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Reviving Government Schools: Case Studies of Best Practices of Government Schools in Improving Public Education

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Submitted by
Dr. Poornima. M
Ramandeep Kaur
Council for Social Development
New Delhi-110003

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Dr. Poornima. M

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

ABL	Activity Based Learning
ALM	Active Learning Methods
ANTRIEP	Asian Network of Training and Research Institutions in Educational Planning
APF	AzimPremji Foundation
ASER	Annual Status of Education Report
BEEO	Block Education Extension Officer
B.Ed	Bachelors of Education
BRC	Block Resource Centres
CABE	Central Advisory Board of Education
CAG	Comptroller and Auditor General
CCE	Continuous and Comprehensive Evaluation
CCTV	closed-circuit television
CD	Compact Disc
CEO	Chief Education Officer
CFL	Compact Fluorescent Lamps
CRC	Cluster Resource Centres
CSO	Civil Society Organisations
DEO	District Education Officer
DPEP	District Primary Education Programme
ECO	Economy
EDU.	Education
ESTABL.	Establishment
EWS	Economically Weaker Sections
FGD	Focused Group Discussions
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
GHS	Government High School
GHSS	Government Higher Secondary School
GGHSS	Government Girls Higher Secondary School
Govt.	Government
GO	Government Order
GOI	Government of India
HCL	Hindustan Computers Limited
ICT	Information and Communication Technologies
ITL	Institutional Theory of Leadership
LAB	Laboratory
LED	Light-Emitting Diodes
MDM	Mid-Day Meal
MGNREGS	Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Scheme
M.Ed	Master of Education
MLA	Member of the Legislative Assembly
MLALAD	Member of Legislative Assembly Local Area Development Scheme
MPLADS	Members of Parliament Local Area Development Scheme

MP	Member of Parliament
M.Phil	Master of Philosophy
MS	Middle School
NABARD	National Bank for Agriculture and Rural Development
NTS	National Talent Search
NCERT	National Council of Educational Research and Training
NEP	National Education Policy
NGO	Non-Governmental Organisation
NIEPA	The National Institute of Educational Planning and Administration
NUEPA	National Institute of Educational Planning and Administration
NMMS	National Means cum Merit Scholarship
NRI	Non Resident of Indian
NTS	National Talent Search
OBC	Other Backward Caste
QR	Quick Response
PhD	Doctor of Philosophy
PKPI	Palli Kalvi Paathukaapu Iyakkam
PG	Post Graduate
PUMS	Panchayat Union Middle School
PUPS	Panchayat Union Primary School
PTR	Pupil-Teacher Ratio
RMSA	Rashtriya Madhyamik Shiksha Abhiyan
RO	Reverse Osmosis
RTE	Right to Education
SABL	Simplified Activity Based Learning
SSA	Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan
SC	Schedule Caste
SMC	School Management Committee
SES	Socio-Economic Status
ST	Schedule Tribes
TLM	Teaching Learning Materials
U-DISE	Unified District Information System
UG	Under Graduate
UMS	Upgraded Middle School
UHS	Upgraded High School
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization.
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
US	United States
VIP	Very Important Persons

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

The Context

Government schools are often criticised for lacking infrastructure, poor teaching quality, absence of basic welfare facilities etc. The inefficient functioning of government schools and its deteriorating quality has resulted in poor societal perception as government schools are considered unproductive and useless. In this scenario, the public education system figure relatively low, both in status and recognition (Tilak, 2017). This situation is further complicated by the growing popularity of private schools. It is believed, though not supported by evidence, that higher the fee a school charges, the higher is the social status and even higher is the quality of education in these schools (Tilak, 2017). Endorsing the view that private schools provide a 'superior' quality of education, it has succeeded in mobilising enormous support at the same time undermining public school education. Mechanisms adopted by private players and institutions are often promoted by way of big hoardings and advertisements, which makes the private initiatives to be applauded and acknowledged. Further, in a status conscious and hierarchical social structure as that of India, private education easily and quickly catches the imagination of a progressively mobile social class – not so much because of what they deliver in terms of knowledge and values, but more as sending children to such schools adds to social rank, even though at the level of aspiration, if not real (CABE, 2016).

On the contrary, the image of a government school is not so. Both at the central and state level, various measures have been undertaken to strengthen the public education system. There are indigenous efforts at the local level too, which has gone into strengthening the public education system though at a micro level. For instance, school authorities in a government school in Chennai encouraged children coming from socially weaker sections to speak in English. The headmaster took upon this initiative to challenge the idea that 'English cannot be taught in government schools' (Thambi B., 2014). In another government school, innovative means such as using string puppets to teach was adopted to make learning interesting and interactive. Such innovative measures are sometimes taken by the school teacher, community, etc. in strengthening the public education. Unfortunately, such efforts made at the local level across the

country remain unnoticed, unrecognised and are often not acknowledged by policy makers, civil society and state authorities.

This study thus hopes to string together innovative strategies, mechanism and practices that have been adopted by local stakeholders in strengthening government schools, which can contribute in highlighting positive case studies of government schools and serve as a model for replication.

NEED FOR REVIVING GOVERNMENT SCHOOL: A BRIEF REVIEW

Schooling system in India can be divided into various categories based on the level of education; primary, upper primary, secondary and higher secondary. Different levels of education are thus managed by different actors that include the central government, state governments, local bodies and the private sector. The state in India has been overwhelmingly held responsible for providing primary education in the country.

Factors Dismantling the Public Education System

Criticism on Government Schools: In the present day, a number of studies have criticised the quality of government or public education in India. Independent organisation, think tanks, human rights agencies, non-governmental organisations have all produced innumerable reports criticising the practices and quality of government schooling. Lacking facilities, unskilled teachers, teacher absenteeism, mismanaged authority and a deteriorating learning environment has become synonymous to government schooling and the quality of education it dispenses. Some of the critical arguments made in this regard are as follows:

- *Inefficient Administration*: One of the major concerns that need attention and that plays a major role in dismantling the public education system is the inefficient administration. The authority and officials engaged in school governance, viz., the chief education officers, district education officers, block education officers, and other set of officials engaged in school management has to be provided proper orientation on the importance of the task that they are handling, which can make a huge impact on the future citizens of the country, as education is not a routine clerical exercise. It is highly important that these officials are given proper training on the purpose of education and the importance of their role. In reality, most of these officials function as agencies to maintain the database of schools and their concern mostly is on improving the results of schools, which is seen in terms of pass percentage and high marks obtained by students in Class X

or XII. Even, while going for inspection, their focus is mostly on finding faults and checking the school records. Thus, when the school is visited with the eye of fault-finding, some of the good interventions taken by the teachers are missed out, affecting the motivation level of teachers. In reviving the public education system, emphasis should be placed on the principles of good governance viz., efficiency, rule of law, accountability, transparency and responsiveness, which should be followed in school management (Narayan & Mooij, 2010). Further, shift has to take place in the government while meeting accountability and from allegiance to rules and orders focus has to be laid on actual achievement of goals that are established (Madan, 2003). At the same time, it is also critical to pay attention on other value-laden principles and philosophies of education that would go into addressing the real weakness in the education system and strengthening the public schools.

- *Lack of Attention on Teacher Recruitment*: Another key challenge that goes into undermining the public education system is the lack of sufficient teachers. As pointed out by Guru (2019), parents from underprivileged background, with modest or no resources, have been asking local level government functionaries to provide their children with quality teachers on a regular basis. However, such basic requirement for quality functioning of the public education system has been neglected for a long time, which forces parents to move away their children from public school systems to the private ones. When RTE Act of 2009 was enacted, it was stipulated that teachers would be recruited by March 2015. However, the proper recruitment that has to be made is still overdue (Dubey, 2010). In government schools it can be observed that a single teacher has to manage about 3 to 4 classes at the same time, increasing the work burden of teachers and at the same time affecting quality education. Another challenge which adds to this complexity is the recruitment of para-teachers in schools. Though positive effects were visible in some states because of this arrangement, and as pointed out by Dreze aand Sen (2002), though it would be unwise to completely dismiss this option, it has to be understood that in the long run, the temporary arrangement is only diluting the long term solution of appointing regular teachers. Moreover, the para-teachers are found to be untrained without much guidance and substantial amount of investment is needed to train them (Mehrotra & Buckland 2001).
- *Teacher Absenteeism*: The functioning of the public education system is also affected by the issue of teacher absenteeism. A study carried out by Kremer et.al (2005) that covered

about 20 Indian states, highlighted higher teacher absenteeism, in poorer states, which varied from 15 per cent in Maharashtra to 42 per cent in Jharkhand. The study also pointed out that teacher absenteeism has been less in such schools, where there is regular inspection, better infrastructure, good road connectivity and effective monitoring with the involvement of local community. The study argues that absence rate was found to be high among highly educated, experienced, qualified and high paid teachers, in comparison to low paid and low qualified private school teachers. However, the scenario is the other way round. In the low paid private schools, the teachers are constantly kept on a state of unrest with poor working condition, which always keeps them in the fear of being fired. Some studies offers various solutions in checking teacher absenteeism, which includes: (1) creation of local level institutions that can check the accountability of teachers; (2) creation of voucher system to enable parents to send their children to school (government or private) of their choice; and (3) recruit contractual teachers on a voluntary basis (Narayan & Mooij, 2010). However, except for the involvement of local community, other avenues suggested will complicate the situation rather than solving the issues. That is, while voucher system promote the entry of private players that offer differential education, appointment of contractual teachers will let the school door open for ineffective teachers who do not have any passion for the profession. Moreover, these are quick fix solutions, that 'act on' teachers, rather than 'acting with' teachers, as argued by Narayan & Mooij (2010) and teachers should get a larger role to play in the formulation and implementation of a strategy, to address teacher absenteeism.

The critical arguments made on the functioning of government schools, exposes the drawbacks that remains in the system and specifies the importance of focusing on these aspects. However, rather than reflecting on these scenarios to strengthen the grey areas, these insights are used as measure to dismantle the public school system.

Expansion of Private Schools: In recent years, there has been an overwhelming emphasis on the growing importance of private school education, as the latter has witnessed a decadal rise. Promoting the idea that education in private schools is 'superior' to that of government schools has resulted in the complete dismissal of government schooling and its positive outcomes. Low-fee private schools or the budget schools are mushrooming in recent times, which have been projected as the viable, cost-effective and equitable option for meeting the aspirations of low-income parents. However, as argued by Nambissan (2012) the low cost schools only serve as

business models for making profit, and it has been fragmentary in nature, with little evidence to prove the promise of high-quality education for poor children. The proponents of private schools put forward various arguments in highlighting the importance of having the budget schools, which includes the following: (1) Budget schools help in meeting the parental choice of the poor and measure of school voucher should be promoted to meet their aspirations Tooley (2009); (2) public schools are becoming dysfunctional due to concerns like teacher inefficiency and teacher absenteeism (Kremer & Muralidharan, 2008). However, Nambissan & Ball (2011) opine that such promotion of low fee schools in India is mainly due to the vast funds offered by pro-market organisations of the United Kingdom, US and India, whose intention was to explore the possibility of creating edu-business, rather than serving the needs of the poor. Moreover, the low-fee schools advocated are totally unjust, which is discriminatory and totally against the fundamental right of children to free education (Nambissan, 2012). Again, as asserted by Bhatty, De & Roy (2015) it is critical that the research promoting private school education is based on correct reading of facts, keeping the larger vision of education in mind. The larger vision of education is to provide equal and equitable access of education to all, which is possible only by the public education system. Unlike the private school system that chooses the kind of children who should study in their school, the government school system cannot exercise the choice of choosing the children or turning out children who do not perform well (Bhatty, De & Roy, 2015). Further it is the obligation of the public education system to ensure that every child in the age group of 6 to 14 years of age is provided free and compulsory education. The private schools again cannot meet this obligation, as fee collection is the main mode through which the private school functions, and based on the difference in the fee paid, differential education is provided. Thus, huge costs are shifted on the parents in the private schools.

Shift in Approach of the Government: In recent years, there has been change in the approach of the government in itself, which tries to shed away its key responsibilities from the social sectors, due to which key sectors like health and education suffers. Rather than making adequate financial allocation to strengthen the public education system, the government makes a self-declaration that public schools are inefficient and the non-performing public schools should be handed over to the private players (GoI, 2017). This clearly demonstrates the shift in the agenda of the government, which is moving from equitable development to the agenda of promoting voucher system and private players. This gives the impression that the fate of our students is a predetermined mould designed for school failure (Brown et.al. 2010). Similar such intervention of the government is the 25 per cent reservation in private schools for economically weaker

sections, as per Article 12 (c) of the Right to Education Act 2009. In a recent judgement of the High Court of Karnataka, on this provision, the judgement stated that admission in private unaided schools can be considered only when government or aided private schools are not available in the neighbourhood. In this respect, Kumar (2019) argues that it affects the fundamental right of the child to education as per Article 21 A, as it affects choice, quality and inclusion. However, the provision of Article 12 (c) under RTE Act in itself is against the principle of equality and equity as enshrined in Article 14 of the Constitution. This will create knee-jerk responses to the structural problems and assimilation of children from underprivileged social backgrounds into the private education system, cannot eliminate structural inequality (Guru, 2019), which in fact needs expansion of social vision. Further, subsidisation of private schools, leads to a situation, which results in 'public pauperisation and private enrichment (Tilak, 1994). Such interventions of the government are planned measures which on one side has contributed to the withdrawal of children from government schools and on the other hand, led to the promotion of many unrecognised private schools in recent years.

Government schools made as Schools of the Marginalised: Another common trend that can be noted in recent times is that the government schools are pushed as the schools of the marginalised, which is done in a systematic manner. Thus government schools are no longer the schools of everyone, where children belonging to different socio-economic group access it. Pankaj & Poornima (2019) through their study on the unequal access in government and private schools in 4 states of India highlights the significant variation in terms of access across gender, social groups and income category. Such marginalised sections of the society are found to be in large numbers in the government schools, and as highlighted by Velaskar (1990), government school or the local body schools exists to cater to the needs of the poorer segments. Thus the issue of equity and justice is sacrificed with the segregation of education system, which provides differential quality, standards, teaching and learning methods (Velaskar 1990; Pankaj & Poornima 2019).

Shifting of Blame on Government Schools: A study that documented the initiatives of principals in 24 schools in the United States, highlights that the debate on public schools mostly centres on the achievement gap, though it is politically bathed in the language of equity and excellence (Brown et.al, 2010). The authors highlight that despite decades of efforts to provide an equitable education to all students, significant gaps in achievement remain between white students, students of colour and students living in poverty. Such gaps in achievement on the learning

levels of children are also highlighted in India as well. The Annual Status of Education Report (ASER) data highlights the difference in the learning levels of children in the government and private schools. The report observes that comparing the learning outcomes of children in government schools with those in private schools is incorrect (ASER, 2015), as the supporting environment at the household level is totally different for government school children and private school children. However, Valencia (1997) points out to such arguments as deficit thinking, as the blame for poor achievement is shifted to children and their families.

Need for Reviving the Public Education System

Despite the innumerable limitations attached to government schooling and public education it is important to recognise and understand the importance of public education in a democratic society like India. Most of the developed countries across the world are countries that have a very good public education system and hence, for a country to progress ahead in most of the socio-economic indicators, it is critical that public education system is strengthened. Even in countries such as Japan and South Korea, where substantial part of higher education is in private hands, school education belongs exclusively to the state, and such countries understand the importance of public education, as they implicitly or explicitly understand the problems of having a large private education (Tilak, 2016). Public education is a 'public good', a 'social merit' that promotes equity and efficiency simultaneously and has been recognised to be a characteristic feature of civil society (Bardhan 2013; UNESCO 2015). Government school education, found, managed and financed by the state is a system of education that remains accountable to the general public and lays the foundation for a civilised society. Public schools offer common curriculum that helps inculcate core values of humanism, liberty, equality and freedom. By inculcating in young minds and nurturing civic and social values, public schools help in building humane societies. Amartya Sen has argued how public education is an important ingredient of human capital and development which serves as a means and an end in itself (Sen 1997; Tilak, 2017). For Benjamin Barber (2000), government or public schools are not just schools for the public but institutions where individuals learn what it means to develop a common civic identity. Public education is considered the education of the masses wherein government schools serves as an equalising medium making the same quality of education accessible to all.

