

CHALLENGES AND PROBLEMS FACED BY SCHOOL AUTHORITIES IN THE SCHOOLS OF KERALA- A SURVEY BASED ANALYSIS

Dr. JEENA P.M

Assistant Professor, PG Dept of Economics, MES Asmabi College, P.Vemballur,

Abstract

As the education system is moving towards to meet the needs of contemporary society, the role of schools and school authorities or school principals had undergone a drastic change. The role and responsibilities of school principals are very important in transforming the young students to make responsible citizens of a country. Their leadership qualities are important in shaping the teacher quality, student quality and the quality of the institution as a whole. But as the institutional head, they are faced with so many challenges and problems which make their work more tedious and painful. The present study is an attempt to find out the challenges and problems faced by the head of the institutions in the schools of Kerala and the suggestions from their part to improve the quality of their institution. The study is based on primary data collected from 131 high school and higher secondary head of the institutions of Thrissur district in Kerala. It is found that the school principals in Kerala are mainly challenged with the major problem of administrative difficulties along with teaching and other responsibilities and this in some way adversely affect the quality of their institution. The problems and challenges they face need urgent and immediate policy changes from the part of school educational policy makers.

Introduction

Schools are type of organizations which aim to improve the mind of students and teach them to become responsible adult and help them to acquire further knowledge to build their future (Gedikoglu, Sanem Bulbul, 2009). School principals plays an important and inevitable role in the school environment. Their responsibilities and leadership qualities play an important role in the success of school education process. They are facing emerging challenges never seen before in school education such as overwhelming pressure on student achievement, administrative difficulties, lack of financial resources, lack of infrastructural facilities, cooperating parents and teachers and balancing their efforts in favour of schools and a host of other issues which make their work more complicated and burdensome. In order to be more successful in their academic life, the school principals have to integrate the basic complexities of administrative activities, teaching process, coordinating the teaching faculties and along with they are more responsible in achieving and improving educational standards of each student.

The school principals are also faced with the problem of managing efficiently the financial resources of schools in the best possible way, lack of parental and community

involvement in the working of schools, the poor or low academic performance of some students, the results of their school, proper use of instructional or learning methods, the

best use of assessment methods of both teachers and students, lack of time in the overall management of schools and overburden of too much responsibilities and challenges. Strong principals may be regarded as the important factor in determining the effectiveness of school and in the words of Larry Payne “the principal is the principle, and everything flows from there” (Markley, 1996). Along with this motivation of students and thereby improving their satisfaction level in school environment is a very important factor which determines the success of schools. There are other challenges and critical issues also which stands in the way of efficiency of them.

Research Problem

School principals play an important and inevitable role in the school environment. Their qualities and institutional leadership plays an important role in the smooth working of the school and they are at the heart of the organization. But it is no doubt that they are faced with so many challenges and problems which make their working atmosphere more burdensome. So it is important to study the problems faced by school authorities as this will help in developing or formulating more educational policies and initiatives in favour of them. There are some studies related to the problems and challenges faced by the school principals. But the present study focuses on the problems and challenges faced by high school and higher secondary school principals in the schools of Kerala. The study also throws light in to the serious issues faced by school organization as their problems are nothing but the problems faced by schools itself. So it is important to focus on these problems by educational policy makers to make their work more simple, easy and transparent.

Challenges and problems faced by school authorities

The classification or category of schools in the study is divided in to high school and higher secondary schools. 39.69% of schools are high schools and 60.31% are higher secondary schools. The different type of schools in the survey includes government, private, aided and unaided schools. 39.7% schools are government or state level schools, 50.4% are aided schools and 9.92% are CBSE schools.

The majority of the schools are aided schools and there are no other categories. Based on the nature of schools, it is divided into all- boys, all-girls and co-educational. 5.3 % of schools are all-boys, 16.8% are all- girls and 77.9% are co- educational or mixed schools. The vast majority of schools participated in the survey are co- educational schools.

The ownership of schools in the study is divided into state owned, private owned, private individually owned and others. State owned schools constitute 83.9%, private owned schools includes 45% and private individually owned schools include only 5.3%. Other category of ownership includes 10.7%. Majority of the schools in the survey comes under the category of private owned, i.e., 45% and the least proportion of category comes under private individually owned, i.e., only 5.3%. It is found out from the study that

teacher evaluation factors and student evaluation factors are done in schools in a commendable manner.

In the present study school authorities or head of the institutions are asked with the suggestions from their part to improve the quality of their institution which is shown in table 1(a) and 1 (b). They gave a wide variety of responses which gave more valuable insights into the school education in Kerala. The suggestions regarding improving the quality of the institution from the part of government and aided school principals which forms the majority of the study is shown in the table 1(a).

