt to find out the problems of secondary education and to suggest some measures to minimize these problems. Descriptive research method was used for the present study. This study was conducted on the 100 college students to know their perception towards the problems when they were studying in the secondary or senior secondary schools. A self designed questionnaire in Yes and No type of responses and direct interview with students was used to know the problems and issues of secondary education. The data was analysed with the help of percentage. On the basis of this study it was found that the students faces problems like shortage of teachers, inadequate building, shortage of library and laboratory, lack of ICT/Teaching aids, faulty examination system, lack of vocational training courses, over-crowded classes etc. This study was helpful in improving the status of secondary education and for the policy makers to know the status and problems of secondary education.

Keywords: secondary education, issues and problems, students

Introduction

Secondary Education is a gate way to the opportunities and benefits of economic and social development. Demand for access to higher levels of education is growing dramatically as countries approach universal primary Education. Secondary Education is characterized by transition from primary education for minor to tertiary, Post secondary, or higher education. Depending on the system, schools for this period or a part of it may be called secondary schools, high schools, gymnasias, lyceums, middle schools, sixth form, colleges, vocational schools and preparatory schools, and the exact meaning of any of these varies between the systems.

The Central Government has sponsored several schemes for the qualitative improvement of secondary education and minimizing dropouts, stagnation and wastage. Government of India introduced (Vocationalization of Secondary Education) February 1998, (Improvement of Science Education in Schools) 1988-89, (International Science Olympiads) 1989-98, (Educational Technology) (strengthening of boarding and Hostel facilities for Girl students of secondary and higher secondary schools) schemes but still unable to improve the present status of secondary education.

Different committees and commissions before and after independence have mentioned various aims of secondary education. But secondary educational institutions in practice do not try to materialize those aims. The so-called aims are practically paper-aims. During pre- independence days the only aim of secondary education was to secure white-collar jobs, this is no doubt a very narrow aim. Even secondary education is not complete by itself. It is a stepping-stone for admissions in colleges and universities. Secondary education is thus regarded as a passport for higher education. Hence the

main defect of secondary education is its aimlessness. Secondary education must have definite aims related to practical life and the secondary schools should try to realize those aims in every possible manner.

With Universal Elementary Education (UEE) becoming a reality, expansion of secondary education is inevitable. This requires development of a secondary school system with defined standards irrespective of the location and management of the institution to accommodate all those eligible students. Virender (2012) show that long distance is a cause of dropout at secondary level as tribal girl children walk 3-4 km on foot to reach school every day. The challenge is in improving the retention and transition rates at secondary levels. Nedam and Attri (2013) have attempted to find out the academic anxiety and academic achievement of secondary school students and showed that academic anxiety arises out of the apprehension of rebuke from teachers, parents and peers regarding the failure of performing the responsibilities of academic properly. Mir (2015) ^[12] found that 95 percent respondents agree that teachers take personal interest in their study, 81 percent respondents agree that teachers make use of modern teaching methods, 86 percent respondents agree that they are satisfied with the teaching methods of teachers, 61 percent respondents agree that teachers are fair to them in study, 80 percent respondents agree that their teachers are well qualified and trained, 74 percent respondents are satisfied that teachers of secondary schools are hard working, 83 percent respondents favour that teachers provide quality education, 83 percent respondents agree that teachers take personal interest in their all round development and 66 percent respondents favour that teaching aids are necessary for effective teaching. The present examination system also is riddled with several

maladies and malpractices. While efforts have been made in some states to conduct examinations in a fair and transparent manner, the overall situation requires major reforms.

Scenario of secondary education in India

National trends (based on SSE, SEMIS and UDISE): The target age group population of (14-18 years children) was 9.69

crore in 2011 as per census data (Registrar General of India). The estimate population of this age group in 2016 is 9.30 crore (MHRD, Department of Higher Education, statistical bureau). The Gross Enrollment Ratio for class IX-XII in 2005-06 was 40.42%. The figure for class IX-X was 52.19% as against the target GER of 100%, changes in the GER at secondary level since 2005-06 is as follows.

