



Attitude of Teachers towards Universalisation of Secondary Education in Assam

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ABSTRACT: Secondary education as a transitory phase in between elementary and higher education plays a very important role in the socio-economic, scientific and technological development of a country. In India, secondary education and secondary school marks the completion of formal education for the vast majority of students. Even the students who prepare for higher education cannot take the advantage of higher education without receiving quality secondary education. Secondary education becomes naturally universal once universal elementary education has been achieved. The transition rate from 8th to 9th grades in India is almost 85% and it is going to improve further. With the universalisation of elementary education through SSA, there will be universal demand for secondary education. What is important is to make good quality education available, accessible and affordable to all young persons in the age group of 14-18 years with special reference to economically weaker sections of the society. The present study has aimed at assessing the attitude of teachers towards the education and schooling of their students. Although the government endeavors at universalizing education has resulted in creating mass awareness and positive response towards schooling and education and there is a lot of scope for improvement in this regard. In this study, the attitude of teachers signifies the involvement of teachers in universalisation of secondary education in Assam.

Key words: secondary education, teacher, attitude, universalisation

I. INTRODUCTION

Education plays an important role in building of the nation and is instrumental in bringing about a change in the country as a whole. For quality improvement in education of masses, every citizen has to be covered without disparity between haves and the have not, in rural and the urban, the linguistic and geographical regions and more importantly between the genders. The Education of children is influenced by interplay of a range of factors at school, society, family and teachers. For school participation it is important that all the factors should be positive but in this process teachers should be strongly favorable. School education in India up to elementary level is free and compulsory for every eligible child within the age group of 6 to 14. Since universalisation of elementary education (UEE) has become a constitutional mandate, so "It is absolutely essential to push this vision forward to move towards universalisation of secondary education (USE) which has already been achieved in a large number of developed countries and several developing countries. Secondary education is a crucial stage in the educational hierarchy as it prepares the students for higher education and also for the world of work. Class IX and X constitute the secondary stage and the normal age group of the children in secondary classes is 14-16" (Govt. of India, 2009). The rigor of the secondary education enables Indian students to compete successfully for education and for jobs globally. Therefore, it is absolutely essential to strengthen this stage by providing greater access and also by improving quality in a significant way. Realizing the importance of secondary education and along with the success of UEE the Govt. of India has launched another scheme for universalisation of education at secondary level in the year 2009 on the basis of the guidelines provided by CABE (2005) which is known as Rastrya Madhyamik Shiksha Abhiyan (RMSA) during eleventh five-year plan (2007-2012) and now it has been implemented in most of the states of India. Now the teachers of secondary schools have to play a key role in implementation of the schemes of universalisation of secondary schools in the state of Assam.

II. BACKGROUND OF THE STUDY

Education plays a key role in the development of a nation. In this regard NCFSE (2000) stated “World over it has been realized that no country can progress without the qualitative development of its human capital. Education plays a key role in the development of human resources”. Secondary education plays a vital role in shaping the total personality of an individual. Therefore, it is said that while primary education is described as education for the child, secondary education is defined as education for the adolescents (Hedow Report, 1926). A child's future can depend a lot on the type of education she/he receives at the secondary level. Apart from grounding the roots of education of a child, secondary education can be instrumental in shaping and directing the child to a brighter future. This stage of education serves to move on higher secondary stage as well as to provide generic competencies that cut across various domains of knowledge as well as skills. Thus “Education provided to the adolescents of the age group of 14 to 19 years is considered as secondary education” (UNESCO, 1961).

Secondary education has a special importance in the entire educational structure as its successful completion is a requirement for admission into institutions of higher education and at the time, being a terminal stage it caters to the needs of those who enter the world of work (Anand, 1997). Moreover, the success of education in the field of science and technology is also dependent on the existence of the co-ordinate system of secondary education which not only identifies special talents but also provides basic knowledge for higher education in specialized field. The students who goes for higher education cannot take full advantage of the wider opportunities offered by the universities unless they have received their grounding in a system of sound secondary education (Mahanta, 2004).