Table 1(a) Suggestions to improve the quality of institution from School Authorities (Government and Aided schools)

SL NO	Suggestions to improve the quality of institution by school authorities	Frequency of responses	% of responses
1	Improvement in school infrastructure	43	36.44%
2	Student strength is to be improved	13	11.01%
3	Teacher- student ratio to be decreased	12	10.16%
4	Close interaction with teachers, students and parents	11	9.32%
5	Students to be more competent and quality of students	9	7.62%
6	Teacher's role in improving the quality of students	6	5.08%
7	Parental involvement in the studies of children	6	5.08%
8	Importance to extra-curricular activities	6	5.08%
9	Discipline and punctuality of students	5	4.23%
10	Attitude of students to be changed or interest in studies	4	3.39%
11	Teacher's professional training	4	3.39%
12	Government support in the form of scholarships	4	3.39%

Source: Survey Data

They include: improvement in school infrastructure, student strength is to be improved, teacher- student ratio to be decreased, close interaction with teachers, students and parents, students to be more competent and quality of students, teacher's role in improving the quality of students, parental involvement in the studies of children, importance to extra-curricular activities, discipline and punctuality of students, attitude of students to be changed or interest in studies, teacher's professional training\ and Government support in the form of scholarships.

There are suggestions pointed out by principals of CBSE school principals and theirs are entirely different from that of Government and aided school principals. They are more in favour of innovative ecosystem, innovative educational practices, experimental learning and other types of research in school education which is yet to be explored. So it is important to look in to know the suggestions from the part of CBSE school principals in order to improve the quality of their institution which is shown in the table 1 (b).

Table 1(b) Suggestions to improve the quality of institution from School Authorities (CBSE School Principals)

SL NO	Suggestions to improve the quality of institution by school authorities	Frequency of responses	% of responses
1	Transform the school education system	6	46.15%
2	More student outcome	5	38.46%
3	Importance to extracurricular activities	5	38.46%
4	Experiential learning	4	30.76%
5	Activity based learning	4	30.76%
6	More quality teachers	4	30.76%
7	More infrastructure	3	23.07%
8	Addressing the gaps in Indian education system	3	23.07%
9	Simplify syllabus and Curriculum	2	15.38%

Source: Survey Data

The most important qualitative suggestions from the part of CBSE school authorities are transforming the school education system followed by more student outcome; importance to extracurricular activities, experiential learning, activity based learning, more quality teachers, more infrastructure, addressing the gaps in Indian education system and simplify syllabus and Curriculum. According to them all these suggestions to some extent can bring about some qualitative changes in their schools.

School authorities are also being asked with the question of challenges or problems faced by them. This is a very important area of concern because almost all school principals are working under conditions of severe stress and over burden which make their work more burdened and adversely affects the school environment and school quality which urgently requires more policy changes in the school education sector. From the study it is found out that the school authorities are faced with several constraints and problems in their working place which makes their work more difficult. The wide range of problems in fact reflect the working difficulties and over burden of school principals and it in another way affect their efficiency and productivity which in turn will adversely affect the quality of the institution.

First of all it is important to look in to the problems faced by Government and aided school principals which constitutes vast majority of the study area. They responded in a wide variety of responses which throw light on the administrative, qualitative, academic, institutional and so many other related aspects which are of paramount importance in improving or changing the school education scenario of Kerala.

They responded in a wide variety of responses which throw light on the administrative, qualitative, academic, institutional and so many other related aspects which are of paramount importance in improving or changing the school education scenario of Kerala.

Table 2(a) Challenges and problems faced by School Authorities of Government and Aided Schools

SL NO	Challenges faced by the head of the institution in schools	Frequency of responses	% of responses
1	Administrative difficulties of Principals in Higher secondary schools	22	18.64%
2	Financial problems of parents	21	17.79%
4	Lack of adequate student strength	17	14.40%
5	Problems related to student discipline	15	12.71%
6	Lack of infrastructure	13	11.01%
7	Lack of students' interest towards studies	8	6.77%
8	Managing teachers, students and parents	5	4.23%
9	Student result to be improved	5	4.23%
10	More parental support for the development of child	5	4.23%
11	Student's over use of social media	4	3.38%
12	Parents' attitude towards teachers and schools to be changed	4	3.38%
13	Low student standards	4	3.38%
14	More government support is needed	4	3.38%

Source: Survey Data

The challenges and problems faced by school authorities in their working places are many, but it is mainly found out that the higher secondary school principals in the schools of Kerala are overburdened with administrative duties. Along with their administrative responsibilities they are also doing teaching and other student related works as there are no supporting staff in the higher secondary schools in Kerala. The other challenges and problems include: financial problems of parents, lack of adequate student strength, problems related to student discipline, lack of students' interest towards studies, managing teachers, students and parents, student result to be improved, more parental support for the development of child, student's over use of social media, parents' attitude towards teachers and schools to be changed, low student standards and more government support is needed in schools.