Table 1

Year	GER Total	GER Girls	GER Boys
2005-06 (SES)	52.19	46.20	57.60
2009-10 (Launch year of RMSA) (SES)	62.90	58.70	66.70
2012-13 (UDISE)	67.35	65.98	68.60
2013-14 (UDISE)	76.64	76.47	76.80

Source: Trends-and-Indicators-under RMSA-pdf

Overall enrollment in the country at secondary level has increased from 30675872 in 2009-10 to 37296683 (22%) in 2013-14, increase has been observed in all states. The enrollment has increased considerably in Jharkhand (103%), Sikkim (83%), Chhattisgarh (83%), Nagaland (78%) and D&N Haveli (72%).

- Target of 100% GER has been increased by states: A and N islands, Delhi, Goa, HP, Kerala, Lakshadweep, Mizoram, Puduchary and Tripura.
- GPI (Gender Parity Index): GPI at national level in 2013-14 seems to be at desired level i.e. one. It has improved from 0.88 in 2009-10.
- Net Enrollment Ratio (NER) in the year 2013-14 at national level is 45.63 which have increased from last year 41.93 (4PP).
- Dropout Rate: Dropout rate for class I to X at national level has decreased from 61.62 in 2005-06 to 49.20 in 2010-11 (52.70 in 2009-10). The average Annual Dropout rate at secondary level for the year 2012-13 is 14.54% at National level as per UDISE data.
- Transition rate: Transition rate form elementary to secondary schools at National level has been 91.95% in the year 2013-14 as per UDISE.

Scenario of secondary education in J&K State

After the partial success of universalization of elementary education, the government of India along with the state government J&K state is taking stock of secondary education and working out strategies to infuse fresh life into it. It is imperative because in the present scenario the secondary education constitutes the nucleus of the edifice upon which rests the structure of higher education. The Jammu and Kashmir state has total number of population attending schools as 914114. Rashtriya Madhyamik Shiksha Abhiyan (RMSA) launched in Jammu And Kashmir State took initiatives to ensure universalization of secondary education by 2017.

RMSA Vision

- The vision of secondary Education is to make good quality education available, accessible and affordable to all young persons in the age group 14-18 years.
- To provide secondary schools within a reasonable

distance of any habitation which should be 5 km.

- Ensure universal access to secondary education by 2017 (GER of 10%) and universalization retention by 2020.

Achievements Registered Under RMSA

- 251 middle schools upgraded to the level of High schools during 2011-12.
- 1418 High schools at present. High schools within a radius of 5 km.

Problems of secondary education

There are many critical issues and problems in the field of tribal education. They are as follows:

- Aim Lessness
- Problems related with teachers
- Curriculum related problems
- Overcrowded classrooms
- Lack of Library & Laboratory
- Stress on Theoretical Part
- Problem with medium of instruction
- Lack of vocational education
- Lack of guidance and counseling
- Diversification of courses
- Faulty examination system
- Lack of hostel facilities
- Building/Infrastructural problems
- Problem of transport
- Administration and supervision problems
- Lack of research
- Lack of separate schools for girls
- Problem of indiscipline
- Insecurity issues
- Lack of co-curricular activities in the schools
- Poverty of parents
- Illiteracy of Parents
- Cultural problems
- Social problems
- Political issues
- Geographical barriers

Significance of the study

A study of minimizing the problems and issues of secondary education in District Kathua was very important because it

encourages the investigator to know about the issues and problems which acts as an obstacle in the progress and development of students and secondary education as a whole. Low quality of secondary education is also an obstacle in the smooth functioning of higher education. As a teacher when I taught the first year class in the college, it was observed by the investigator that the students were very weak in the academic activities. Students always try to cheat even in the class tests and they did not take interest in their studies which encourage the investigators to know the problems and issues related with secondary education. From the various studies it was also concluded that there are numerous issues which hinder the progress of students in higher education or for further education. Nedam and Attri (2013) attempted to find out the academic anxiety and academic achievement of secondary school students and showed that academic anxiety arises out of the apprehension of rebuke from teachers, parents and peers regarding the failure of performing the responsibilities of academic properly. Mir (2015) ^[12] also found that 95 percent respondents agree that teachers take personal interest in their study, 81 percent respondents agree that teachers make use of modern teaching methods, 86 percent respondents agree that they are satisfied with the teaching methods of teachers, 61 percent respondents agree that teachers are fair to them in study, 80 percent respondents agree that their teachers are well qualified and trained, 74 percent respondents are satisfied that teachers of secondary schools are hard working, 83 percent respondents favour that teachers provide quality education, 83 percent respondents agree that teachers take personal interest in their all round development and 66 percent respondents favour that teaching aids are necessary for effective teaching. From the above literature it was also clear that there are numerous problems in secondary education. With the help of

this study the investigator tries to minimize the problems and try to find out the factors or causes of various problems.