Universalisation of secondary education is a new concept in the context of school education in India. “Universalisation of secondary education implies creating universal access and opportunity for all children within the age group of 14 to 16 years to receive secondary education. Universalisation of educational opportunity at the secondary level is “A major instrument of social change and transformation, as secondary education deals with the children between the group of 14 to 16 years which is most critical and precious period of an individual's life and thereby determines the quality of nation's citizen” (Buragohain, 2010). Teachers are the key person who educate the next generation. The most important aspect of the society is the youngest generation. Joolideh and Yeshodhara (2013) stated, “A sound educational system is considered to be the backbone of a country and the teacher is the pivot around which the entire educational system revolves”. Teachers are the ruler of the life of human being from the initial stage of life. As teachers are the creator of the next generation they can play a very significant role in universalisation of secondary education. Teacher attitude is a measure or an index of student's educational development. Attitude is described as “A feeling or mood relative to action” (James, Sakthignanavel and Vasanthi, 2011). In modern psychology “Attitude is often referred to as mental attitudes and occasionally as motor attitudes” (Allport, 1935). “An attitude is described by Hilgard (1962) as “An orientation toward or away from some object, concept or situation, and a readiness to respond in a predetermined manner to related objects, concept or situation”. In the present study, it has been used in the sense as defined by Thurstone (1946), viz. “The degree of positive or negative effect associated with some psychological object”. The psychological object in this particular case is the universalisation of secondary education which the teachers may either have a positive or negative effect. The attitude of teachers can have a profound effect on the social and educational integration of students.

III. MATERIALS AND METHODS

A. Objectives of the Study

The objectives of the present study are as follows:

- (i) To examine the attitudes of teachers towards universalisation of secondary education.
- (ii) To compare the teachers involvement in terms of rural-urban background with regard to their classroom transaction.
- (iii) To examine whether there exists gender difference in attitude towards student's education.

B. Sample of the Study

Sample for the present study consisted of randomly selected 18 secondary schools from three districts of middle Assam i.e. Kamrup (matro), Morigaon and Nagaon. And from each district 3 secondary schools are taken from urban area and 3 secondary schools are taken from rural area. The sample consists of 72 secondary school teachers from these three districts. Out of which 36 participants are trained teachers and 36 participants are untrained teachers. Again among these participants 36 teachers are male and 36 teachers are female.

C. Tools Used

The data was collected through a questionnaire consisting of 20 statements all pertaining to schooling and education of the students. Equal numbers of positive and negative statements were included. The respondents were asked to

give their response against each of the statements in the form of yes/no. In order to know the attitude of teachers towards USE the researchers have developed a 3 point Likert Scale, ranging from agree, disagree, and undecided. As the tool is a three-point scale, the answers to each question have been scored in a system of 3, 2 and 1 i.e. 3 denotes to agree, 2 denotes to disagree and 1 denotes to undecided.

D. Design of the Study

In the present study, quantitative methods of data analysis were used by the researchers for analyzing the data. The researcher used the statistical techniques like percentage, graphical representation of data and “t” test for analysis of quantitative data relating to the present study.

IV. ANALYSIS OF DATA

Data of the present study are analyzed and interpreted under these points (in relation to the objectives of the study):

Table 1: Attitude of teachers towards universalisation of secondary education.

Attitude of the teachers	Rural teacher	Urban teacher	Male teacher	Female teacher
Positive attitude	40%	75%	45%	60%
Negative attitude	60%	25%	55%	40%

Table 1 reveals that the attitude of secondary school teachers towards universalisation of secondary education in rural urban background is different in positive attitude and negative attitude. Out of the total participants, 40% of rural teachers have the positive attitude towards universalisation of secondary education whereas 60% of rural secondary school teachers have the negative attitude towards universalisation of secondary education. On the other hand 75% of urban secondary school teachers have positive attitude towards universalisation of secondary education whereas 25% urban secondary school teachers have negative attitude towards universalisation of secondary education. From this study it is observed that, urban secondary teachers have more positive attitude towards universalisation of secondary education than the rural secondary school teachers. From the same table it has been observed that 45% male secondary school teachers have positive attitude towards universalisation of secondary education whereas 55% of male secondary school teachers have the negative attitude towards universalisation of secondary education. On the other hand 60% of female secondary school teachers have positive attitude towards universalisation of secondary education whereas 40% female secondary school teachers have negative attitude towards universalisation of secondary education. From this study it is observed that, female secondary teachers have more positive attitude towards universalisation of secondary education than the male secondary school teachers.

Table 2: Comparison of teachers’ involvement of rural-urban background with regard to their attitude towards schooling and education of secondary school students.