Government schools in India are constitutionally mandated to admit every child seeking admission. Education being a fundamental right is made available to all children irrespective of

socio-economic class, caste, religion etc. only in government schools as they have a much wider reach and are more easily accessible. They are in remotest corners of our country, from the rural, hilly to urban slums catering to the educational aspirations and needs of all sections of population including the first generation learners. They are designed as great equalizers in society - a place where all children have access to good educational opportunities (CABE, 2016).

Insights from Empirical Studies

Some studies have highlighted the role of various stakeholders in energising government schools, though such studies are minuscule in number. Some of the studies that discuss the agency of schools, teachers, head teachers, community, etc. in improving government schools have been presented here.

Yirci & Karakose (2010) highlight that a number of stakeholders including but not limited to parents, teachers, civil society members, policy makers, advisors etc. play a critical role in determining the educational structure and its subsequent outcome.

A study on the Village Education Committees (VECs) or the School Management Committees (SMCs) in Gujarat shows that the involvement of a supportive *sarpanch* has contributed in increasing the enrolment of school-going age children from less than 70 per cent to 100 per cent in a matter of two years. The strategy adopted by the community to increase the enrolment was awarding prizes to vulnerable groups who enrolled, highlighting the importance of enrolment during celebrations, enrolment drives etc. (Chand & Kuril, 2018). The study has also highlighted that, in addition to the involvement of the community in school development activities, the community had also shown active involvement in mobilising the needed resources from the local people for various school related activities. Similarly, the study carried out by Kremer, Hammer & Rogers (2005), highlights that schools with regular parents teacher meeting (PTM) has low absence of teachers and such monitoring mechanism of the community helps in preventing teacher absenteeism.

Vasavi (2015) has identified how the education processes in schools get diluted, distorted or compounded due to the negotiation or strategies adopted by key agents such as administrators, management, authorities etc. Consequently, the quality of a particular school and the kind of education it dispenses is determined by the role played by different actors and the efforts made by them. Vasavi (Ibid) by exploring some of the proactive efforts made by teachers of

government school in Delhi, notes how efficient management and authority can buck or negotiate structural limitations to focus on enabling children to learn.

Through a study of government schools in Karnataka, Ramachandran (2001) and Page (2005) observes how the supportive environment created by the teacher encourages children to interact as they depart from the 'passive and one-way communication that characterises most schools'. By departing herself from an authoritarian figure to a fun loving and creative facilitator the teacher was able to encourage interest amongst students (Ibid.).

Though such literature on the good practices of government schools is available, it is quite scarce and there is abundance of literature that goes into criticising the public education system. Further, the literature is also scarce on the novel mechanisms, strategies and methods adopted indigenously to strengthen government schools. In this regard, ihis study tries to fill this gap and further contribute in improving societal perception for the same. The study also aims to shed light on some of the innovative means and practices adopted by key agents such as school authorities, teachers, administrators etc. to improve the quality of public education and revive its popularity and support.

STUDY OBJECTIVES

This study by examining the efforts of best performing government schools that caters to children in the age group of 6 to 14 years, aims to highlight the positive case studies that can serve as model for replication in other government schools. In this regard, the specific objectives of the study are to:

- Identify some of the practices adopted in reviving public education, which includes measures taken towards school development, student development and addressing equity concerns;
- Identify factors that have contributed in making such initiatives the best practices;
- Capture some good case studies of government schools and analyse the strategies adopted by them in coping with the challenges of quality, implementation and monitoring;
- Recognise key factors and individual who have been instrumental in taking such proactive measures; and
- Identify key elements and components that can be replicated in other government schools.

METHODOLOGY

The study uses case study method to capture the best practices adopted indigenously. It focuses more on qualitative aspects of the survey than quantitative. Structured interviews, semi-structured interviews, informal discussions and focused group discussions (FGDs) have been undertaken as part of the data collection process.

Additionally, both primary and secondary data sources were used for the study. Secondary sources include data from U-DISE, National Institute of Educational Planning and Administration (NIEPA), information and reports of state governments and other organisations, which were reviewed to understand and analyse the general practices across different states in India and the states identified for the survey.

Primary data was collected from the selected states. The state selection was based on the index on 'extent of government school penetration in India' which is computed, based on the 1) indicators of (a) total number of Government schools (excluding the central schools) and (b) total enrolment of students in these schools; and 2) index on education development prepared by NIEPA. Using both these index, one state with high education development and low government school penetration (Tamil Nadu) and one with low education development and high government school penetration (Bihar) has been taken.

BIHAR **TAMIL NADU**

Three districts from each state was identified for the survey based on the discussion and interview with the officials of the State Education department, non-governmental organisations (NGOs) working on education at the state level and the district-wise award list of schools that was awarded for best performance. The districts so identified in Bihar include Begusarai, Samastipur and Sitamarhi, while in Tamil Nadu the identified districts were Ariyalur, Madurai and Perambalur. After identifying the districts, further information on the educational practices of the districts were also collected by tracing the news item on these districts and schools. Facebook sites were also reviewed to know about the functioning of these schools.

Table 1.1: Area visited during survey in Bihar and Tamil Nadu

State	District	Block	Village
BIHAR	Sitamarhi	Sonbarsa	Inderwa
			Buthibazar
		Bajpatthi	Bangaum Uttam
		Bathnaha	Sonbarsa
		Dumra	Bhavdepur
	Samastipur	Samastipur	Mordiva
			Lagunia
		Kalyanpur	Malinagar
			Barheta
		Pusa	Sri Rampur Aayodhya
			Thahra Gopalpur
		Maouddinagar	Nandani Pursuram
	Begusarai	Matihani	Matihani
			Badarpura
		Begusarai	Mohanpur
TAMIL NADU	Madurai	Madurai East	Othakkadai
			Pottapanaiyur
			Meenakshi Nagar, Karserai
			Othakkadai
		T. Kallupatty	Vannivelam Patti
	Perambalur	Aalathur	Sillakudi
			Nochikulam
		Veppur	Kothavaasal
			Kathalaimedu
		Permabalur	Kurumbalur
	Ariyalur	Ariyalur	Asthinapuram
			Idayathankudi
		T. Palur	Vikramangalam
			J.Suthamalli
			Pudhuchavadi

Source: Prepared by the authors.

Again discussion was held in the identified districts with district level officials of the education department, NGOs having its presence at the district level and the teachers of block resource centre and cluster resource centre. Based on the visit and discussion held, the schools that were frequently repeated by these stakeholders as good performing schools in their respective region was identified and around 10-12 schools were short-listed in the identified district. Against these

identified schools, four set of criteria such as *performance of school in infrastructure development, student development, innovation* and *community involvement* was taken as the broad parameters and each school was asked to rank these schools on a five point scale. The top five schools, based on these ranking were selected for in-depth survey. Thus a mix of snow bowl sampling and purposive sampling was used in identifying the final list of 30 schools for survey, 15 each in Bihar and Tamil Nadu. Later, the key respondents such as headmaster, teacher, students, and parents were identified, for in-depth survey and different survey instruments were used to garner information from them.

The schools finally identified for survey were rich in various ways: (1) in some, the principals were the nodal persons who were the instrument of change; (2) In some, there were other key teacher or teachers who were playing the transformative role with their vision and implementation strategy; (3) in some, community involvement was found to be strong, this was particularly, the case in Begusarai; (4) in some schools, almost all the children of the village and nearby areas had their children in this school, irrespective of the parental background, income etc. (5) in some, there has been a reversal of trend, where children from private schools had shifted to the government schools, knowing about the performance of these schools and one school in particular was instrumental in closing-down of 5 to 6 private schools close by. The key respondents such as headmaster, teacher, students, and parents were identified, for in-depth survey and different survey instruments were used to garner information from them (see Table 1.2).

Table 1.2: Sample Size and the Survey Instruments Canvassed

Sample	**Survey Instruments**	**Respondents per district**	**Respondents per State**	**Respondents in 2 States**
School	Structured School Schedule	1 x 5 schools = 5	5 x 3 districts = 15	15 x 2 = 30 schools
Teachers	Structured Teachers Schedule	2 x 5 schools = 10	10 x 3 districts = 30	30 x 2 = 60 teachers
Parents	Focussed Group Discussion	1 FGDs/school x 5 schools/ district = 5	5x 3 district = 15 FGD	15 x 2 = 30 FGDs
Students (Class V & Class VIII)	Focussed Group Discussion	1 FGDs/school x 5 schools/ district = 5	5x 3 district = 15 FGD	15 x 2 = 30 FGDs
Government Officials & Employees of NGOs	Semi-Structured Interview Schedule		20 per state	20 x 2 = 40 officials
Resource Persons for Case Study	Semi-Structured Interview Schedule		5 cases/state	10 cases
Total			**100**	**200**

Source: Prepared by the authors.

Structure of the Report

Chapter 1 is the introductory chapter that presents a brief background of the study, survey of literature, study objectives and methodology adopted for the study.

Chapter 2 discusses the determinants of the best practices of government schools, based on the review of national and international literature on effective schools or good schools.

Chapter 3 presents the theoretical framework and analytical framework. It elaborates the Institutional Theory of Leadership, which was considered apt for our study on the best practices of public schools. Further, an analytical framework is designed which included key components such as measures towards school development, student development and equity concerns.

Chapter 4 presents a brief profile of the surveyed schools. It discusses in detail, the key features of the schools, profile of the key teachers who acted as change agents and other such components related to the surveyed schools.

Chapter 5 sheds light on the how the best performing schools have undertaken school development measures and established the reputation of their schools. In discussing these aspects, it throws light on how such measures were pursued by the teachers and the factors that contributed towards its success.

Chapter 6 highlights the strategies and measures taken by the surveyed public schools that had contributed towards the holistic development of children.

Chapter 7 highlights the measures taken by the schools in ensuring equal and equitable education to all children and thus discusses the key initiatives undertaken in this regard.

Chapter 8 summarises the major findings and conclusions of the study.

CHAPTER 2

DETERMINANTS OF BEST PRACTICES IN GOVERNMENT SCHOOLS

"*We can, whenever and wherever we choose, successfully teach all children, whose schooling is of interest to us".*

- *Ronald Edmonds, 1979*

INTRODUCTION

Government schools in general are the schools of equity and where the system of public education is promoted. However, in the globalised world, which is driven by market, there seems to be market penetration in the schooling system too, wherein the market tries to provide different kinds of education based on the paying ability of parents. In such a context, when universalisation of education is to be achieved, it is only the public education system that has to be focused upon, as only public education can cater to the requirements of all children irrespective of caste, creed, religion, class, etc. and meet the Constitutional commitment of Education for All.

Government schools are still the schools of the masses in India, where majority of the children are enrolled. As per U-DISE 2016-17 data, about 77.25 per cent of the total elementary schools in India are government schools that cater to about 65.96 per cent of the total school going children (NIEPA, 2017). Government schools are the only option, where lies the hope of equality, especially in a context, where the private schools are mushrooming in number.

However, the schools of the masses has been losing its glory in today's world and as observed by Ramachandran (2010), the biggest challenge across the world is to make the government schools work and ensure the learning of children. In this direction, the Central Advisory Board of Education (CABE) had constituted a Sub-committee in 2015 to devise pathways for improving government schools and the committee had identified some of the concerns that has resulted in the lost glory of government schools. Some of the concerns highlighted by the committee include (CABE, 2016):

- Multi-grade classes, lack of adequate number of teachers and single teacher schools;
- Lack of optimal and adequate infrastructure to support the education of children;
- Negative perception associated with government schools;
- Shortage of capable and motivated principals, leading to lack of ownership and poor governance in schools and lack of accountability in government education system;
- Influence of English medium education, creating dichotomy between the public and private schools;
- Lack of full proof system for ensuring selection of quality teachers;
- Lack of voluntary spaces for self-improvement of teachers and support for institutional capacity building; and
- Unsatisfactory condition of block resource centres (BRCs)/cluster resource centres (CRCs) and the various institutions of teachers' education and training.

While some of the concerns highlighted by the committee relate to systemic issues that needs policy level intervention, others are linked to school related issues, which can be addressed by the educational stakeholders at the local level, viz. teachers, educational officers, parents, community, civil society organisations, etc. Irrespective of all these concerns which have been highlighted, it cannot be denied that both policy measures and practice at the ground level are already visible across the country in strengthening the government schools. For instance, state governments such as Delhi, Kerala, etc. are already found to be taking innovative policy measures to strengthen the government schools. Similarly, many of the educational stakeholders at their respective levels are also found to be taking various measures to revive the government schools and strengthen their functioning.

One of the best strategies as identified by Ramachandran in energising government schools is to acknowledge the exisitng problems in all its complexity and then work on it by drawing learnings from succesful initiatives (Ramachandran & Jandhyala, 2007; Ramachandran, 2010). However, the existing studies mostly have illustrated the examples of how the government schools have failed. It is important to throw light on the successful initiatives and the effort in this direction is made in this study to identify the best practices of government schools.

In the context discussed above, this chapter by reviewing the existing literature related to good practices or best practices of schools, conceptualises what best practice means for the purpose of this study and identifies few key characteristics of effective schools.

DETERMINANTS ON THE BEST PRACTICES OF SCHOOLS

An effective school can be regarded as something that concentrates on addressing the concerns related to child development in a holistic manner. There are certain key aspects that are considered as essential components in considering a school effective, viz., student outcome in terms of learning and achievement, school infrastructure, pedagogy practised in schools, etc. Demonstrating a practice as 'best' or 'good', is not an easy task, as it is a subjective phenomenon and the perception on 'good practice' or 'best practice', varies from one person to another and also from one context to the other. In the existing literature, the term good school is also synonymously used to refer to effective, successful, efficient, best or quality school. As observed by Urbanovič & Balevičienė (2014), criteria for determining school effectiveness may vary, as the key agents involved in school, viz., education management, school administration, teachers, students, parents, society, etc. may have different expectations from school. For instance, for the state or educational management, a school can be regarded best, if it achieves the results fixed by the state or the management. For the school authority, their school can be the best, if their students are able to get good results and achieve name for their school. For a civil society organisation, a school can be effective, if it is able to strengthen both the teachers and the community to work for the development of the school and meeting the requirement of education for all. For students, a school can be best, if it allows the child to enjoy his or her freedom and provide the space to voice out their concerns.

Existing evidence and literature mostly is critical of the functioning of the public education system and emphasise on the lacking infrastructure and quality, teacher absenteeism, extreme socio-economic background of students etc. (French & Kingdon, 2010; Muralidharan & Kremer, 2007). However, there is little evidence to show the 'effective strategies' or 'best practices' adopted by the public education system or the role played by key stakeholders, i.e. the teachers in particular, in contributing towards school improvement. Despite the myth that exist about government schools and the countervailing pressures involved, there are teachers who resist, survive and transform schools (Riester, Pursch, & Skrla, 2002; Scheurich, 1998). These are teachers, who exhibit strong will and ability to leave the comforts and confines of professional codes and state mandates, just to meet higher moral callings (Rapp, 2002: 233). In exploring the role played by such teachers and in identifying the best strategies or practices, there is no universally acclaimed set of practices, which is considered best, effective or successful. In this context, the forthcoming section of this chapter, based on the review of both international and

national literature related to effective schools or good performing schools, tries to identify the characteristics of good performing schools and demonstrate what constitutes a good practice for the purpose of this study.

What Constitutes a Best Practice?

There are various components that go into strengthening the performance of students in a school, contributing to their holistic development in spite of the various backgrounds that they come from. The best practices literature thus identifies various components based on theory and empirical evidence. Irrespective of whatever be the practices or strategies adopted or suggested, school improvement is not possible unless the teachers stand by the values that they are advocating for their students and show genuine interest in students' lives (Brown, et.al. 2010).