Objectives of the study

The objectives of the present study are as following:

1. To study whether the students are satisfied with the existing status of secondary education.
2. To find out the problem and causes of problems of secondary education.
3. To suggest some measures to tackle with the problems of secondary education.

Delimitations of the study

The following were the delimitation of the present study:

1. The study was confined only to a sample of 100 students.
2. The study was confined only to first year degree college students.
3. The data was collected from only from three colleges of District Kathua.

Methodology

There are many methods of collecting, analyzing and reporting research data. Strictly speaking the decisions about the methods depends upon the nature of the problem and objective to be achieved. The present study was based on survey method which is descriptive in nature. The sample of 100 college students was selected randomly from three different colleges of Kathua district. The data was collected personally by the investigator. A self prepared questionnaire and direct interview with the students was conducted to know the various problems of secondary education. Based on the nature of questionnaire and data the data was analysed with the help of percentage.

Data Analysis

Table Showing the Perception of Students towards Problems listed below

Table 2

S. No.	Problem	Responses in % age		Total
		Yes	No	
1	Student's Satisfaction	25	75	100
2	Methods of Teaching	19	81	100
3	Nature of Schools/Type of School	51	49	100
4	Library and Laboratory problem	18	82	100
5	Lack of Teacher	47	53	100
6	Problem of ICT	21	79	100
7	Vocationalization	15	85	100
8	Diversification of Courses	14	86	100
9	Problem of Building/Infrastructure	48	52	100
10	Examination Problem	39	61	100
11	Lack of Guidance and Counseling	10	90	100

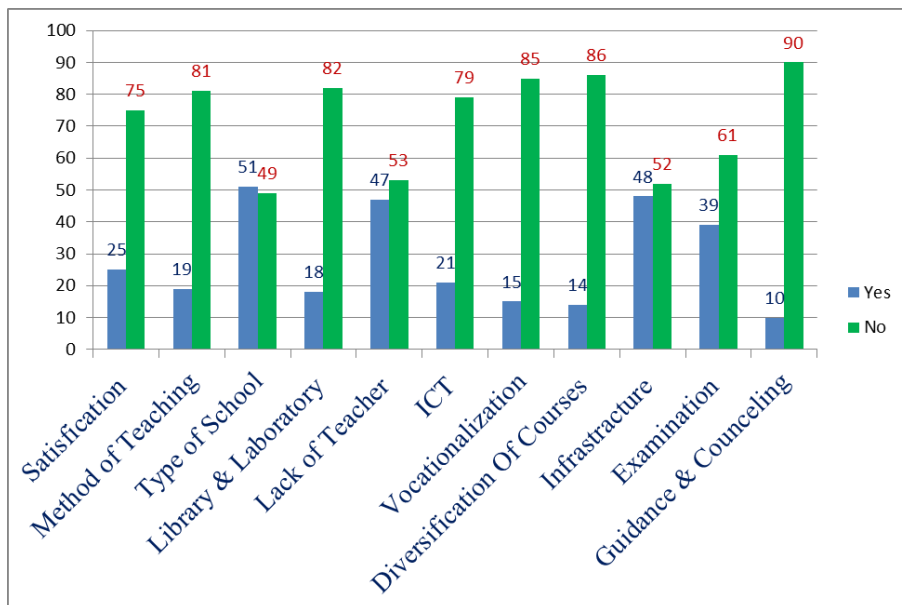


Fig 1: Graph shows the perceptions of students towards problems of secondary education

Interpretation and Discussion of the results

Table 1 and figure 1 show that out of a sample of 100 respondents, 95 students of secondary schools agreed that they are not satisfied with the present status of secondary education system. Whereas only 5 students responded that they are satisfied. The ones who responded in the positive are because of the fact that secondary education is according to the needs and interests of the students and those who responded in the negative are because of the fact that they are not loved and are neglected by system. The education imparted in secondary schools is not psychologically sound as it does not provide ample opportunities to the students to receive education according to their abilities, interests and aptitudes. It is not based on the pedagogical concept of individual differences. It does not fulfill the needs and aspirations of adolescent children. The students who are responded that they are not satisfied with existing secondary education system because they believe that secondary education is aimlessness.

