

Impact of Teaching Learning Process in Primary Education of West Bengal - A Cohort Study

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Abstract

This paper has tried to study the impact of teaching learning process on primary education. The teacher-student interaction plays an important role in the promotion, grade wise transition, performance, repetition of student. A comparative study reveals that the method of teaching, use of TLM, time spent in teaching has a relationship with the promotion, performance, grade wise transition, repetition of the students in primary school. Thus it tries to find a cause and effect relationship with the students in primary schools.

Keywords

Primary Education, Enrolment, Teaching Learning Process

I. Introduction

“Despite being ahead of many other states on many development initiatives such as land reforms and role of panchayats in local governance, and also better performances in terms of decline in rate of population growth and positive change in sex-ratio, West Bengal stands somewhere lower when it comes to literacy rates and school participation positions”¹. The primary education has improved since the launch of SSA in 2001 but the quality of education imparted remains a concern. The present article has thus focussed on the qualitative aspect of primary education imparted in primary schools of West Bengal.

II. Trend of Enrolment Since The Launch of SSA

The GER at the primary level of education has been increasing since the launch of SSA to above 100 percent which implies migration, over-aged students, repetition. It is observed that GER has been increasing ever since the launch of SSA and remained above the national average all throughout both in case of primary and upper primary education.

The actual enrolment scenario can be studied with the help of Net enrolment ratio (NER). The NER in case of primary education was lower than the National average initially in the post launch period. In 2014 NER has completely overtaken National average, which is a remarkable improvement for West Bengal. The NER in case of upper primary education though is low but has improved drastically since 2003-04 to 73 percent in 2013-14 which is above National average.

Table 1 Trend of GER and NER 2003-2014

Year	Level	Primary		Upper primary	
		GER	NER	GER	NER
2003- 4	W.B	103.4	81.9	55.2	40.8
	India	89.8	84.5	-	-
2005- 6	W.B	104.5	82.7	66.2	48.7
	India	103.7	84.5	59.2	43.1
2013- 14	W.B	104.0	92.1	99.6	73.0
	India	101.4	88.1	89.3	70.2

Source: DISE, State Report Card, 2005-06, 2006-07, 2010-11, 2011-12, 2013-14 NUEPA.

III. Quality of Primary Education

There is no doubt that infrastructure plays an important role in

improving the school enrolment. It is observed that the quality of education is not determined by physical infrastructure but by the teachers. Hence it is important that the teachers are well trained and qualified for the challenging task of shaping young minds.

The study of the present problem has been done through the help of a Cohort study in 2 districts of North 24 Parganas (Titumir, Lakshmankati) and Murshidabad (Hariharpara, Gakunda) covering 4 schools. The teaching practises have been studied in details to observe the teaching learning process in the schools.

IV. Teaching Learning Process

A. Method of Teaching

The students were taught in 90 percent of the schools in Murshidabad by just repeating lines after teacher thus emphasizing on the memorizing skills of the students without understanding. The teaching could have been carried with the help of demonstrating posters, charts. The exception of only one Gobindopur Titumir School in North 24 Parganas in the entire field study could be taken as an ideal model school where students were taught singing, reciting and hours of study was maximum 5 hours a day.

Table 2 : Teaching learning activities in school on the day of visit

Items	N24 Parganas	Murshidabad
Method of teaching		
write in blackboard	35.3	36.4
read from books	64.7	100
reciting poems	5.9	0
repeating lines	58.8	90.9
TLM used in teaching		
maps	0	0
globe	0	0
chart	29.4	0
pocketboard	0	0
text book	100	100
Story books locked	94.1	100
TLM locked	70.6	81.8
Time spent in teaching		
1 hrs	0	9.1
2-3 hrs	88.2	86.4

¹Jha Jyotsna (2003): “Primary Schools in West Bengal” 5 July, EPW, pp.2839.

above 4 hrs	11.8	4.5
total	100	100

Source: Cohort Field Survey 2011

B. TLM used in Teaching

The school survey in both the districts has brought forth several deficiencies in the method of teaching. The following are the observations made in this respect:-

1. Every school had sufficient teaching learning material like pocket boards, number cards, models, posters, charts, globe but on the day of visit none of them were being used in any of the classrooms.
2. Most of the TLM materials were found locked, dust laden not being used in a long time.
3. Every school purchases story books in Shiksha Dibash but all the books are kept locked none of them are being given to the students to read in the fear of damage caused to the books by the students.

C. Time Spent in Teaching

The hour of teaching in majority of the schools in both the district is 2-3 hrs . This is true as observed in the field that classes start at 10 in the morning and as soon as the Mid day Mid2 commences at 1 o'clock it marks end of the day, most of the students after having lunch start playing and barely enter the class and leaves by 3 – 3.30. The teachers in some school are strict but in most of the schools the teacher find it difficult to manage the rowdy students and it has become a practical reality to let them leave as soon as the MDM is served.

V. Impact of Teaching Learning Process on Learners

A. Promotion Rate

The promotion rate of the students in Titumir was constant all throughout class 2, 3 and 4 but the promotion rate was around 60 percent only, the enquiry into the matter revealed that the students were not able to pass the examination so they were not promoted to the next class. This was the honest effort of the school teacher (the government norm directs that no student shall be held back in any class and they have to be promoted) not to blindly pass students.