Both international and national literatures on the good practices highlight different characteristics that are found in different good performing schools that try to address different context. While some studies highlight the overall concerns that contribute to good performance in schools, there are other studies that focus on specific aspects such as achievement of students, equity concerns in schools, etc.

Student Development

In the good performing schools, one of the key characteristics that has been highlighted in several studies is the focus of the school on student development. Most of the existing literature equates student development with the achievement in academics and obtaining good marks. Goddard, Sweetland, & Hoy (2000) notes that the greater the academic emphasis, the more capable is the school in facilitating student learning. In this regard, Murphy et.al (1982) had identified various strategies that are followed in the schools with good academic achievement, which includes: i) establishing an academically demanding culture; ii) having orderly and well-managed classrooms; iii) ensuring student academic success; iv) implementing instructional practice that promote student achievement; and v) providing opportunity for student responsibility and leadership. A study by Oliveira et.al (2013) on the best practices of middle schools in New York, regard best practice as educational practices that correlates with high student performance, which depends upon instructional and administrative practices. However, emphasis on academic performance alone is not sufficent, and schooling should contribute towards the holistic development of children. Academic performance is sure to bring about change in the lives of students and as long as the focus is on enhancing the life and learning of

children, emphasis on academic performance is good. On the contrary, when the emphasis is so much on academic performance, the focus gets diluted in just preparing the children for securing high marks, irrespective of whether the learning has happened or not.

Scheurich (1998) affirms that the core belief of a successful school rests on the philosophy that all students can succeed and thus the emphasise of a succesful school is on i) child-centred approach, ii) love, care, appreciation and respect to children; and iii) value to the culture of children. Scott (2001) emphasises that learning of a learner has to be focused upon by ensuring adequate resource and needed support in order to enable the students to achieve competence, excellence, independence, sense of responsibility and self-sufficiency. Daggett & McNulty (2005) argue that, in high performing schools, priority is laid on fostering intellectual development, teaching students to be responsible citizens, and getting them ready for higher education. With respect to student development, successful schools (Daggett & McNulty, 2005: 13):

- embrace student-focused vision and lay attention on what to teach, considering the future of the students;
- believe that all students must be equiped with the skills to be lifelong learners in a technologically based society;
- focus on the future of students, with the goal of teaching how to think — not simply what to know and thus teach students on how to apply cognitive knowledge to real-world unpredictable situations;
- motivate students and have firm belief in the potential of students, which makes them engage in rigorous learning, when they know that the teachers, parents and others care for them;
- embed the principles of respect, responsibility, honesty, compassion, contemplation and perseverance in the school culture to promote student development.

Thus when focussing on the needs of the students, the high performing schools, rely on the stregnth of the teachers, students, community and the school.

Equity in Education

There is a strong agreement among scholars in most of the studies that the achievement of students is mainly related to the socio-economic background of students and the learning

opportunities available at home. By highlighting these concerns, the belief is established that the schools do not have a major role to play in enhancing the learning of children (Coleman, 1966). However, some scholars highlight that schools can be both excellent and equitable and contribute to the achievement of the children, irrespective of the background that they belong to (Edmonds, 1979; Hoy, 2012; Brown et. al. 2010; Comer, 1984; Ladson-Billings, 1994; Reyes, Sribner, & Scribner, 1999; Skrla & Scheurich, 2001). Scott (2001) identifies various components that are necessary for achieving excellence and equity, which includes: opportunity to achieve, opportunity to learn, resource distribution, amidst other components that is put forward in the context of equity. Brown & Harris (2004) highlight that, in the United States (US), racially segregated schools are regarded unconstitutional, as it deprives the educational rights of minority children, which is against the 'equal protection clause' of the U.S. Constitution (p.239). On the contrary, in India, despite having education as a fundamental right in the Constitution of India and having the Right of Children to Free and Compulsory Education Act, 2009, rights of children are constantly violated with the existence of differential schooling system for the haves and the have-nots. Thus, as opined by Brown et.al. (2010), in a school when there is no response to the needs of all children and their families, it only perpetuates hegemony and leaves these students behind—without hope, without vision, and without equal access to the excellent education to which all children are entitled. Hence, a school can be regarded best, where conscious attempt is made by the school to resist hegemony and make social justice the principal agenda.

Weber (1971) one of the early scholars, who worked on the achievement of all children, argues that low achievement of the marginalised children is mainly due to the inherent disabilities characterising the poor or marginalised. Some of the characteristics that contributed to the achievement of all children, as highlighted by Weber include: i) *Strong leadership*, in setting the tone of the school, deciding instructional strategies and organising and distributing school resources; and ii) having *high Expectations* on all students with provision of orderly and pleasant atmosphere.

Edmonds, one of the key scholars on the research of effective schools and learning achievement of all children, argues that if the opportunities available to the high achieving schools are made available in all the schools, then all the students can show high achievement (Edmonds, 1979). Similar argument is also made by Oliveira et.al. (2013), who state that in almost all the schools with best practice, climate of opportunity is provided for all the students, regardless of socio-

economic status, linguistic background, ethnicity and other such factors. Based on their analysis of about 7 best performing schools in New York, such claims were made. In one school, it was highlighted that climate of opportunity is manifested in everyday life in school so that student feel confident. In another school it was reported that students are allowed to make mistakes and they are not threatened when they make mistakes. This gives them the freedom to openly explore and question without any fear of being right or wrong. In a collaborative study on the effective and ineffective schools in Detroit, Edmonds and others infer that the students' family background neither causes nor precludes elementary school instructional effectiveness (Lezotte, Edmonds & Ratner, 1974). Socio-economic background of students is only taken up as an excuse measure to absolve educators of their professional responsibility to be instructive (Edmonds, 1979).

In promoting equitable education, most of the existing literature, either talks about the issues of access to children of different socio-economic background or the achievement of children belonging to diverse groups. However, holistic development of all children is not just about the education of children belonging to diverse background. It is about making the school, a school for everyone, in which there is blurred boundaries in terms of class, caste, religion, gender, etc. Some scholars suggest the strategy of incorporating the lived experiences of children which will legitimise and validate the realities of more students (Shields, 2004). He thus argues that "we need to open our curriculum (formal, informal and hidden) and create spaces in which all children's lived experiences may be both reflected and critiqued in the context of learning". This way, the schools and classrooms can be made more inclusive, providing scope for democratic participation.

Common Characteristics of Effective Schools

Scheurich (1998), through his study of the schools for Mexican-American and African-American students in the United States, discusses about the model that works for children from low socio-economic status (SES). Those schools are called as HiPass model, which means High Performance All Student Success Schools. This study basically highlights about the core beliefs and cultural characteristics of these successful schools, in trying to address the needs of low SES students. According to Scheurich, the success of a school depends upon **the vision, commitment and practice of a school leader** (Scheurich, 1998). Five Core Beliefs of successful schools, as highlighted by Scheurich include:

- All children can succeed (Belief in the potential of all children);

- Child-centered Schools;
- All children should be treated with love, care, appreciation and respect;
- Racial Culture – First language of the child is always valued;
- Schools exist for and serve the community.

In addition, he also states that the Cultural characteristics are quite strongly visible in a good performing school, which includes (Scheurich 1998):

- A strong, shared vision;
- Loving, caring environments for children and adults;
- Strongly collaborative;
- Innovative, Experimental, Openness to New Ideas;
- Hardworking, but not burning out;
- Appropriate conduct is built into the organisational culture;
- School staff as a whole, hold themselves accountable for the success of all children.

The characteristics of a good school as identified by Shouse (1996) include school academic climate, disciplinary climate, and teachers' instructional behaviour and emphasis. His study also reveals the tremendous potential of school social networks that are supportive, cohesive, and academically oriented to greatly enhance the quality of educational experiences for disadvantaged students.

Based on a study of about 120 elementary schools in California, Benninga et.al (2006) identified four indicators or principles of a good school which include:

- Good schools ensure a clean and secure physical environment;
- Good schools promote and model fairness, equity, care, and respect;
- In good schools students contribute in meaningful ways; and
- Good schools promote a caring community and positive social relationships.

Edmonds (1979) identifies certain indispensable characteristics that are there in the effective schools:

- Existence of *strong leadership and teachers,* who are highly supportive, responsible, committed and accountable
- Having a *climate of expectation,* i.e. high level of achievement is expected for all children and there is emphasis on minimum level of mastery of basic skills of all children
- Having an *orderly atmosphere* in the school, not being rigid or oppressive, but conducive to instruction

- Having a *sense of clarity* that basic school skills are to be acquired by students over other school activities and apply appropriate principles of learning
- Having measures for *frequent monitoring* of student progress

Daggett & McNulty (2005) have also identified a set of characteristics, that are visible in successful schools and the observations made by them is mostly related to the process factors which contributes towards strengthening the school. Again as reiterated in various studies, the success of most of these measures depends upon the measures of leaders. Some of the key characteristics highlighted by them are as follows:

- Successful schools has a focused vision and a common purpose and their visions are helpful to create a collaborative spirit among teachers and community;
- Change leaders in high performing schools are willing to take necessary risks, as they believe that there is no choice but to change and they know that playing it safe is more dangerous than risk taking;
- For long term success, schools need to engage in reflective thinking, and have the zeal to continually strive to improve and reinvent themselves;
- High performing schools, mainly focus on the needs of the students, however, they rely on the strength of the faculty, community, school and students;
- Successful schools, capitalise on the strengths, rather than compensating for the weaknesses, thus focus on the positive and become energised to move ahead;
- Successful schools understand that leadership is not a position, but a way of doing for everyone in the school and thus leadership is everyone's responsibility. Everyone should have a clear focus and understand the goals

On the whole, what can be perceived from the international literature is that a combination of various characteristics such as presence of strong leadership, dedicated teachers, active involvement of community, dynamic school culture, climate of opportunity, vision for the success of all children, etc. are essential to make schools effective.

However, a different dimension to the study of good or effective schools has also been given by few scholars. Zierer (2013) argues that 'we run the risk of being preoccupied with measurement, ranking and evaluation, failing to take an integral view of schools'. According to Zierer, a 'joyful school is one, in which the interests, wishes and senses of its students and teachers are engaged and give them pleasure, fulfilment and happiness' (Zierer, 2013). There are still others

who states that school should be a place for everyone to teach and learn simultaneously under the same roof; and should also provide the learning environment for self realisation (Barth, 1990; Döş, 2014). Maher & Hanley (2013) argue that the education system that prepares students for economic rationalistic terms fail both the young people and the common good. Rather, a good school, should teach students to handle their crisis and reflect upon experiences that either contributes towards growth or diminishment. The authors define diminishing experiences as those that harm relationship or damage self-esteem (Maher & Hanley, 2013).

At the national level, the literature is quite scarce on the good practices of schools and mostly the literature that exists makes a comparative study of the quality of education in government and private schools and some criticises the government schools on various grounds. Still some literature has defined a good or efficient school in its own way and some has made a discussion on how a good school should function. While some has made a discussion in this regard on schools in general, some has made their deliberation on public schools.

Grauwe & Varghese (2000), define an efficient school as those schools that: 1) obtain good outcomes in terms of examination results; 2) are well managed, in which the interaction between different stakeholders is cordial and mutually reinforcing, where teachers are happy to teach, parents are willing to send their children to school and children are enjoying the learning process; and 3) give good results at affordable cost to society and different individuals in the society, thus meeting cost and equity considerations. In crux, effective school is something that has its focus on outcome; favorable internal management; cost-effectiveness and equity.

The Sub-Committee of CABE on Education, envisions a good Public School as follows:

> "A good Public School is one, where a child feels welcomed as the school provides warm and conducive learning environment and staff cares for the students. A good public school has good physical infrastructure, equipped with a wide range of co-curricular activities that helps children develop and take up challenges with passion for excellence. A good public school is where teachers and school leaders organise learning and teaching programmes with innovations and dedication and where every child is so special to them. A good public school rises above the usual social divides and help children grow into responsible and sensitive human beings (CABE, 2016)."

Vasavi (2015) by exploring the proactive efforts made by teachers of government schools in Delhi, notes that efficient management and authority in schools can buck or negotiate structural limitations and focus on enabling children to learn. Similarly, based on another study of government schools in Karnataka, Ramachandran (2001) and Page (2005) states that supportive

environment created by teachers in schools can encourage students to interact and break the one-way lecture method that is practised in most of the schools. Though such literature on the good practices of government schools is available, such literature is quite scarce, and mostly the focus is on individual aspects, rather than making a study on the holistic measures that goes into strengthening the public schools. The forthcoming section throws light on the measures that contribute towards school improvement, as discussed in few studies.

Measures towards School Improvement

The report that had assessed the Asian experience on improving school efficiency argues that if schools are to be improved, the focus should be laid on the processes, which is contextual and the improvement depends upon the capacity of each school and hence, emphasis should be on the interventions at the school level (UNESCO, 2000). On similar lines, Grauwe & Varghese (2000) argue that revival of schools is possible, when emphasis is laid on the process variables such as school organisation and practices, rather than focusing on input variables like facilities, textbooks, etc. Similarly, emphasis should be on the capacity of school on the whole, rather than focusing on isolated components such as teacher development, professional competencies, etc.

Ramachandran & Jandhyala (2007) suggest various measures for improving or energising government schools. Some of the key suggestions made are as follows (Ramachandran, 2010):

- Firstly, it is important to make a revisit to the ground reality, acknowledge the problem in all its complexity, and then address it by taking the examples of success stories;
- Secondly, make a conscious plan to ensure equity, by focussing on concerns related to low teacher motivation, negative teacher attitudes and prejudices and insensitivity of key players;
- Thirdly, there is the dire need to acknowledge the role of community in ensuring accountability in schools;
- The fourth criteria for ensuring good practices in school is to follow the transparent information policy, which highlights the practice of free flow of information upwards, downwards, and laterally and the freedom to communicate with decision makers;
- The fifth criteria for energising government school is to make schooling a joyful experience through pedagogical renewal, child-friendly classrooms, developing activity based learning material, etc. which is possibel by rekindling the self motivation and enthusiasm of teachers;

- Sixthly, government schools have to be energised by scaling up successful models;

In addition to the above measures she also emphasises on the process related concerns to improve government schools which includes (Ramachandran, 2010): i) addressing administrative, personnel and other issues alongside accountability systems; ii) taking systemic measures and not piece-meal approach; iii) setting in motion a virtuous process, though limited, which will demonstrate tangible outcomes resulting in improvement in input processes; iv) sustaining innovations and negotiating with people who maintain status quo; v) reflecting on the reasons for failure of promising innovations or measures; and vi) reflecting on what happens, when programmes are scaled up without adequate preparation.

Case Studies on Successful schools was jointly carried out by the Asian Network of Training and Research Institutions in Educational Planning (ANTRIEP) and the then National University of Educational Planning and Administration (NUEPA) which made a study of successful schools of about seven countries viz., Bangladesh, India, Malaysia, Nepal, Philippines, Pakistan and Sri Lanka. The study highlights that success in most of the schools was possible only based on leadership efforts and some of the strategies adopted by successful schools, as identified by this study includes (Sujatha, 2011):

- Setting up high standards for the school;
- Concentrating on human resource mobilisation;
- Ensuring provision of quality education and special facilities;
- Promoting sound leadership efforts; and
- Focusing in team building support system and mobilisation efforts of leadership;

Tilak (2017) observes that the overall climate is downright hostile to public education and he suggests that a multipronged approach and commitment to strengthen government schools is needed. Some of the policy and practice measures suggested by him include the following:

i. Creation of a healthy school environment, with attractive infrastructural facilities;
ii. Ensuring that every government school has good committed teachers;
iii. Boost the social equation by making government schools-schools of everyone, where children get the opportunity to mix with different income groups;
iv. Adoption of Common School System/Neighbourhood School, so that the principle of paying ability does not operate;

v. Reviving the best practices of past system, such as inspectorate system, quality and motivational training systems, accountability mechanism, method of recognising and rewarding merit and performance;

vi. Improving school leadership through strong and high quality training programmes;

vii. Inculcation of good values, attitudes and skills, such as dignity of labour and other moral, social and national values, by making activities such as gardening, sweeping, cleaning, as an integral part of schooling.