Table 1 and figure 1 show that out of a sample of 100 respondents, 19 students of the secondary stage agreed that the teachers of secondary schools make use of modern teaching methods and other teaching aids. The ones who responded in the positive are because of the fact that the teachers used different methods and made use of various teaching aids. Whereas 81 students responded that teacher of secondary schools did not make use of modern teaching methods and other teaching aids, it is because of the fact that there is no such provision and the teacher only used lecture and text-book methods of teaching. They responded that the standard of teaching at secondary education level is as low as it should be. Table 1 and figure 1 show that out of a sample of 100 respondents, 51 students of the secondary school agreed that they can do better after getting admission in private schools. Whereas 49 students respond in negative. The one who responds in the positive is because of the fact that they experience good quality education and are doing better in private schools. Those who respond in the negative are because of the fact that there are various problems in govt.

schools and quality education is not provided in government secondary schools.

Table 1 and figure 1 show that out of a sample of 100 respondents, 18 students agreed that they make use of library and laboratory at secondary schools. Whereas 82 students don't agree to this. Those who responded in the positive are because of the fact that they have library and laboratory facilities in their school. Those who responded negatively are because of the fact that they don't have library and laboratory facilities in the school. So it is clear that majority of schools do not have their own library and laboratory in the schools.

Table 1 and figure 1 show that out of a sample of 100 respondents, 47 students agreed that they need more staff for teaching at secondary stage whereas 53 students don't agree with this. Those who responded in the positive are because of the fact that due to less number of staff and more children, it is very difficult for teachers to handle all the classes. Because of large size of classes the teacher cannot pay individual attention to all the students. The others who don't agree to this statement because of the fact that the schools in which they read had sufficient staff.

Table 1 and figure 1 show that out of a sample of 100 respondents, 21 students agreed that they have facilities for ICT classroom working in secondary schools. Whereas 79 students do not agree with this. Those who responded in the positive are because of the fact that their schools have ICT based facilities. Those who responded in the negative are because of the fact that their schools don't have ICTs facilities. So lack of ICT facilities in the school is another big issue in the secondary schools.

Table 1 and figure 1 show that out of a sample of 100 respondents, 15 students agreed that they are guided by the teachers of secondary stage to be prepared for career/vocational based courses on their aptitude for the same. Whereas 85 students don't agree with this. Those who responded in the positive are because of the reason that their teachers may help them and guide them at each stage to go for vocational courses. Those who responded in the negative are

because of the fact that their teachers do not guide them for career/vocational based courses. Because there is no guidance services in the schools and teachers are not aware about it.

Table 1 and figure 1 show that out of a sample of 100 respondents only 14 students agreed that they are provided with the choices for diversification of courses after class 10th where as majority i.e. 86 students don't agree with this. Those who responded in the positive are because of the fact that the schools in which they read provided with choices for diversification of courses after class 10th. These schools have all the streams and combinations which the students select by their choice. Those who responded in the negative are because of the facts that the schools in which they read don't provide any such courses or combinations but they choose subjects by force or chance.

Table 1 and figure 1 show that out of a sample of 100 respondents, 48 students agreed that there are sufficient building and infrastructure in the schools. Whereas 52 students responded that their schools do not have adequate buildings and other infrastructure. Because of the lack of building most of the classes are run under the shadow of tree or in open. These schools do not have any toilet facilities for students. So the students responded that this is also a big problem at secondary schools.