Table 3 : Promotion Rate and Repetition Rate

school	Promotion rate			Repetition rate	
	Class2	Class3	Class4	Class2	Class3
titumir	67.9	67.9	60.7	0	7.1
Lakshmankati	89.6	52.1	18.8	37.5	33.3
gakunda	100.	92.1	42.1	7.9	50.0
hariharpara	100.	100.	97.6	0	2.4

Source: Cohort Field Survey 2011

The Hariharpara primary school had a better promotion rate of around 95 percent and the promotion rate was constant. The rate of promotion in Lakshmankati was lowest in terms of class 3 and

4, whereas the promotion rate in class2 for both Gakunda and Lakshmankati is found to be good around 90 percent. In Gakunda primary school the promotion rate in class 4 was poorest which shows that student’s level of understanding the curriculum was difficult as compared to class1. Hence the need for innovative, experimental teaching methods, relevant TLM should be more used.

B. Repetition Rate

The repetition rate or fails in case of Titumir and Hariharpara primary school is very low as compared to Gakunda primary where 50 percent of the students were repeating in class 3 .In Lakshmankati primary school the repeaters were very high in number, class 2 repeaters were more than that of class 3.

C. Transition Rate

The survival rates in all the four schools are showing four different patterns. In Hariharpara which has high VEC activity shows the remarkable 100 percent survival rate of children till class 3 after which the survival rate declines marginally and still it stands to 97 percent. Rates approaching 100% indicate a high level of retention and low incidence of dropout. “The distinction between survival rate with and without repetition is necessary to compare the extent of wastage due to dropout and repetition. Survival rate to the last grade of primary education is of particular interest for monitoring universal primary education, a central objective for Education for All and the Millennium Development Goals”.³

Table 4 : Grade wise Transition rate of students

school	Students			
	Class1	Class2	Class3	Class4
Titumir	100.0	67.9	67.9	60.7
Lashmankati	100.0	89.6	52.1	18.8
Gakunda	100.0	100.0	92.1	42.1
Hariharpara	100.0	100.0	100.0	97.6

Source: Cohort Field Survey 2011

In Titumir primary school where VEC is also very active the survival rate has been 60 percent at class 4 which is lower than our expectation. The survival rate in class 2 is 67 percent which indicates 33 percent of non retention of students. The possible factor can be economic factor of the engagement of children in child work specially in the tailoring business by their parents. This can be further verified by the male female survival rate which shows that the boys survival rate in class 4 is little above half the girls survival rate. It also shows the retention of girls are more, thus female education is more accepted among the villagers.

The Lakshmankati primary school has the worst survival rate of only 18 percent students reaching class 4. The gender wise survival rate shows retention of girls being poorer than boys. This poor retention may be due to the very active economic activity of bidi making and seasonal migration of labour. The girls specially prefer bidi making at home and supply to shopkeepers. The Gakunda primary school of Mursidabad has the next poor survival rate in class4 of 42 percent. Here the female retention is better than that of the male. The poor retention rate of this school is mainly due

²Mid Day Meal is centrally sponsored scheme of nutrition support to primary education aiming to improve enrolment, retention, attendance of students.

³UNESCO (2009): Education Indicators Technical guidelines, Institute of Statistics. pp.14. Retrieved from <http://www.uis.unesco.org/Library/Documents/eiguide09-en.pdf>

to poverty and lack of interest of VEC in door to door enrolment. The poor retention among boys are due to the economic activity of brick kiln labourer. Most of the boys are helping hand to their parents in brick kiln.

D. Performance Rate

The performance rate is the best indicator of quality of teaching. The promotion rate, repetition rate, survival rate cannot point at the actual learning level of the students. They indicate only numbers and magnitude but the qualitative aspect of learning can be understood by the performance of marks obtained. Therefore the study of performance of class 4 students has been studied and observed that though Hariharpara till now was the best school in terms of indicator of transition, repetition rate, promotion rate yet the marks achieved by class 4 students are not satisfactory, 57 percent of the students have failed and only 15 percent show satisfactory performance. This is closely associated with the process of teaching, which is found to be different in Gobindopur Titumir with singing, use of TLM, storytelling, prayer etc. and the result was evident that only 3.6 percent of the students failed and 35 percent were very good in terms of marks achieved in class IV. Thus impact of innovative teaching method has a positive relation as seen here.

Table 5. Performance of class 4

Performance	Titumir	Lakshmankati	Gakunda	Hariharpara
very good	35.7	0.0	23.5	5.3
satisfactory	28.6	12.5	52.9	15.8
poor	32.1	18.8	14.7	21.1
failed	3.6	68.8	8.8	57.9

Source: Cohort Field Survey 2011

Failed- below 35%, poor 35-50.9%, satisfactory 51-69.9%, very good above 70%

VI. Conclusion

Thus the present study reveals that the nature of teaching learning process plays an important role in primary education. In north 24 Parganas the teaching practise to some extent is activity based, use of TLM is found whereas in Murshidabad district it is solely based on oral method of repetition and dictation. The use of library books is almost absent. Hence the effect of such teaching habit is poor level of understanding by the students as they progress to higher classes and subsequent failing.

The performance in terms of exams marks is poor in those schools where the teaching practise is not innovative. Hence a cause and effect relation can be observed as marks obtained by a student is based on his individual learning which in turn is influenced by innovative teaching practise. This is observed in Hariharpara and Lakshmankati primary school where the performance is below poor due to poor teaching practise where in Titumir the performance rate is very good due to innovative teaching practise. It is also observed that governmental policies also play a major role in the improvement of actual learning level of students. Thus more emphasis and training in teaching habits can improve the quality of primary education in West Bengal.

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