Similarly, the Sub-Committee of CABE on Education in devising pathways for improving government schools suggested various recommendations for reviving government schools. Some of the recommendations linked to school related aspects are as follows (CABE, 2016):

- Provision of quality infrastructure and maintenance, such as safe and nutritious MDM, health support, safe drinking water, clean environment, provision of hand wash stations with running water, provision of budget for TLMs, etc.
- Provision of appropriate learning resources, such as vibrant libraries with audio-visual kits, well-equipped laboratories, computers, learning materials, etc.
- Empower teachers to design classroom pedagogy, choose curricular material and select assessment procedures;
- Incorporation of inclusive and democratic school culture and school process – ensuring physical and emotional safety of all children and have a collaborative and inclusive school culture;
- Provision of multi-disciplinary environment for teacher education;
- Plan for teacher recruitment and management;
- Focus on school leadership to ensure quality by revamping selection procedure of those in leadership position
- Financing of education, in order to strengthen public education system

Most of the measures suggested by Tilak and CABE committee are policy oriented. However, related concerns at the micro level have also been taken up by stakeholders at the local level to strengthen government schools. For instance, school development measures, infrastructure and learning resources, financing education and creating conducive conditions for government schools are recommended at the macro level. However, some teachers and community members are already working in this direction to pool financial resources for their respective schools and

addressing concerns related to their school, to make schools conducive. However, most of the recommendations suggested by the committee seem to have limited linkage with ground reality and thus the recommendations suggested are mostly unrealistic. Rather than suggesting measures which has the practicality of implementation, the measures seem utopian.

It can also be noted that most of the literature on the best practices or successful or efficient practices has discussed the characteristics of successful schools. However, as observed by Sujatha (2011), what educational leaders or other stakeholders do to achieve success is less explored, at least in the Indian context and especially the dynamics of the process and ways and means adopted in managing successful schools. Huber (1996) affirms that through various means of knowledge acquisition, dynamic processes and means are adopted by leaders in improving their schools. The five forms of knowledge acquisition as highlighted by Huber include the following (Hanson, 2001):

- Replicating the successful measures of other schools;
- Learning from personal experience, for instance, evaluating the effectiveness of a strategy for fund raising;
- Learning by observing, that is watching and judging the outcome of measures undertaken by another school, for instance, measures related to ICT learning, phonetics;
- Grafting on carriers of new knowledge, such as seeking out and hiring teachers specialized in computer-based training; and
- Carrying out focused and wide-ranging sensing of the external environment.

Almost all these measures are visible in India, in the efforts of successful leaders in reviving their schools. Review of the effective/successful/good schools literature reveals the existence of certain practices, which sometimes is a self-generated practice in the school, or at other times, is the replica of other successful practices implemented in other places. Such set of practices as discussed by various scholars exhibit the inherent potential of those measures in transforming even a very bad school into a good school. Thus, based on the review made, the set of practices that has its relevance in the Indian schools has been consolidated as below. In this process, it is important to know what works for the Indian context, as even the highly effective solution will not produce the desired results, if it does not fit the context. Thus on the whole, practices adopted in schools are considered best for this study, if it focuses on the following:

- ***School Development Measures*:** A set of practice that goes into strengthening the school and its infrastructure viz., having a clear vision and mission for school; resource mobilisation measures for school development; ensuring a proper infrastructure and a clean, safe and secure physical environment; having supportive climate for teachers; establishing strong collaborative network and thus contributing towards building the reputation of school;
- ***Student Development Measures*:** Practice that aims at achieving holistic development of children in terms of enhancing competence, life skills, creating responsible citizens; academic intervention etc. through pedagogical practice, i.e. various teaching and learning styles, innovative teaching and learning methods; social intervention, i.e. addressing the challenges faced by students;
- ***Ensuring Equity Concerns*:** Practice that acknowledges and meets the needs and preferences of all children by increasing the access of all and ensuring equal opportunity to learn, participate and achieve and incorporate the lived experience of children to validate the realities of more children (Shields, 2004).

CONCLUSION

Most of the existing studies on the successful models of public schools mainly talk about how these schools make a difference for the children of low socio-economic status and how it contributes to their achievement. Such studies, clearly conveys that the good performing government schools are advancing the children of the weaker sections, while at the same time, gives an image that government schools are meant for the marginalised. For instance, the CABE committee on Education states that public education system in India caters to those without means, providing access, sustenance and support to vulnerable groups. The same set of literature glorifies public schools and states that they are the schools of everyone that promote equity and equality. The literature on successful models of government school, thus has failed to capture successful practices in terms of meeting the educational needs of both the haves and the have-nots. When children of different socio-economic group, study in the same school, the exposure and experience of children is actually enriched. Hence, our case study of government school also tries to capture such schools, where children of better socio-economic group had also competed to get admission in government schools and where children of all sections of the society are making good performance.

CHAPTER 3

THEORETICAL AND ANALYTICAL FRAMEWORK

INTRODUCTION

The previous chapter on the determinants of best practice had identified various characteristics that had contributed to the success of a school. However, the chief of all factors that has been reiterated in various studies is the presence of strong leadership in school. Leadership in schools plays a major role in addressing the systemic constraints that are present in the schools and thus contribute towards the effective functioning of schools (Govinda, 2002; Sujatha, 2011; European Union et.al. 2013). As observed by Brown et.al (2010), success of school reform initiatives in terms of improvement in teaching and learning, highly depends upon the motivation and capacities of local leaders. A strong leader is someone, who brings about significant transformation and changes in daily practices; thus small changes made in the structure, goes a long way in bringing transformation in the system on the whole (Brown et.al 2010). Thus, for schools to be effective, quality leadership and quality teachers are of paramount importance, as strong instructional leadership can be instrumental in creating a positive school climate (Edmond, 1979).

Not all leaders have the same type of practice. The style of leadership and the role carried out by them change from one type of leader to the other. However, in spite of the difference in the leadership styles, they seem to have their vision for school improvement and are thus engaged in different practices and strategies. As highlighted by Marzano (2003), an effective teacher brings about changes just by sheer will and personality and they focus on promoting the involvement of teachers and parents in decision making.

Understanding the suitability of the leadership approach for the purpose of this study, this chapter explores the application of Institutional Theory of Leadership. The basic assumption of this study is that when a school leader is effective, he or she can address all the concerns that weakens government schools and contribute towards its strength by addressing contextual problems, equity concerns, school quality and holistic development of children. In this context, this chapter presents the Institutional theory of Leadership put forward by Biggart & Hamilton (1987) and reflects on the appropriateness of this approach to study the best practices of public schools. Based on the theoretical framework, an analytical framework is designed. The

framework so developed is later used to assess the empirical findings with respect to the best practices initiated by government schools, to strengthen the public education system.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK: INSTITUTIONAL THEORY OF LEADERSHIP

To understand the phenomenon of leadership towards revival of government schools, this study relies on the theory proposed by Biggart & Hamilton in 1987. According to Biggart and Hamilton (1987), "leadership is an interactional process, which is related to the social structure in which it is found and examine the normative principles on which those structures rest" (p.430). The authors thus argue that leadership can only be successful when their strategies are oriented towards the norms or principles in which they are embedded. Success also depends upon the distinctive abilities of the actors involved. In the context of this study, leadership is an interaction process that takes place among the educational stakeholders, viz. head teachers, teachers, students, parents, community, government officials, etc. who are embedded in the school setting. As per this framework, the leadership strategies followed in school should be oriented towards the norms and principles of school and the distinctive performance abilities of each stakeholder towards school development.

ITL is considered appropriate for this study, also for the reason that it does not associate leadership with the head of the institute, and separates leadership from authority, resultant positions and structures. Leadership is defined as "the influential increment over and above the mechanical compliance with the routine directives of the organisation" (Katz & Kahn, 1978: 528). It can be related to school management too, where the effective leadership in schools is not based on authority, position or power structure. Any person, who is able to influence over and above the mechanical compliance, with the routine activities in school actually becomes the binding factor in taking school towards development. As per normal definition of leadership, there is a leader based on authority, who directs the set of people or subordinates towards organisational goals. In other set of definitions, the focus is on leadership traits or behaviours and how a leader is valued based on traits, interpersonal skills, vision, intelligence, etc. and other such attributes. However, as argued by Biggart & Hamilton (1987), leadership may not be based on personal qualities alone, but also on pre-existing structures, professional norms and democratic ideals. In such a structure, that is oriented towards norms and democratic ideals, the leadership engages in interactional process. The patterns of interaction and the leadership strategies varies according to the substantive principles followed in the organisation. For

instance, though the common task of schools may be to impart education to children, the strategies and interaction of leadership changes depending upon the substantive principles followed. When the school is guided by the principle of 'equality of education to all', then the strategy of leadership will be different in comparison to a principle, where the focus is on 'efficiency' and 'results' in education (where focus is established on earning profits or in showcasing the results of particular sections).

According to Biggart & Hamilton (1987), there are 4 elements to the Institutional Theory of Leadership, which includes 1) Basis of Organisation or Substantive Rationality; 2) Grounding of Leadership Strategies; 3) Dialectical Nature of Interaction and Structure in producing Leadership; and 4) Leadership as Performance.

i) ***Basis of Organisation:***

As argued by Biggart & Hamilton, every organisation is guided by a set of principles, which forms the basis of the organisation. Various patterns emerge in an organisation, based on these guiding principles and norms. The authors draw inspiration from the three legitimising principles of Max Weber (1978), viz. tradition, charisma and laws, upon which an institution is built and guiding interaction. According to Biggart & Hamilton, leadership has to be conceptualised in relation to the legitimating principles, which guides the actions and interactions of leadership. That is, an organisation should be rooted in substantive principles and values, and without these norms and values, an essential component of leadership will be missed out. At the same time, the principles should be evaluated against institutional practices, to know their ability to further the values of organisation and not just for instrumental measures such as efficiency and profit (Biggart & Hamilton, 1987: 434).

In the context of schooling, the actions and interactions of school leadership is guided by the principles, norms and procedures that emerge from the educational laws, policies and legislations. Patterns that are followed in school, thus emerge from these 'principles' and 'norms' and strategies of leadership is based on these principles. However, though the strategies of leadership is based on the norms and principles, it is also important to evaluate the laws or policy to know their ability in strengthening or dismantling the public education system. For instance, the Article 12 (c) of the Right to Education (RTE) Act 2009 makes provision of 25 per cent reservation in private schools for the economically weaker sections (EWS). Such provision in the legislation, on one hand has contributed to the withdrawal of

children from government schools and on the other hand, led to the promotion of many unrecognised private schools in recent years. Hence, while it is important for leadership to be guided by the educational policies, laws and programmes, it is equally important for the leader to know the ability of the educational laws and policies in furthering the goal of equitable education for all.

ii) Institutional Grounding of Leadership Strategies

To explain this aspect, again Biggart & Hamilton (1987: 434) rely on Weber's ideas. Weber (1978) states that principles of social order (law, tradition etc.) do not determine organisational structure, but it establishes parameters regarding the organisational forces that works and that does not work. Biggart & Hamilton argues that the parameters derived from the principles and norms should form the ground for the actions of leadership. Hence, strategies of leaders should be based on the roles and tasks that emerge from the principles. Every actor has their own sphere of action and all actors especially leaders must embody the norms of their position and persuade others in ways consistent with their normative obligations.

Again in the context of schooling, educational laws and policies do not determine the structure of the school. But rather, establishes set of parameters regarding the forces that operates or does not operate in the school. Such parameters get routinised in schools in the form of various tasks, which also creates various roles. For instance, the legislation of the RTE Act 2009, establishes set of norms for the school, which becomes institutionalised in the schools. Tasks are formulated based on the educational policies, laws and programmes both for the schools and also the educational departments. Recruitment of teachers, training of teachers, supply of teaching learning materials, etc. are tasks that gets routinised in the education department. On the other hand, the tasks that are routinised in schools include teaching and learning, maintenance of school campus, managing school related activities, managing mid-day meals (MDM), etc. The routinised tasks in education departments and schools, also creates various roles. While, district education officer (DEO), chief education officer (CEO), block education officers (BEO) etc. are the roles created in education department, the roles in schools includes, head teacher, teacher, student, community etc. and these roles are created based on the routinised tasks. These stakeholders are expected to play their part based on the norms and maintain their credibility. Thus, leaders should try to uphold the norm and meet their obligation in adopting their strategies.

iii) Dialectical Nature of Interaction & Structure in producing Leadership

A leader within the bounds of the norms of the organisation, is expected to play his/her role. The actions of a leader have the ability to influence the structure, the role and even the norms based on his/her own style, strategies or traits of leadership. A strict authoritarian approach may not work in today's world. By sensing the parameters of leadership in a democratic society, a leader might change his style as a non-leader and portray a common person thrust, in playing his/her role or getting the tasks accomplished (Biggart & Hamilton, 1987: 436). A leaders thus through his creativity of action, may change the norms attached to the role or tasks. Though roles and norms can constrain leadership strategies, roles do not dictate or determine Acts of leadership. Roles may vary depending upon the leadership style and even same roles are enacted in different ways. For instance, one may be authoritative, while others may rely on strategies of personal influence.

Again in the context of schooling, a school leader may be expected to ensure classroom learning, which may be an established norm in the structure. However, a creative leader/teacher, may change this norm and promote the opportunity of experiential learning or learning by doing. Thus, it is important to study the dialectic between the structure and the creativity of action (by leader or other actors). In school, the structure expects the performance of certain roles. However, an individual teacher or a head teacher through his/her style or strategy and innovative activities is able to influence the structure and role and perform their duty in a way that goes to strengthening the school. In this process, it might strengthen or affect the existing structure.

iv) Performance of Leadership

Biggart & Hamilton (1987) asserts that a leader must put on a performance that idealises his/her bond with other actors and celebrate principles underlying shared organisational reality. In thus putting this performance, leadership should i) engage in creative performance based on norms; ii) manifest itself through interaction and iii) constantly enact his/her role. Irrespective of the style of leadership, be it traditional, charismatic or rule-based, a leader should constantly enact his/her role; otherwise, people in the organisation will forget or the tasks get diluted (Collins, 1975: 302; Biggart & Hamilton, 1987: 436). Different possibilities of role relations exist between leader and other actors in an institution. However, such possibilities is limited by constraints of interaction among other roles, task orientation of roles

and legitimising principles underlying set of roles (Ibid.). With creativity of performance by the leader, the actions in an organisation are set in motion with the involvement of actors.

In the context of schooling, functioning of a school depends upon the creative performance of a school leader and the bond or interaction of leader with other actors, namely teachers, support staff, students, parents, community, government officials, etc. If the role of the leader in terms of school management, teaching, learning, student development, etc. is not constantly enacted, actors tend to forget or the intended action gets diluted. Only when the other stakeholders viz. teacher, community, parents, etc. see a creditable self in the role of the leader, they start obliging to the role, task or principles enacted by him/her. Hence, to study the performance of leadership, interaction of leader with actors should be studied, as that determines the success.

The theoretical framework of Biggart & Hamilton is regarded apt for this study and rather than considering all the four elements of the authors, this study, consolidates the elements of leadership into three, in order to understand the role of leadership at the ground level in improving school performances. The three elements consolidated for the purpose of this study include:

- Norms or Principles that forms the basis;
- Strategies that emanates from principles; and
- Leadership performance through constant interaction and creativity of action.