Table 1 and figure 1 show that out of a sample of 100 respondents, 39 students agreed that they are satisfied with the existing examination system. Whereas 61 students don't agree with this. They responded that examinations are conducted in time. The system of examination is more or less traditional. Students also responded that there is no internal assessment at secondary level. They also responded that cheating in examination made it mockery. The entire system of education is vitiated by examination. The educational achievements of students are measured by the single measuring rod known as examination. The prevailing essay-type examination dominates the educational arena. But it has developed a large number of defects and as such it is no longer regarded as the only measuring rod for determining the academic achievements of students.

Table 1 and figure 1 show that out of a sample of 100 respondents, 77 students agreed that they are guided by the teachers of secondary stage to be prepared for a career based on their aptitude for the same. Whereas 22 students don't agree with this. Those who respond in the positive could be because of the reason that their students may help them and guide them at each stage. Those who responded in the negative may be because of the fact that their teachers may not guide them for a career based on their aptitude.

Suggestions for the policy makers

1. Even secondary education is not complete by itself. Secondary education must have definite aims related to practical life and the secondary schools should try to realize those aims in every possible manner. Secondary education should fulfill the various needs and requirements of the students.
2. Neither have they had good school buildings nor good teachers and suitable teaching materials. Respondents suggested that modern teaching methods and strategies should be used by the teachers.
3. Changes should be brought about in methods of teaching. Teacher should make use of variety of teaching methods while teaching. There should be provisions of various teaching aids in the school. Still many secondary teachers are untrained. Dearth of efficient and properly trained teachers is a peculiar feature of present-day secondary schools. The teaching profession does not attract talented students. Conditions of work and service of teachers should be improved.
4. It was found that most of the secondary schools do not have their own libraries and laboratories. Majority of the respondents suggested for the facilities of library and laboratory with provision of sufficient books. So every secondary school should have their own complete library and laboratory. The books should be available in the library for the poor and needy students.
5. It was also found that some schools lacks in teachers. Respondents suggested that they need more teaching staff especially female teachers. Govt. should take necessary step to overcome this problem. In some schools pupil teacher ratio is so high. So it is difficult for the teacher to pay individual attention. Additional teachers should be there in order to reduce the pupil-teacher ratio.
6. At school level there is no provision of ICT till date. The respondents suggested that facilities for smart working in the classroom should be provided. So govt. should provide basic ICT facilities for the schools. There should be the provisions of computer labs, smart classrooms and internet facilities in every school.
7. The another problem of this stage is problem of vocationalization. Therefore we have to make our secondary education so useful that the students having passed this stage do not run only for admission to colleges or universities but there should be varied choices and provisions for the students so that they become economically independent by having acquired some vocational skills of productive nature. Each and every school should provide vocational training to all the students side by side.
8. There should be diversification of courses at secondary schools. There should be different combinations under the courses so that students should opt combination according to needs, interests and capabilities.
9. Majority of schools do not have their own building. At least there should be provision of one room for one class or one room for every section. Respondent of the study suggested that there should be separate toilet facility for boys and girls in the schools. There should be the provision of hostel facilities for far flung areas.
10. Examination standard should be improved. We cannot reject the essay type examination altogether. But it should be reformed in the desired channels. Some reforms are needed after careful thinking and a good deal of research. Students also claimed that there should be provision of internal evaluation throughout the year by the internal teachers for examining the students like in higher education.
11. Every school should have their own guidance and counseling cell. There should be a guidance teacher or counselor. Because it is a biggest issue at this stage.

Without counseling, the students opt the wrong track after completing the secondary education. Every student should be counseled at this stage.

Conclusions

It was concluded that a study of minimizing the problems and issues of secondary education was important because it encourages the investigator to find out the issues and problems which acts as an obstacle in the progress and development of students and secondary education as a whole. Like other levels of school education, a significant progress should be made in all the spheres of secondary education. It constitutes the nucleus of the edifice upon which rests the structure of higher education depends. The present study showed that in most of the rural areas of district, there is lack of modern technologies, strategies as well as facilities for smart working, teachers, buildings or infrastructure, lack of guidance and counseling and other library and laboratory facilities etc. The Government particularly, policy maker should take care of this aspect and should equalize educational facilities at secondary school stage. It is suggested that at least basic equipments and facilities should be provided to each secondary schools.

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