The study also separately analyzed the problems faced by CBSE school principals who form only a few portion of the study area but their problems and challenges are not different from that of others but also throw light on important policy implications on school educational policies.

The challenges and problems faced by CBSE School principals is shown in the table 2(b). It is clear from the table 2(b) that the problems and challenges faced by CBSE school authorities are different from that of Government and aided school principals in the schools of Kerala. But it is no doubt that the most pressing problem all school principals facings are related to administrative problems which need immediate policy

changes. The other problems are problems related to decision making, school scheduling, faculty evaluation, lack of Government support, communication & collaboration, student outcome, parental involvement, recruitment and technology integration in classrooms respectively.

Table 2(b) Challenges and problems faced by CBSE School Authorities

SL NO	Challenges faced by the head of the institution in schools	Frequency of responses	% of responses
1	Administrative difficulties along with paper work	7	53.84%
2	Decision making	6	46.15%
3	School scheduling	5	38.46%
4	Faculty evaluation	5	38.46%
5	Lack of Government support	4	30.76%
6	Communication & collaboration	4	30.76%
7	Student results need to be improved	3	23.07%
8	Parental involvement in school affairs	3	23.07%
9	Recruitment of staff	2	15.38%

Source: Survey Data

All these problems faced by the head of the school authorities showed that there are so many problems faced by them and include different dimensions and need immediate or urgent attention and policy changes in the school education sector of Kerala.

Conclusion

School principals play an important and inevitable role in the working of a school. Their leadership qualities and institutional management are the key factors to the efficient and smooth working of the school. They are more concerned about the quality of their institution and are bothered about the factors to improve it. Among the factors to improve the quality of institution in which they are working they are more concerned about the betterment of infrastructural facilities in their schools. The study also looked into the problems, challenges, quality suggestions faced by Government and aided high school and higher secondary school principals on the one hand and CBSE school principals on the other hand. The school principals are faced with so many major challenges and issues and the major among them is administrative problem especially that of higher secondary principals. This throws light in to so many policy implications that there should be some steps to solve these problems from the part of educational policy makers. It is no doubt that this will adversely affect the quality of their work and quality of their institution. So it is clear from the study that there is need to revamp the school education system in Kerala and more educational programmes and policies in favour of school principals especially that of higher secondary principals.

References

- Adem Bayar (2016): "Challenges Facing School Principals in the First Year at Their Schools", *Universal Journal of Educational Research*, Vol.4 (1), pp 192-199.
- Badgajar Preetika, Joshi Priti (2013): "A Descriptive Study on the Challenges Faced by a School Principals", *International Research Journal of Social Sciences*, Vol.2 (5), pp 39-40.
- Bredeson V Paul (2000): "The School Principal's Role in Teacher Professional Development", *Journal of In Service Education*, Vol. 26 (2), pp 385-401.
- Donald Wise (2015): "Emerging Challenges facing School Principals", *NCPEA Education Leadership Review*, National Council of Professors of Educational Administration, Vol.16 (2), pp 103-115.
- Gedikoglu, Sanem Bulbul (2009): "Managerial Competencies of Primary School Principals in Terms of Leadership Standards Brief Dimension", *National Education*, Vol.38 (182), pp 123-148.
- Nyaboga Nyaboka Evans, Joseph Bosire, Jack Ajowi (2016): " Analysis of the Challenges faced by Principals in the Management of Support Staff in Public Secondary Schools in Nyamira County, Kenya", Research Paper, *Journal of Research in Humanities and Social Science*, Vol. 4 (3), pp 41-50.
- Purna Prabhakar Nandamuri & K.V.Rao (2011): "Leaderships and School Principals- A Study", *Asia Pacific Journal of Research in Business Management*, Vol.2 (12).
- Ronald A Styron, Jennifer L Styron (2011): "Critical Issues Facing School Principals", *Journal of College Teaching and Learning*, Vol.8 (5), pp 1-10.
- Olowoselu Abdulrasheed, Fauzi Hussin, Muhammad Dzahir Kasa (2016): " Challenges of Principal Leadership Styles and School Management: A Solution Oriented Approach", *Asia Pacific Journal of Education, Arts and Sciences*, Vol.3 (4), pp 61-68.
- Wieczorec D & Manard C (2018):" Instructional Leadership Challenges and Practices of Novice Principals in Rural Schools", *Journal of Research in Rural Education*, Vol.34 (2), pp 1-21.