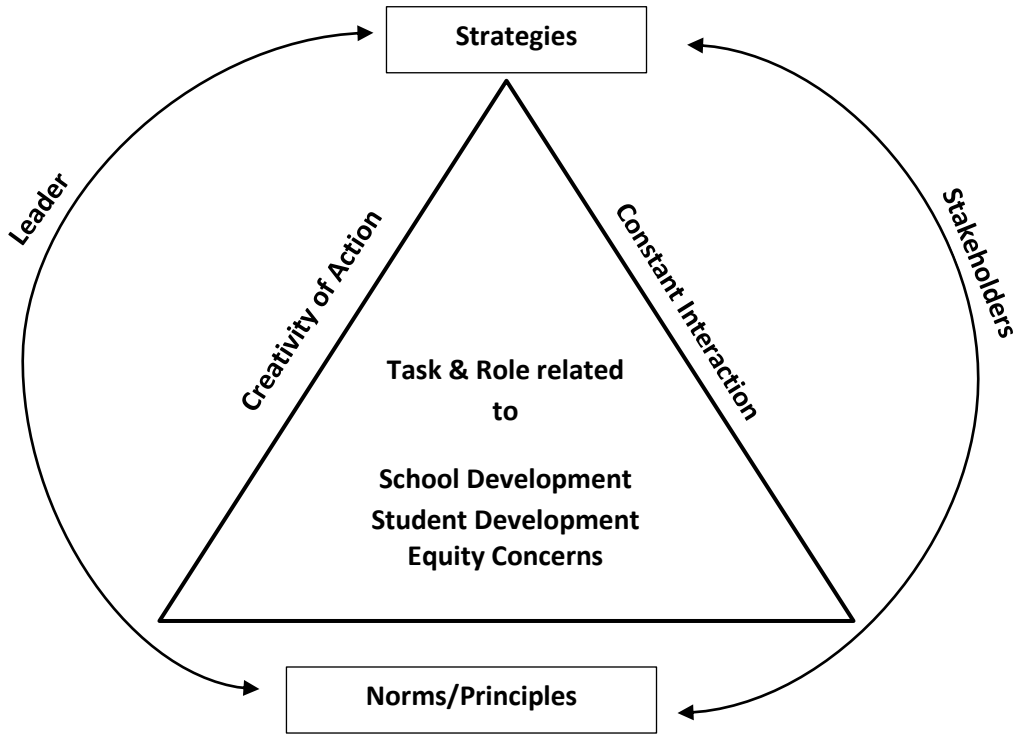
Leadership as per this model is regarded as a relationship among stakeholders in a social setting and in our case, the school setting. The model argues that the leadership strategies must consider the normative principles in their setting and the distinctive performance abilities of actors involved and accordingly apply their creativity of action.

ANALYTICAL FRAMEWORK

Research on school effectiveness or the best practices literature done in the previous chapter, enumerates the various characteristics that are essential to improve the performance of the school. For the purpose of this study, practices adopted by schools is considered best if the measures are oriented towards school development, student development and ensuring equity concerns. To study the best practices at the ground level, in terms of these three dimensions, the study uses the theoretical model of Biggart & Hamilton, as discussed above in this chapter. In

particular, the elements of Norms, Strategies and Leadership performance through constant interaction and creativity of action will be used to study school effectiveness.

Figure 3.1: Institutional Theory of Leadership



Source: Prepared by authors.

Institutional Theory of leadership guides this research on the best practices of schools. For instance, if best practices literature focuses on school development, student development and equity concerns, to meet this focus area, the approach relies on the elements of Norms; Parameters on tasks and roles; and Strategies and Interaction of School Actors/Stakeholders and leaders. The tentative variables that have been identified for this study based on this framework has been discussed below. The indicators so identified are only indicative and all these aspects may not be relevant to all the surveyed schools.

Norms/Laws/Policies/Programmes: The institution of school gets legitimacy through the norms, policies, legislation or programmes that guide the actions of school management. Based on the educational policies of 1968, 1986 and the new education policy of 2020, the Right to Education Act 2009 and the guidelines of Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan, the norms or principles related to school development, student development and equity concerns has been identified. The practices that are followed in the surveyed schools will be verified against these norms and principles, as only

the conformity with the norms gives the legitimacy to the activities implemented. While verifying the conformity of the practices to the laws and policies, evaluation will also be made on the extent to which the norms and principles contribute in strengthening the public schools. For instance, assessment will be made on what are the real values of the policy/programmes towards securing equitable education for all? The micro aspects in this context, related to school management in general and the components related to school development, student development and equity concerns, related to surveyed schools in particular, will be discussed in the subsequent chapters.

Table 3.1: Framework for Analysis

Best Practices on	Norms/Principles Policies & Law	Strategies	
		Role	Task
School Development Measures	• RTE Norms • Teacher Recruitment • Teacher Training • Provision of facilities	• Head teacher • Teachers • Parents • Community • Government • Civil Society • Private players	• Vision & Mission • Strong Collaboration • Resource Mobilisation • Infrastructure Development • Building School Reputation • Others

Student Development Measures	• Child centred Approach
	• Quality Education
	• Better Pedagogical Practices
		• Head Teacher
		• Teachers
		• Parents
		• Community
		• Government
		• Civil Society
		• Private players
			• Innovative Teaching-Learning Practice
			  ○ Creative learning methods
			  ○ Use of ICT
			  ○ Practical exposure
			• Academic achievement
			• Extracurricular Activities
			• Holistic Development of Children
			  ○ ICT skills
			  ○ Life Skills
			  ○ Other competence
			  ○ Creating responsible future citizens

Measures towards addressing Equity	• Protection of child rights • No denial of admission • Admission to weaker & disadvantaged • Minimum level of learning of all children of comparable standards	• Head Teacher • Teachers • Parents • Community • Government • Civil Society • Private players	• Increasing the access of all • Support for admission, retention & drop out • Social intervention • Opportunity to all • Incorporating lived experience of children

Source: Prepared by the authors.

Parameters on Strategies (Tasks and Roles): As per the Institutional Theory of Leadership, the organisational structure establishes parameters regarding the organisational forces that works or does not work (Weber, 1978; Biggart & Hamilton, 1987). In the context of schooling, educational laws, policies, etc. establishes set of parameters regarding the forces in school that works or does not work. The RTE Act establishes school level parameters or norms related to schools. Such parameters of an organisation manifest itself in a school in the form of tasks and roles. For instance, in the context of schooling, the head teachers, teachers, parents, students,

government, community, etc. are examples of roles that emerge in a school. Based on the norms and policies, certain tasks too emerge in the organisation. Thus, when examining the best practices of schools, the tasks and roles that emerge from the norms and legislations in the light of best practices is identified from the educational laws and policies (see table 2.1). Based on the tasks and roles, strategies are formulated. The empirical analysis of this study would thus examine the set of strategies adopted in the surveyed schools. In this context, some of strategies related to the identified best practices, that will be examined include the following: innovative teaching learning materials, extra-curricular activities, use of ICT, etc.

Leadership Performance through Constant Interaction and Creativity of Action: As per the ITL, leadership performance depends upon the level of interaction with actors and the creativity of action adopted by leaders, which should be enacted constantly. The role adopted by a leader varies depending upon the style followed by a leader. Thus while examining the best practices of schools, the kind of interaction that exists between the structure and the creative action of a leader will be assessed to understand the style or strategies followed by a leader. While examining the best practices of surveyed schools, the interaction between the tasks and the roles and the creativity applied by the leader in school development, student development, and addressing equity concerns will be assessed.

CONCLUSION

It was felt necessary to take guidance from appropriate theoretical framework and as discussed in this chapter inference was taken from the Institutional Theory of Leadership developed by Biggart & Hamilton considering the appropriateness of the same. The model argues that the norms or principles of an organisation guide the functioning of the organisation. It also emphasises on the significance of evaluating those norms and principles, in order to find the extent to which those norms contribute towards furthering the values of organisation. The elements discussed in this theory were related to the school setting and thus the analytical framework was developed. The subsequent chapters present the empirical findings of the study based the framework developed here and thus illuminate the measures taken towards strengthening of government schools.

CHAPTER 4

PROFILE OF SURVEYED SCHOOLS

INTRODUCTION

A school is an institution in which various stakeholders viz., department of education, school administration, teachers, students, parents, community and civil society organisations are involved. In effective schools with good practices it can be noted that the key stakeholders work together in different combinations to contribute towards school improvement. Concurrently, it can also be noted that schools have their own unique cultures, that are shaped around a particular combination of values, beliefs and feelings and every school has its own culture, which helps it to strive hard in a particular direction (Hanson, 2001). For some schools, the focus is on imparting education to rural children and making them on par with urban kids; for some it is preparing the future citizens of the country, for others, focus is on securing high marks, preparing children in extracurricular activities etc. Irrespective of whatever be the value system of a particular school, one common phenomenon that can be noted across the effective or successful schools is that they follow a set of techniques or strategies that help them in transforming their schools. Many public schools across the country have shown their strength in reviving their schools by adopting various measures that varies from one school to the other. In this study, a total of about 30 such schools with best practices in Bihar and Tamil Nadu were surveyed in order to understand how they have dealt with similar challenges that are faced by thousands of other government schools in this country.

Every school that was surveyed was unique in its own way and had exhibited different key characteristics that contributed to its success. Uniformity was not maintained in the selection of schools. Based on the criteria established for school selection (discussed in chapter 1) schools were identified for survey, which differed from one district to the other. In Tamil Nadu five schools each were surveyed in the districts of Ariyalur, Madurai and Perambalur; however, in Bihar, the numbers varied between three and seven. In Bihar, three, seven and five schools respectively were surveyed in the districts of Begusarai, Samastipur and Sitamarhi. Though the primary focus of this study was government elementary schools, they varied again in terms of location (rural-urban), management type (state-run and local body school), school type (Co-education and girls school) and category of school (primary, upper primary, etc.). Uniformity in these aspects were also not maintained, as the basic purpose was to identify those schools with

best practices and based on the ranking given by key stakeholders of the respective district, the schools were identified for in-depth survey. While the findings from the surveyed schools are presented in the subsequent chapters, this chapter presents a brief profile of the surveyed schools.

BASIC PROFILE OF SURVEYED SCHOOLS

Out of the total 30 surveyed schools, almost all the schools in both the states were located in rural areas, except for one school in Sitamarhi district of Bihar that was located in urban area. In terms of year of establishment, it can be noted that about 8 schools were established even before Independence, 4 each in Bihar and Tamil Nadu. Of these school one each in Bihar and Tamil Nadu are centenary schools, exhibiting the historical legacy since colonial times. Some of the schools of Bihar that were established prior to the independence were run and administered by local village communities as stated by the teachers. The community involvement in school management was reported to be strong even till the 1970s. Some of the schools, still carry the name of the person, who donated land for the school, along with the school name. Of the total surveyed schools, 8 schools, i.e., 27 per cent of the schools were established before independence; 19 schools (63 per cent) since independence to the turn of the century; and only 3 schools (10 per cent) were established in the last 20 years. It can be noted that most of the surveyed schools are age old schools, exhibiting stable performance over the years. In particular, almost all the schools of Bihar were age-old schools with good performance for a long term, while in Tamil Nadu, 3 schools of recent origin were also found with good performance.

In terms of location of the schools, it can be observed that almost all the schools were from rural areas, except for one school from urban locality in the Sitamarhi district of Bihar. Though only government schools were targeted for the survey, there were mild variations in it, especially in case of Tamil Nadu. In Bihar, while all the schools were run by the Department of Education of the Bihar state, in Tamil Nadu, the schools run by the local bodies were also identified to be the schools with good performance. Out of the 15 schools surveyed in Tamil Nadu, 8 were managed by the panchayat unions. Of the total panchayat-run schools, 5 were middle schools from class I to VIII, while 3 were primary schools till class V.

Table 4.1: Basic Profile of Surveyed Schools								
States	**Districts**	**Name of School***	**Rural-Urban#**	**Year of Estabt.**	**School Management**	**School category**	**School Type**	**Total Enrolment**
Bihar	Begusarai	MS Badalpura	R	1939	Dept. of Edu$	I-VIII	Co-ed	710
		MS Matihani	R	1965	Dept. of Edu$	I-VIII	Co-ed	534
		MS Mohanpur	R	1950	Dept. of Edu$	I-VIII	Co-ed	642
	Samastipur	UMS Lagunia Suryakanth	R	1980	Dept. of Edu$	I-VIII	Co-ed	371
		UMS Mordiwa	R	1953	Dept. of Edu$	I-X	Co-ed	567
		MS Sri Rampur Aayodhya	R	1956	Dept. of Edu$	I-VIII	Co-ed	420
		MS Gopalpur	R	1954	Dept. of Edu$	I-VIII	Co-ed	470
		MS Nandani	R	1925	Dept. of Edu$	I-VIII	Co-ed	503
		MS Barheta	R	1897	Dept. of Edu$	I-VIII	Co-ed	712
		MS Malinagar	R	1952	Dept. of Edu$	I-VIII	Co-ed	795
	Sitamarhi	MS Nagarpalika School, Bhawdepur	U	1959	Dept. of Edu$	I-VIII	Co-ed	1018
		MS Buthibazar	R	1946	Dept. of Edu$	I-VIII	Co-ed	1057
		UHS Indarwa-1	R	1960	Dept. of Edu$	I-X	Co-ed	1228
		MS Sonbarsa	R	1924	Dept. of Edu$	I-VIII	Co-ed	478
		MS Madhuban, Bangaon	R	1954	Dept. of Edu$	I-VIII	Co-ed	636
Tamil Nadu	Ariyalur	GHSS, J. Suthamalli	R	1976	Dept. of Edu$	VI-XII	Co-ed	942
		GHSS, Vikramangalam	R	1986	Dept. of Edu$	VI-XII	Co-ed	999
		GHSS (Model School), Asthinapuram	R	2013	Dept. of Edu$	VI-XII	Co-ed	393
		PUMS, Idayathankudi	R	1949	Local Body	I-VIII	Co-ed	91
		PUMS, Puduchavadi	R	1940	Local Body	I-VIII	Co-ed	197
	Madurai	GHS, Vannivelampatti	R	1920	Dept. of Edu$	VI-X	Co-ed	178
		PUMS, Meenakshi Nagar	R	1994	Local Body	I-VIII	Co-ed	518
		PUPS, Pottapanaiyur	R	2002	Local Body	I-V	Co-ed	69
		PUPS, Othakadai	R	1933	Local Body	I-V	Co-ed	425
		GGHSS, Othakadai	R	1996	Dept. of Edu$	VI-XII	Girls	1503
	Perambalur	PUPS, Kathalaimedu	R	1957	Local Body	I-V	Co-ed	24
		PUMS, Kothavasal	R	1958	Local Body	I-VIII	Co-ed	135
		GHSS, Kurumbalur	R	1960	Dept. of Edu$	VI-XII	Co-ed	853
		GHS, Sillakudi	R	2002	Dept. of Edu$	VI-X	Co-ed	193
		PUMS, Nochikulam	R	1954	Local Body	I-VIII	Co-ed	143

***Source*:** Field Survey, 2018 & 2019.

Note: *MS-Middle School; UMS-Upgraded Middle School; UHS-Upgraded High School; GHSS-Government Higher Secondary School; GHS-Government High School; PUMS-Panchayat Union Middle School; PUPS-Panchayat Union Primary School; GGHSS-Government Girls Higher Secondary School.

R-Rural; U-Urban; $ Department of Education

Though elementary schools were the focus of this study covering classes from I to VIII, there was variation in terms of school category and such variation was mainly found in Tamil Nadu. Of the 15 schools surveyed in Bihar, 13 schools were middle schools, one each in Samastipur and Sitamarhi district were schools upgraded till class X. In Tamil Nadu, only five schools were elementary schools, 2 each in Ariyalur and Perambalur and one in Madurai. There were 3 primary schools identified with good performance in Madurai and Perambalur. Almost all the state run schools that were surveyed in Tamil Nadu were senior secondary schools that had classes from VI to XII. In Ariyalur district of Tamil Nadu, one of the schools that was surveyed was a Model school that was established by the state government. Almost in all the 32 districts of Tamil Nadu, one school was identified and converted into model school and each of these

schools were provided a grant of Rs. 50 lakhs to equip them with libraries, labs, sports facilities, smart classrooms, etc. This was an initiative taken by the state government in 2018 to strengthen government schools. However, such measure was criticised by many scholars, on the ground that such measure would create inequality and they argued that every government school should be strengthened.