Status of the teachers	N	Mean	SD	SEm	‘t’ value	Table value of ‘t’ at 0.05 level	DF	Sig.
Rural teachers	36	40.81	2.21	0.45	27.96	2.00	70	*
Urban teachers	36	53.39	1.50					

The Table 2 indicates the comparison of the teachers’ involvement of rural-urban background with regard to their attitude towards schooling and education of secondary school students in Assam. The “t” test was employed to find out whether urban secondary school teachers differed significantly from rural secondary school teaches in their attitude towards schooling and education of secondary school students. From the same table, it is found that the obtained “t” value 27.96 is more than the table value of “t” is 2.00 in 0.05 level of significance. Therefore, it is concluded that there was significant difference between rural secondary school teachers and urban secondary school teachers’ attitude towards schooling and education of secondary school students. Since mean score of attitude of urban secondary school teachers toward schooling and education of secondary school students (mean = 75.95) is more than the mean score of attitude of rural secondary school teachers toward schooling and education of secondary school students (mean =53.39). So, it is summarized that the attitude of urban secondary school teachers

toward schooling and education of secondary school students is better than the attitude of rural secondary school teachers toward schooling and education of secondary school students.

Table 3: Difference of attitude between male teachers and female teachers towards students' education at secondary level.

Category of the teachers	N	Mean	SD	SEm	't' value	Table value of 't' at 0.05 level	DF	Sig.
Male teachers	36	40.56	1.96	0.48	18.63	2.00	70	*
Female teachers	36	49.50	2.10					

The Table 3 indicates the comparison of attitude of male secondary school teachers and female secondary school teachers towards students' education at secondary level in Assam. The "t" test was employed to find out whether male secondary school teachers differed significantly from female secondary school teachers in their attitude towards students' education at secondary level. From the same table, it is found that the obtained "t" value 18.63 is more than the table value of "t" is 2.00 in 0.05 level of significance. Therefore, it is concluded that, there was significant difference between male secondary school teachers and female secondary school teachers' attitude towards students' education at secondary level. Since mean score (mean = 49.50) of attitude of female secondary school teachers toward students' education at secondary level is more than the mean score (mean =40.56) of attitude of male secondary school teachers toward students' education at secondary level. So, it is summarized that the attitude of female secondary school teachers toward students' education at secondary level is better than the attitude of male secondary school teachers toward students' education at secondary level of Assam.

V. MAJOR FINDINGS OF THE STUDY

The major findings of this study are as follows:

- (i) Urban secondary teachers have more positive attitude towards universalisation of secondary education than the rural secondary school teachers.
- (ii) Female secondary teachers have more positive attitude towards universalisation of secondary education than the male secondary school teachers.
- (iii) The attitude of urban secondary school teachers toward schooling and education of secondary school students is better than the attitude of rural secondary school teachers toward schooling and education of secondary school students.
- (iv) The attitude of female secondary school teachers toward students' education at secondary level is better than the attitude of male secondary school teachers toward students' education at secondary level.

VI. EDUCATIONAL IMPLICATIONS OF THE STUDY

- (i) Department of Education should organize orientation course regarding universalisation of secondary education among the secondary school teachers.
- (ii) This type of study provides a gateway to many challenging research questions in the area of universalisation of school education.
- (iii) This study will help the teachers and administrators to know about the problem found in the way of achieving USE.
- (iv) This study also helps the teachers and authority of school to take right kind of initiative to solve the problems faced in the process of USE.
- (v) This study helps the teachers to develop a positive attitude towards implementation of the scheme of universal school education.
- (vi) This type of research helps the teachers/principals/managing committee to take right decision regarding the development of students and school.
- (vii) It also helps the educationists to know about the role of teachers in the growth and development of school education.

VII. CONCLUSION

Teachers play a crucial role in identifying innate potentialities of learner, transmitting refined knowledge to learners and providing appropriate opportunities to learners to create new knowledge. In this regard, it is said that learning process and development of education system is incomplete without teachers who strive for holistic development of learners as well as for society (Devakarunyam and Jesintha, 2014). The study has revealed that more precisely urban secondary school teachers (75%) showed a favorable attitude towards USE out of which female secondary school teachers (60%) expressed more favorable attitude. These findings suggested that the majority of sample secondary school teachers having a more favorable positive attitude towards implementation of the scheme of USE. It has been accepted that many factors other than ability of the students and parents' support for their achievement in education. Among them teachers' attitude towards their students' education and schooling may be an important variable.

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