In terms of school type, while all the surveyed schools were co-educational schools, only one school was a girls' school. In the successful schools that were surveyed, there was variation in terms of student enrolment too. Of the total schools surveyed, only 4 schools had a strength of more than 1000 children and the number had crossed 1500 in the girls' school of Madurai district. Most of the elementary schools of Bihar had a good strength ranging between 500 and 1200 students. In Tamil Nadu the strength was found to be less than 100 in three of the primary and middle schools run by the panchayats. It is interesting to note that there were only 24 children in one of the schools in Perambalur. However, as reported by the head teacher, which was later cross verified with the community members, there were only 24 children in this village in the age group of 6 to 14 years and all were studying in this school. On the whole, the enrolment figure was found to be low in the surveyed government schools of Tamil Nadu when compared to the enrolment rate in Bihar. In Bihar, the highest enrolment was reported in the school in Indarwa-1 village in Sitamarhi district. In this school, as reported by the teachers and community members, every year around 3000 to 4000 students from across Sitamarhi and nearby districts come here for admission due to the good performance of the school. However, the school is not able to accommodate all the students and preference is mostly given for the children of nearby villages surrounding Indarwa-1. The popularity of this school, led to the closure of about 3 to 4 private schools in the surrounding areas, as they were not able to get sufficient enrolments.

KEY FEATURES OF SURVEYED SCHOOLS

The good performing government schools that were identified for the study had unique set of characteristics, which varied from school to school. In spite of the heterogeneous nature of every school, homogeneity could be noticed in certain aspects both in Bihar and Tamil Nadu. Within the same state, the process of homegenisation was quite strong, as schools try to imitate the measures and practices of other successful schools within their locality.

Table 4.2: Key Features of the Surveyed Schools in Bihar			
States	**Districts**	**Name of School***	**Description**
Bihar	Begusarai	MS Badalpura	This school exhibits active involvement of the community, NGOs and private organisations (Industry), Shiksha Samiti members, retired District Judge, etc. About 50 to 80 students have shifted to this school from private schools. Emphasis is also made on sports and extra-curricular activities. School remains accountable to the community and there is active involvement of School Management Committees (SMCs) too.
		MS Matihani	Historically, this school had active community involvement which continues even to this day. Land for school, school building and water supply was provided by the community. Piramal Foundation had constructed the school library.
		MS Mohanpur	Most of the children in this school are first generation learners and the motto of this school is to provide proper opportunities and quality education to the marginalised children. Community involvement is very strong in this school and they have mobilised about 10 lakh for school & infrastructure development. Madhubani painting is made by children on the walls of the schools. Bal Shiksha Samiti is active in this school, where children make their own decisions related to school development.
	Samastipur	UMS Lagunia Suryakanth	There is active involvement of community, teachers, government officials and NGOs. Special feature of this school is the honesty box installed in the school, where money and stationery items are openly kept. Child who wishes to purchase, can take the item and keep the money for the item in the box. Projector has been installed in the school to show learning videos to children. The school assembly is organised by children in a disciplined way.
		UMS Mordiwa	The focus of the school is on student development and four active young teachers work together as a team to contribute towards school improvement. The school also runs a Shiksha Patrika, which carries news item related to the school. Children are made to paint on school walls on lessons that they learnt from their books. You-Tube videos are shown to children through mobile phones. The school has active Bal Sansad and Meena Manch.
		MS Sri Rampur Aayodhya	The key feature of this school is the active involvement of an individual alumna of the school. After retirement, he laid his focus on strengthening the school. He mobilised fund from HCL to install smart classroom in the school. Emphasis is also placed on sports and extra-curricular activities.
		MS Gopalpur	A single teacher of the school has contributed about Rs.1.5 lakh for school development. Computers were sponsored by the NGO called Anand Shala. Bal Sansad is very active in this school. Constant interaction is held with the parents in order to prevent drop-out. Focus is also laid on promoting extra-curricular activities and children are taken on education tours, competition, craft work, etc.
		MS Nandani	There is active involvement of panchayat leader in this school. The special feature of this school is the structure of the school building in the form of train, to attract the rural children, who had not seen a train. Snake & Ladder game is made on the floor of the classrooms (Class I & II) and children learn numbers while they play. Everyday Newspaper is prepared by children on a rotational basis. The school has active Bal Sansad and Meena Manch.
		MS Barheta	Motto of this school is to show the efficiency of government schools. Teachers have contributed Rs.50,000 for school development. There is community support in the form of supply of goods for the school, like donation of cupboards, maintenance of garden, etc. There is active involvement of ward members and school alumni.
		MS Malinagar	This school was awarded for best infrastructure. The Head teacher of the school was a pass-out from this school and wanted to come back and develop the school. He had mobilised around Rs.4-5 lakh for school development.
	Sitamarhi	MS Nagarpalika School, Bhawdepur	This school organises weekly meetings with teachers for school development measures. The Bal Sansad is active in this school. Teachers provide financial support to the extent of Rs. 1 lakh per year for school development. The school received award for proper charting and menu of MDM.
		MS Buthibazar	This school has active involvement of the community. The school has obtained National and State award for good performance and also award for cleanliness.
		UHS Indarwa-1	This school which is bordering Nepal, has strong community support which has mobilised about Rs.25 lakhs for school development. Around 3000-4000 children from nearby districts also compete for admission in this school. Every year, about 40 children of this school clear the National Means cum Merit Scholarship (NMMS), National Talent Search (NTS), Sainik school exams, etc. After school hours, the school is converted into hostel, where about 80 boys study. Free meals thrice a day is given to children by the community. The school's performance has led to the closure of about 5-6 private schools around the locality. The school had also obtained National Award for good performance.
		MS Sonbarsa	Community contributes to the extent of Rs.30,000 every year for school development activities. Recognised by the BRC and CRC as the best model school of the area. Teachers also wear uniform in this school. Social problems faced both by parents and children are addressed. Linkage with bank is made to support needs of community. Counselling session held with parents and children on child marriage. Proper care is taken to provide nutritious meal under MDM programme. The school's performance has led to the closure of about 2 private schools in the village. Children of local politician, doctors, teachers, army people also study here.
		MS Madhuban, Bangaon	This school received award from Bihar Chief Minister for good performance. The school also made in the Limca Record for Sanitation and Hygiene. The Acting teacher has spent about 6.5 lakh from his pocket for school development so far. Counting and Maths is taught through games.

Source: Based on interview with Educational stakeholders, teachers, head teacher and community in Bihar in 2018 and 2019.

In Table 4.2, the key characteristic features of the schools surveyed in Bihar have been discussed. The common feature that was noticed in the good performing schools of Bihar was the active involvement of the community and this was the case mainly in the districts of Begusarai and Sitamarhi. In some of the schools in Samastipur, active involvement of the panchayati raj representatives and ward members were noticed. Other common features are the active Bal Sansad (child parliament) and the Meena Manch (an initiative that aims at empowering girls and promote the enrolment, attendance and completion rates of girl children) that was observed in many schools. Almost all the surveyed schools of Bihar laid their emphasis on the infrastructure of the schools and all the schools had good infrastructural facilities, going beyond the basic norms of RTE Act. Some of the unique practice that was noticed in Bihar is the School Newspaper and News bulletin brought out by school students and teachers in Nandani village and Mordiwa village of Samastipur, respectively; the train structure of the school in Nandani village, which later became popular and was replicated in several schools across the country; and the provision of quality education and support to children through the collaborative involvement of both the government officials and the people of the entire village, as noticed in Indarwa village of Sonbarsa block, Sitamarhi.

On the other hand, the successful schools of Tamil Nadu exhibited different characteristics, though the focus of schools in both the states was on improvement of schools (see Table 4.3). In Tamil Nadu, the common features of most of the successful schools were school development in terms of infrastructure development, installation of smart classrooms, enhancement of ICT skills, and enrichment of English language skills. Most of these schools were also keen in teaching dying folk arts to the children and some of which include silambattam (form of martial art using pole), Parai attam (dance with drum), bharathanatiyam, street plays, etc. Some of the unique features as noticed in some of these schools in Tamil Nadu include: active functioning of Mother's Association in a school in Vikramangalam village of Ariyalur district; innovative activities of the school in Idayathankudi village, Ariyalur in terms of Skype class for children by Non-Residents of India (NRI) and foreigners, use of socio-linguistic approach for English teaching; making government school a school for all, irrespective of caste, class, etc. as observed in Othakadai school of Madurai east; teaching of life skills and cultivation of own vegetables for Mid-day Meals (MDM) as practiced by the schools in Kathalaimedu and Kothavasal village of Perambalur; engaging students in community development activities as practiced in the school of Sillakudi village of Perambalur; and the active Alumni Association as noticed in the school in Kurumbalur village of Perambalur, who consider school development as their responsibility.

Table 4.3: Key Features of the Surveyed Schools in Tamil Nadu			
States	**Districts**	**Name of School***	**Description**
Tamil Nadu	Ariyalur	GHSS, J.Suthamalli	This school was supported by the community for the construction of learning shed, cycle shed, etc. Teachers had mobilised Rs.25,000 for school development and an individual has contributed Rs. 1 lakh. Projectors, YouTube videos and QR codes are used for teaching children from class VI-XII.
		GHSS, Vikramangalam	This school believes in creating a connection between bookish learning and practical life learning. Panchayat provides a fund of Rs.50,000 every year. Financial support for the school was also received from (National Bank for Agriculture and Rural Development) NABARD, MP and MLA fund. The Mother's Association of the school is quite active. Communal conflicts are quite common in this village and during general assembly every day, principle of equality is emphasised. One of the teachers is part of the forum called Pattampoochi (Butterfly), wherein a set of 15 teachers are engaged in painting the government schools to improve the look of the schools.
		GHSS (Model School), Asthinapuram	This is an English medium school that was identified and converted as a model school of Ariyalur district by the Tamil Nadu government for which a grant of Rs.50 lakhs was provided by the State for construction of the building, library, science lab, smart classrooms, sports equipment, etc. The focus of the school is on the results. Environment protection is a major aspect emphasised and the National Green Corps (NGC) of the school is very active. It has about 12 computers, separate lab for physics, chemistry and biology. It has eco-friendly toilet for both boys and girls. The students of the school are made to take membership in district library.
		PUMS, Idayathankudi	This is a school which has implemented a lot of innovative activities and the chief focus of the school is holistic development of all children. Though a Tamil medium school, children speak very good English. Socio-linguistic approach and Tri-Verb technique is used to teach English. English conversations of the children are uploaded in You Tube channels. It is made a Wi-Fi campus. Focus is laid on handwriting of children, as the school believes that cursive writing contributes to cognitive development. Skype classes are taken by NRIs and US citizens on various topics every day from 4 to 5pm and NCERT is planning to scale up this model. Children are good in extracurricular activities such as chess, karate, Silambam (local art form), etc. Constant counselling is given to parents, as family problems affect the studies of children.
		PUMS, Puduchavadi	This is a school which was in dilapidated condition. A school teacher, who had exhibited a very good performance in another school, voluntarily took a transfer to this school to improve the same. This school had made a drastic change from the time of first visit to the second visit. Local NGOs and private players were approached by the teacher for funding and the school building has been renovated. The children won Award in the National Science fair, which came in newspaper, after which the perception of this school is slowly changing for the better.
	Madurai	GHS, Vannivelampatti	This school lays major emphasis on student behaviour. To give exposure to children, every year children are taken to national tour and different states are visited. Practice of Paadha pooja[1] was started by the school, which has become popular in other schools too. Children of class X study in school from 7.30 to 10pm. Coffee, snacks and meals are provided to them by volunteers. Children are asked to present a book or sapling to school on their birthdays on which their names are written and children take pride in that. Other talents of slow learners are entered in the CCE record. Activities such as karate, taekwondo, meditation, etc. are encouraged in school. Educational CDs, vocabulary CDs of RMSA and APF, etc. is used. QR code lessons and exercises are accessed through smartphone and ABL, ALM and mind map is also taught.
		PUMS, Meenakshi Nagar	There is active involvement of panchayats, alumni, local NGOs and business people. Teachers also contribute funds for school development and so far about 15 lakhs has been mobilised for school development. School had received award for ABL implementation. School has been provided 13 tabs, 5computers and LED projectors. Book reading, newspaper reading, arts and craft, phonetics training is encouraged in school. Children of gypsy families study here. General assembly every day is conducted by different set of children and every child is given the opportunity to participate.
		PUPS, Pottapanaiyur	This school has active involvement of the community members and the panchayat president, who was instrumental in mobilising about Rs.11 lakhs for school development. The school has a smart board, CCTV and ayurvedic garden. Financial support for the school is mobilised from local NGOs and factories. School is engaged in alcohol prohibition and plastic prohibition activities and environmental awareness programme in the weekend. Special attention is paid to SC households who do not send their children to school. Frequent visit is made to such houses. Emphasis is laid on extra-curricular activities like sports, yoga, craft work, storytelling, etc. SABL is practised in the school, which is better than ABL.
		PUPS, Othakadai	This school had a glorious past, which was lost later. Currently, the school is getting revived with the active involvement of head teacher, teachers and community. About 52 lakhs has been mobilised so far for school development since 2010, which was provided by panchayats, SMC, Parent Teachers Association, and other donors. The school has a smart classroom, about 15 computers and educational CDs. The school had received about 20 awards for good performance. Innovative teaching methods, phonetics method of English teaching, art forms, street plays, yoga, etc. is promoted by the school. Children belonging to different social group, different class, right from rich to poor, study here.
		GGHSS,	This is a Model school and has a mix of both rural and urban characteristics. About Rs.50 lakhs has been

[1] Paadha Pooja is a ritual of washing the feet of parents, guru, etc. to express our gratitude or thanks to the revered person

		Othakadai	mobilised for school development from Rotary club, Industries and MLA fund. Classes at kindergarten level have been started last year and the school has a huge campus and a good infrastructure. There is a smart class room; computers and QR codes are used by teachers and children. Judo and Taekwondo classes are provided to students.
	Perambalur	PUPS, Kathalaimedu	The school is called a 'Happy Home' by the head teacher. Though the school campus is small, it is a neatly maintained campus with paintings on walls, paintings of shapes, numbers, solar system, national and state emblem, animals, good touch and bad touch, important helpline numbers for children, etc. It has neat and clean toilet which is cleaned thrice a day of which, once by the head teacher himself. 10 sets of slippers lie outside both the girls and boys toilet to ensure health and hygiene of children. There is a projector, television and about 4 computers in the school. The school has provided tie, belt, badge and identity cards. You-tube videos of children are uploaded in which the children try to teach some skills, which serves as a motivation for children. Children cultivate their own vegetables in school, which is used for MDM and the remaining vegetables and greens are sold out to parents of the village by the children. Life skills such as phenyl making, soap making, etc. are taught to children. Herbal garden is maintained in the school and every child is aware of the name and the medicinal values of each plant.
		PUMS, Kothavasal	The motto of the school is to provide equal opportunities to rural children so that they don't lag behind their urban counterparts. School has about 10 computers and around 400 educational CDs and there is English Lab and maths Lab. Child development is the main focus of this school and emphasis is laid on phonetics way of English teaching, taking children for local events like organic farming, cultural programmes, etc. Children are taught to cultivate their own vegetables and fruits which are used for MDM. About Rs.10 lakh has been mobilised for school development, of which Rs.2 lakh is the contribution of a visionary teacher. Tabs and QR codes are used by children. There is strong involvement of private players for school development. Extra-curricular activities such as Silambam, bharathanatiyam, gymnastic, yoga, karate, origami classes are provided in this school. The concept of Kalvi Seer is quite active in this school, wherein material and monetary gifts to school is whole heartedly given to schools, the way it is displayed and given during weddings.
		GHSS, Kurumbalur	The school is supported by strong alumni association, who had taken the complete responsibility of infrastructure development of the school and in procuring about 20 computers, 10 cup boards, etc. needed for the school. School also received the MP and MLA fund. Alumni association also organises Annual day every year and spend around Rs.50,000 to 1 lakh for school development every year. Tamil Club, English club, Eco Club is active in the school.
		GHS, Sillakudi	The key feature of this school is the 'Government School Improvement Movement' led by the youth of the village who are working abroad as labourers. They contribute money for school development activities and organise various activities and competitions. The school believes that it has a major role in developing responsible citizens of tomorrow. Children are engaged in various activities related to community development, viz., desilting of ponds, digging of canals, bicycle drive to plant palm trees, etc. Emphasis is also laid on reading habit, storytelling and promotion of folk arts such as Kolattam, Silambattam, etc.
		PUMS, Nochikulam	The motto of this school is that, 'no poor parents should feel sad of their inability to send their children to private schools and thus provide good quality learning experience to the children'. It has a smart classroom for which a fund of Rs.1 lakh was provided by an alumna who works in the US now. School has about 20 computers. Maths Lab is also installed, which is a software to carry out mathematical calculations and solve problems. Children are made to express their talents in various competitions. There is an honesty box in this school to teach the principle of honesty to children. In this box, stationery and snack items are kept along with the rates. Children are allowed to open the box, take what they want and keep the money for what they have purchased.

Source: Based on interview with Educational stakeholders, teachers, head teacher and community in Tamil Nadu during 2018 and 2019.

Hanson (2001) argues that some organisations are smarter than others in pursuing organisational change. The same logic can be used in the context of school education too, where it can be stated that some public schools are smarter than the others in pursuing educational change. As stated by Hanson, some take evolutionary step forward, while some are engaged in homegenisation process, while still others are engaged in systematic reform process that alters one or more core components. The key features discussed above, almost reveals all these three categories of school improvement process undertaken in the surveyed schools. Some schools tried to take that evolutionary step forward; some focused on the homogenisation process, where they implemented the measures that they have learnt from other successful schools in their locality;

and the school in Inderwa-1 of Sitamarhi district of Bihar was engaged in systematic reform of the schooling process as a whole.

PROFILE OF KEY TEACHER OF THE SCHOOL (CHANGE AGENT)

According to Bogotch (2002), leaders are someone with a vision and a willingness to take risks to see that vision enacted and they translate visions into socially and educationally just actions (p.142). Dynamism of an effective leader can contribute towards improved performance of students, even against all odds such as poverty and other demographic characteristics of the child's family (Brown et.al 2010). School leadership at the local level thus is of great significance, as they are the ones who have immediate connection with the community. They also are in a position to sense the requirements of the parents and children on one side, and are connected with the government, on the other, and come up with various reform measures from time to time, to strengthen government schools. In every school that was surveyed, it was noted that there was the existence of such key leader or teacher who was instrumental in improving the performance of the surveyed schools. Such teachers or key stakeholders who act as a change agent in some of the schools, were not the head teachers, but other young teachers, who exhibited strong commitment in improving the lives of children. In other schools, the change agent was the head teacher, while in few other schools, active community members, alumni of the school, local NGOs, etc. were the key players, who played a major role in strengthening the public schools. Table 4.4 gives a brief profile of the key teacher in every school, who contributed to the excellence of their respective schools.

Of the 15 schools of Bihar that were surveyed, the key role was majorly played only by the head teacher in almost all the surveyed districts. In 2 of the schools in Mordiwa and Sri Rampur Aayodhya village of Samastipur, other young teachers were instrumental for the success of their schools. In case of Bangon village of Sitamarhi district, Acting head teacher was instrumental. In Tamil Nadu too, in about 9 schools across all the 3 districts, head teachers played a key role, while other set of young teachers were instrumental for the school success in about 5 schools. In Kurumbalur village of Perambalur, strong Alumni association played a major role in strengthening the school and they voluntarily took the responsibility for strengthening their government schools.

Table 4.4: Profile of Key Teacher of the Surveyed School												
States	**Districts**	**Name of School**	**Key Person**	**Age**	**Gender**	**Caste**	**Experience in Teaching (in Years)**		**Educational Qualification**	**Professional Qualification**	**Subjects taught**	**Classes Taught**
							Total Experience	**Experience in current school**				
Bihar	Begusarai	MS Badalpura	Head Teacher	47	Female	SC	15	5	PG	DPE	Hindi, Sanskrit	I-VIII
		MS Matihani	Head Teacher	45	Male	General	25	3	PG	DPE	Maths	I-VIII
		MS Mohanpur	Head Teacher	52	Male	General	15	4	PG	B.Ed	Science	VII-VIII
	Samastipur	UMS Lagunia Suryakanth	Head Teacher	38	Male	General	20	3	PG	B.El.Ed	Social Science & Arts	V-VIII
		UMS Mordiwa	Teacher	28	Male	OBC	5	5	PG	None	Hindi	I-VIII
		MS Sri Rampur Aayodhya	Teacher	50	Female	General	13	6	Graduation	BTC	Hindi, Sanskrit, Soc.Sci	IV-VIII
		MS Gopalpur	Head Teacher	58	Male	OBC	25	2	PG	None	Hindi, Social Science	I-VIII
		MS Nandani	Head Teacher	58	Male	General	25	12	PG	BTC	Maths, Science	VI-VIII
		MS Barheta	Head Teacher	46	Female	General	20	12	PG	BTC	Hindi, Sanskrit, Soc.Sci	I-VIII
		MS Malinagar	Head Teacher	52	Male	OBC	31	11	PG	B.El.Ed	Sanskrit	I-VIII
	Sitamarhi	MS Nagarpalika School, Bhawdepur	Head Teacher	46	Female	General	25	14	PG	BTC	Maths	VI-VIII
		MS Buthibazar	Head Teacher	56	Male	OBC	25		PG	BTC	Social Science	V
		UHS Indarwa-1	Head Teacher	54	Male	OBC	24	10	PG	BTC	Hindi, English, Maths	VI-VIII
		MS Sonbarsa	Head Teacher	40	Male	General	21	10	Graduation	B.Ed	Social Science	VII-VIII
		MS Madhuban, Bangaon	Acting Head Teacher	43	Male	General	22	6	PG	BTC	Sanskrit	VI-VIII
Tamil Nadu	Ariyalur	GHSS, J. Suthamalli	Teacher	45	Male	OBC	14	7	M.Phil	M.Ed	Chemistry	XI-XII
		GHSS, Vikramangalam	Head Teacher	55	Male	OBC	21	9	M.Phil	M.Ed	Biology	XI-XII
		GHSS (Model School), Asthinapuram	Teacher	41	Female	SC	16	5	M.Phil	B.Ed	Physics	XI-XII
		PUMS, Idayathankudi	Teacher	38	Female	OBC	10	4	PG	B.Ed	English	VI-VIII
		PUMS, Puduchavadi	Head Teacher	52	Male	OBC	14	3 months	PG	B.Ed	Science	VI-VIII
	Madurai	GHS, Vannivelampatti	Head Teacher	58	Male	OBC	29	9	PG	B.Ed	Maths	VI-X
		PUMS, Meenakshi Nagar	Head Teacher	52	Female	OBC	21	14	M.Phil	M.Ed	English	VI-VIII
		PUPS, Pottapanaiyur	Head Teacher	49	Female	OBC	23	12	PG	B.Ed	All Subjects	V
		PUPS, Othakadai	Head Teacher	45	Male	OBC	24	8	PG	B.Ed	All Subjects	I-V
		GGHSS, Othakadai	Head Teacher	56	Female	OBC	30	3	M.Phil	M.Ed	Physics	XI
	Perambalur	PUPS, Kathalaimedu	Head Teacher	48	Male	OBC	25	12	PG	B.Ed	All Subjects	I-V
		PUMS, Kothavasal	Teacher	40	Male	OBC	20	3	PG	B.Ed	English	VI-VIII
		GHSS, Kurumbalur	Head Teacher	50	Male	OBC	22	3	M.Phil	B.Ed	Chemistry	XI-XII
		GHS, Sillakudi	Teacher	32	Male	SC	5	5	Graduatoion	B.El.Ed	Maths	VI-IX
		PUMS, Nochikulam	Head Teacher	53	Male	OBC	29	4	PG	B.Ed	Social Science	VI-VIII

Source: Field Survey, 2018-19. ***Note***: PG-Post Graduation; DPE-Diploma in Primary Education; B.Ed-Bachelor of Education; B.El.Ed.-Bachelor of Elementary Education; BTC-Basic Teaching Certificate M.Ed.-Master of Education

In terms of age group of the key teachers, most of the teachers in both the States were middle age teachers in the age group of 40 to 50 years. There were about 6 teachers in Bihar and 7 in Tamil Nadu who were above 50 years, and still showed their sincere commitment in strengthening their respective government schools. On the whole, there were about 6 young teachers below 40 years in both these states.

Out of the 30 schools that were surveyed, the change makers were majorly the male teachers and only 9 were female teachers. In Bihar, there were 4 female teachers who were change makers, and they were one each in Begusarai and Sitamarhi, while in Samastipur, 2 teachers were the key persons engaged in bringing about change in the government schools. In Tamil Nadu, while in Perambalur, all the change makers were the male teachers, in Madurai, 3 female teachers were the change makers of their respective school and in Ariyalur, 2 teachers who were not head teachers, were playing a tremendous role in improving their school performance.

In terms of the social background of the teachers, it can be noticed that in Bihar, the key teachers who brought about change mostly belonged to the general category (9 teachers), followed by 5 teachers belonging to other backward caste (OBC) and one to scheduled caste (SC). In Tamil Nadu, almost all the teachers who were change makers belonged to OBC and there was only one SC teacher in Perambalur, while there was no teacher belonging to general category.

In both Bihar and Tamil Nadu, the key teachers were mostly the experienced teachers who had more than 20 years of teaching experience. In Mali Nagar village of Bihar and the Othakadai area of Madurai, Tamil Nadu, the key teachers had about 30 years of experience in teaching. About 11 teachers in Bihar and 10 in Tamil Nadu had more than 20 years of experience and about 3 and 4 teachers respectively in Bihar and Tamil Nadu had about 10 to 20 years of experience in teaching. On the whole, there were two young teachers, one each in Samastipur, Bihar and Perambalur, Tamil Nadu, who had less than 5 years of experience in teaching and they showed great enthusiasm in improving the performance of government schools. In Samastipur district of Bihar, the key teachers had more than 10 years of experience working in the current school. In Tamil Nadu, most of the key teachers had less than 10 years of experience working in the current school. In Puduchavadi village of Ariyalur, the key teacher had quite recently joined the current school and the teacher, out of enthusiasm, had picked up a very poor performing school of the district and voluntarily got a transfer to this school, to show improvement in the school.

The effective teachers, who were instrumental in strengthening their respective schools, mostly had good educational qualification and professional training. In Tamil Nadu, all the key teachers were highly qualified and trained. In Bihar, about 13 teachers were post graduate degree holders and 12 were graduates. In Tamil Nadu, about 8 key teachers had post-graduate degree, 6 were M.Phil/PhD holders, while only one was a graduate. In terms of professional training of the key teachers, in Tamil Nadu, while all the teachers were B.Ed or M.Ed holders, in Bihar, 9 teachers had their certificate or diploma in basic teaching, 4 had their professional training, while 2 teachers did not undergo any training.

Teachers' Profile

It is the basic assumption of this study that any school with good performance also has a good set of quality teachers with proper educational qualification and training. This is the basic prerequisite not only for school improvement but also for improvement in student learning and student development. Table 4.4 gives a picture of the basic profile of the teachers of the surveyed school. The table again reveals variation in the number of teachers recruited in a school, based on the management type.

The average age of teachers in both the schools of Bihar and Tamil Nadu was found to be around 40 years. In the school of Bangaon village in Sitamarhi, the average age of teachers were reported to be 34 years. Such composition of young teachers is beneficial for both schools and students, as they come up with innovative ideas of teaching and learning, adding strength to the school.

On the whole, there were about 447 teachers in the surveyed schools and the female teachers (252) outnumbered the male teachers (195). However, in Bihar, it was noted that the male teachers were more in number, especially in the districts of Samastipur and Sitamarhi. In terms of the total number of teachers, the numbers were found to be less than 10 in only 2 of the schools in Bihar. A maximum of 22 teachers were found in the Nagarpalika school of Sitamarhi and in this school, there were about 3 to 4 sections for various classes. In Tamil Nadu, more than 30 to 40 teachers were found in the senior secondary schools and the highest number of teachers (47) was reported in the girls' school in Madurai district. On the other hand, in most of the panchayats-run primary and middle schools, the number of teachers was ranging between 3 and 8.

Table 4.5: Profile of Teachers of the Surveyed School																			
States	Districts	Name of School	Average age	Gender			Social Category				Education			Professional Training		Nature of employment		Average	
				Male	Female	Total	SC	ST	OBC	General	Higher Secondary	UG/ PG	M.Phil./ PhD	Trained	Untrained	Permanent	Contractual	Total Service Period	Service in current school
Bihar	Begusarai	MS Badarpura	47.6	2	14	**16**	1	0	5	10	9	7	0	16	0	16	0	11.69	8.00
		MS Matihani	43.1	7	10	**17**	0	0	3	14	5	12	0	17	0	17	0	14.82	9.88
		MS Mohanpur	39.9	8	9	**17**	1	0	6	10	6	11	0	17	0	17	0	10.65	9.35
	Samastipur	UMS Lagunia Suryakanth	38.0	6	5	**11**	0	0	5	6	1	9	1	11	0	11	0	11.64	7.00
		UMS Mordiwa	41.3	5	2	**7**	0	0	7	0	1	5	1	7	0	7	0	9.57	9.57
		MS Sri Rampur Aayodhya	42.7	8	2	**10**	0	0	5	5	0	10	0	10	0	8	2	9.90	9.70
		MS Gopalpur	41.0	5	3	**8**	1	2	3	2	1	6	1	8	0	8	0	14.13	10.50
		MS Nandani	43.9	6	8	**14**	2	0	4	8	5	9	0	14	0	14	0	11.00	9.00
		MS Barheta	42.2	6	10	**16**	2	1	4	9	5	11	0	16	0	16	0	11.56	10.13
		MS Malinagar	40.8	7	7	**14**	2	0	6	6	1	12	1	14	0	14	0	11.43	10.00
	Sitamarhi	MS Nagarpalika School, Bhawdepur	49.7	3	19	**22**	4	0	7	11	2	20	0	22	0	17	5	17.77	11.64
		MS Buthibazar	41.5	9	11	**20**	7	3	10	0	4	16	0	20	0	20	0	12.90	8.90
		UHS Indarwa-1	38.3	8	5	**13**	1	0	12	0	2	11	0	13	0	10	3	9.92	11.00
		MS Sonbarsa	39.7	10	1	**11**	2	0	3	6	3	8	0	11	0	11	0	6.82	5.82
		MS Madhuban, Bangaon	34.4	6	3	**9**	0	0	0	9	0	9	0	4	5	9	0	9.11	7.78
Tamil Nadu	Ariyalur	GHSS, J. Suthamalli	43.4	18	13	**31**	3	0	28	0	0	31	0	31	0	28	3	11.23	4.58
		GHSS, Vikramangalam	40.9	17	10	**27**	8	0	11	8	0	14	13	27	0	27	0	9.11	6.67
		GHSS (Model School), Asthinapuram	40.9	8	8	**16**	4	0	12	0	0	9	7	16	0	16	0	13.38	4.50
		PUMS, Idayathankudi	39.0	1	5	**6**	1	0	4	1	0	4	2	6	0	6	0	12.00	3.33
		PUMS, Puduchavadi	45.4	3	2	**5**	0	2	3	0	0	5	0	5	0	5	0	15.80	11.80
	Madurai	GHS, Vannivelampatti	43.8	3	9	**12**	0	0	12	0	0	12	0	12	0	9	3	10.08	5.33
		PUMS, Meenakshi Nagar	45.9	8	11	**19**	1	0	18	0	0	18	1	19	0	16	3	16.84	8.05
		PUPS, Pottapanaiyur	47.7	2	1	**3**	0	0	3	0	0	3	0	3	0	3	0	19.00	10.33
		PUPS, Othakadai	49.5	2	13	**15**	0	0	15	0	0	15	0	15	0	15	0	22.33	13.00
		GGHSS, Othakadai	44.4	5	42	**47**	6	0	36	5	0	31	16	47	0	44	3	14.57	9.70
	Perambalur	PUPS, Kathalaimedu	39.3	1	2	**3**	2	0	1	0	0	3	0	3	0	2	1	15.33	11.00
		PUMS, Kothavasal	42.6	4	3	**7**	1	0	6	0	0	5	2	7	0	7	0	18.14	3.43
		GHSS, Kurumbalur	38.1	17	14	**31**	13	2	16	0	0	25	6	31	0	31	0	11.10	9.10
		GHS, Sillakudi	39.1	6	6	**12**	4	0	8	0	0	12	0	12	0	10	2	5.00	4.92
		PUMS, Nochikulam	44.3	4	4	**8**	3	0	5	0	0	7	1	8	0	7	1	18.50	8.25

Source: Field Survey 2018 & 2019.

In terms of social group of the teachers, it can be noted that in Bihar, most of the teachers belonged to general category, followed by other backward classes (OBC). A substantial number of scheduled caste (SC) teachers (7) and scheduled tribe (ST) teachers (3) were found only in the school of Buthibazar village of Sitamarhi district. In Tamil Nadu, in almost all the surveyed districts, the OBC teachers were more in number than the other social groups. A substantial proportion of general category teachers were reported only in the schools in Vikramangalam village of Ariyalur and Othakadai area of Madurai.

In Tamil Nadu, the numbers of SC teachers were reported to be more in the Kurumbalur school of Perambalur, followed by Vikramangalam school of Ariyalur and the Othakadai Girls' school of Madurai. 2 ST teachers each were found only in 2 of the schools, viz., Puduchavadi school of Ariyalur and the Kurumbalur school of Perambalur. On the whole, there were a total of 258 OBC teachers, 110 general teachers and 69 and 10 SC and ST teachers respectively in the surveyed schools of both the states. The districts Begusarai, Samastipur and Sitamarhi of Bihar, individually had 2, 7 and 14 teachers from SC category, respectively, while Begusarai had no teacher from ST category. It can be sated that the schools in the Bihar district had teachers belonging to diverse social backgrounds, in comparison to Tamil Nadu, which reported more of OBC teachers.

The educational qualification of the teachers of the successful public schools also varies from one state to the other. On the whole, there were 45 teachers who had completed only higher secondary schooling in Bihar and their numbers were more in Begusarai and Samastipur, compared to Sitamarhi. On the other hand, there was no teacher in Tamil Nadu with just school education and all the teachers had the minimum qualification of graduation. In both the states, majority of the teachers were either graduates or post graduates and their numbers were more in Tamil Nadu. Only in Samastipur district about 4 teachers were found to be M.Phil or Ph.D holders. On the other hand, in Tamil Nadu, a total of 48 teachers across the three districts were M.Phil or Ph.D holders. Though their numbers were found to be more in the higher secondary schools, few teachers with Ph.D was also found in the panchayats run middle schools.

In terms of professional training of teachers, it can be observed that in both the states, most of the teachers were professionally trained. Only in Madhuban village of Sitamarhi district it was reported that 5 teachers did not undergo any formal training. Most of the teachers in Tamil Nadu had B.Ed and B.El.Ed and some even had M.Ed. Few teachers had a diploma or

certificate course in teaching. On the other hand, in Bihar, most of the trained teachers had their diploma or certificate course in teaching.

In terms of nature of employment, about 95 per cent of the teachers in the surveyed schools were permanent teachers and there were only few contractual teachers (23 teachers) in both Bihar and Tamil Nadu. More number of contractual teachers was reported in Madurai district of Tamil Nadu.

One of the important features of selected schools is that a large number of teachers have been serving in the same school for a long time. Even the average service period in terms of total years of teaching came to more than 12 years of service in Begusarai and the collective average in Samastipur and Sitamarhi, was more than 11 years. The average service period was about 12 years in Ariyalur district, while it was approximately 17 years and 13 years in Madurai and Perambalur, respectively. In terms of average service period in the same school, it was reported to be about 9 to 10 years in Bihar, while in Tamil Nadu, there was huge variation. While 3 years to 11 years was the average period of service of the teachers in Ariyalur, the range in Madurai was between 10 years and 22 years and in Perambalur, it was in the range of 5 years to 18 years.

CONCLUSION

From the profile of the surveyed schools, it can be noted that a wide variation exists from one school to the other, though all the sample schools were efficient schools or successful schools in its own way. Even within the same state, though homogeneity can be noted in several aspects, largely these schools maintained their heterogeneous nature and carried unique characteristics. This is mainly because of the value system and the strategies pursued by the local stakeholders, viz. head teacher, teachers, community, etc. which was context specific. The forthcoming chapters make an analysis of the various interventions and measures taken by these successful schools at their respective domain.

CHAPTER 5

SCHOOL DEVELOPMENT MEASURES

INTRODUCTION

Giridhar (2019) asserts that good schools constantly are engaged in promoting their schools and take complete ownership of their schools and care for the infrastructure, safety and hygiene, and ensure student learning (p.22). In the successful schools that were identified for this study, various key measures and strategies are visible in the efforts of the stakeholders, especially the key teachers in improving the performance of the school.

Lot of concerns are involved in school development measures which range from ensuring clean and hygienic infrastructure of the schools to building the resources for strengthening schools and promoting teacher motivation and development. While these are visible measures to strengthen school development, some of the other measures in this direction are having a proper vision and mission to strengthen school, engage the community in strengthening activities and building the reputation of the schools. This chapter presents a picture on how the best performing schools have undertaken school development measures and established the reputation of their schools. In discussing these aspects, it throws light on how such measures were pursued by the teachers and the factors that contributed towards its success. It also reflects on the challenges faced in this regard and the measures taken to overcome such challenges.

VISION & MISSION TOWARDS SCHOOL DEVELOPMENT

Hallinger & Heck (2002) asserts that vision is a source of inspiration that acts as a catalyst to action for oneself and potentially for others. On the other hand, Barth (1990) argues that a ‘mission’ symbolises what is in the hearts of the staff, students and parents. Thus, as noted by Brower & Balch (2005), the mission serves as a roadmap in guiding a teacher towards the institutional dream, i.e. the vision; and mission and vision, helps a teacher to identify new opportunities for his/her school (Leithwood, Jantzi, & Steinbach, 1998). Thus as noted by these scholars, vision and mission oriented teachers were also found in the schools that were surveyed.

Box 5.1: Vision Statement of the Teachers of the Surveyed Schools

Most of the children of this school belong to marginalised group and are first generation learners and hence wanted to provide good quality education to them, so that they shouldn't feel bad for not getting private education

- Head Teacher, Middle School, Mohanpur, Begusarai district, Bihar

I want to make my school a prestigious school and make the students belonging to weaker sections proud for being a part of this school. I want to change the image that people have on government schools, by ensuring good infrastructure, discipline in the school

- Head Teacher, Upgraded Middle School, Lagunia, Suryakanth, Samastipur district, Bihar

Our focus is on the holistic development of all children of our school and make them shine in education, sports and extracurricular. We also want to ensure good behaviour and hygienic practices of our children and build their team spirit

- Three Teachers of Upgraded Middle School Mordiwa, Samastipur district, Bihar

My vision for my children is that they should be able to get rid of poverty and think that they are capable of bringing about change. The school was a middle school earlier and now it is upgraded till high school level. It should also be upgraded till higher secondary level, so that children of this village get the opportunity to study and they do not drop out.

- Head Teacher of Upgraded High School, Indarwa-1, Sonbarsa, Sitamarhi district, Bihar

My focus is on bringing the poor children to equal platform with rich children and providing them all the opportunity

- *Acting Head Teacher, Bangaon, Sitamarhi district, Bihar*

My focus is to bring a connection between book learning and practical life learning, which is missing in the education system

- Teacher of GHSS, Vikramangalam, Ariyalur district, Tamil Nadu

Change is possible when we are able to touch children. Children should not be made to chase marks, rather they should be made as human beings who think about fellow humans and humanity

- Teacher of GHS, Sillakudi, Perambalur district, Tamil Nadu

Source: Interview with Teachers & Head Teachers, 2019-2020.

The motivation level and mission of the schools and the teachers of the successful schools surveyed, seemed to differ from the mainstream literature that is available. Ramachandran (2018) highlights that in the surveys that she conducted between 2005 to 2015, on the question of teacher motivation that was thrust upon the teachers and the administrators, the response that emerged was that, 'a motivated teacher is one who comes to school every day, does what is told and provides information the higher ups want'(p.222). On the contrary, the perception of teachers in the surveyed school was different. It was heartening to see that there are yet teachers who have not become mechanical and were passionately involved in teaching and showed high level of motivation in seeing the growth and progress of their children (see box 5.1 and table 5.1). The emphasis of the schools was on various aspects such as

upgradation of schools to next levels, student learning, extra-curricular activities, promoting ICT knowledge, responsible citizenship, etc.

Table 5.1: Vision for the School

Districts	Name of School	Vision/Mission for the School
Begusarai	MS Badarpura	• Buy more furniture; • motivate children to actively engage in school work; • ensure clean campus & good hygiene of children;
	MS Mohanpur	• Provision of good quality education; • Enhance the literacy and numeracy skills, so that children are able to make their living post schooling;
Samastipur	UMS Lagunia Suryakanth	• Want to make it a prestigious school and change the thinking of people on government schools; • Ensure the discipline and infrastructure of the school; • Installation of CCTV and computer in the coming year;
	UMS Mordiwa	• Want to focus on holistic development of children, with emphasis on sports, behaviour, cleanliness, education, poem writing, team building of children, inculcation of leadership qualities, development of the tendency to help others, and engage children in gardening and plantation;
	MS Gopalpur	• Every class should have a teacher; • Want to get the support of government officials in recruiting required number of teachers; • Construction of a hall for school, separate room for head teacher and staff; • Set up smart class/Projector in every class and also install CCTV in school;
	MS Malinagar	• My vision is to create a beautiful campus and hence emphasis is laid on infrastructure development; • Install CCTV and Construct stage, shed for prayer, general assembly and other purpose;
	MS Nagarpalika School, Bhawdepur	• Want to make my school better than private school; • Poor children who study here should get all the opportunity and benefits;
Sitamarhi	UHS Indarwa-1	• Capacitate children, so that they are able to get rid of poverty; • Make more children clear National Merit & Means Scholarship, and Upgrade school till inter-level (XII standard) to prevent drop out ratio; • Get laboratory for school;
	MS Sonbarsa	• Want to build hostel in the school, to ensure development of children; • want to upgrade this school till high school level to prevent drop out;
Ariyalur	GHSS, Vikramangalam	• Science kit of worth Rs. 2,00,000 should be set up; • Good toilet has to be constructed by getting fund from Lignite corporation; • Library is already good, but want to buy more books; • Already planted a lot of saplings in the villages, but plan for this year is to cover more areas;
	PUMS, Idayathankudi	• School already has a smart classroom and the basic infrastructure requirements of the school have been addressed. Still Garden has to be strengthened; • Children already speak good English and converse with NRIs, who take skype classes; • School should be made a WiFi campus; • Want to make the children responsible citizens and enable them address needs of the village. Focus next is to develop the leadership skills of children and connect them with the village.
	PUMS, Puduchavadi	• Want to convert this poor performing school into a best school and increase the enrolment; • Want to construct gate for the school to ensure the safety of children; • Create Science lab with projectors and smart classroom with audio system;
Madurai	PUMS, Meenakshi Nagar	• English language should be taught and children should be made well-versed in English language; • Should teach children about environmental protection and cleanliness; • Children should be made to participate in a lot of competition to give exposure to them; • Lot of trees should be planted;
	PUPS, Othakadai	• Focus now has shifted to teaching and teaching methods, after establishing the basic infrastructure; • want to build a big library for the school; • want to do research on school development.
Perambalur	PUMS, Kothavasal	• Initially the school did not have proper building. Now we have constructed enough classrooms and the compound wall is also constructed; now, we want to construct a big auditorium for the school; • Language Lab and Maths Lab has already been established and phonetics are taught to children; • Vegetable and fruit cultivation is already taught to children; • want to upgrade the school as a High School;

***Source**:* Interveiw with Teachers & Head Teachers, 2019-2020.

The sources of inspiration for the visionary teachers differed in both Bihar and Tamil Nadu. There was also variation in the vision and mission statement of the key teachers of different schools, but by and large, the focus was on building the reputation of government schools and providing better education than the private schools. In Bihar, in some schools, the teachers stated of taking inspiration from their fathers who were also teachers; and others were influenced by their teachers who taught them. Some also stated that they did not have any intention of getting into teaching field; however, later got passionately involved, as they have the responsibility towards the future generations. In Bihar, though every school was focused on their respective vision and goals, mostly emphasis was laid on:

- Upgradation of their schools to next level, so that children get the opportunity to study;
- Improve the physical infrastructure of the school;
- Provide hostel facilities within school, so that children do not drop out of school;
- Provide the poor rural children with all opportunities that are available to private school children.

Some teachers in Tamil Nadu highlighted that they are the 4^{th} and 5^{th} generation teachers and stated with pride that their entire family has been in the teaching field for more than 70 years and hence, they also wanted to take up this profession. There were other teachers, who stated that their source of inspiration were the teachers of their childhood days, who had made a strong impact on them. Few teachers also stated that though their entry into teaching was accidental, they are strongly influenced by the problems that they faced during childhood and they felt that, no other child should undergo the problems that they suffered and thus try to give their children the best in the school. For instance, a teacher of Pudhuchavadi village, Ariyalur district of Tamil Nadu, who voluntarily shifted from a successful school and joined a poor performing school of his district, stated:

> "When I was in class IX, the students were taken to a science exhibition in Tanjore. Since my family could not give Rs.10 for the exhibition, I did not go. The next day, my friends said that there was a speaking skeleton. This created a permanent impact in me and the pain of missing the opportunity of seeing the speaking skeleton stays with me even to this day. After I became a teacher, I have made it a point, that the opportunity that I missed, should not be missed by any children".

Similarly, another teacher of Kothavasal Village of Perambalur district, Tamil Nadu stated:

> "After schooling, I had joined aeronautical engineering. However, I could not continue beyond first year, due to poverty and I had to drop out. Now, after becoming a teacher, I am trying to give all the opportunities to my children in rural areas, so that they do not suffer and they are able to compete with urban children".

In Tamil Nadu, the most common concern as highlighted by most of the teachers include the following:

- Improve the spoken English ability of children;
- Provide ICT education to children and install Maths Lab, English Lab and Science Lab;
- Promote the participation of children in extracurricular activities, community activities, etc.

On the whole, it can be noticed that the vision of head teacher or the key teachers was on the future direction for the school and the teachers of both Bihar and Tamil Nadu exhibited the zeal and stimulus for change. While in Bihar, the focus was mostly on improving the infrastructure facilities, ensuring the regular participation of children and preventing drop-out, in Tamil Nadu, the teachers were found to be focused on student development measures.

In Bihar, it was also noted that the visionary person in one of the schools in Samastipur district was an alumni of the school, who is now a retired professor from an Agricultural University. Post-retirement, he wanted to contribute towards the development of his school in his locality and has both contributed from his pocket for payment of salary for 2 teachers and infrastructure development, and also mobilised financial resources from Hindustan Corporation Limited (HCL) for installation of smart-classroom, construction of toilets, etc. However, since the head teacher of the school was not active enough, the vision of this individual could not be translated into reality, and even where it get translated, the momentum was not maintained on a sustainable basis.

RESOURCE MOBILISATION MEASURES

The 2017 audit report of the Comptroller and Auditor General (CAG) of India highlights that there has been inadequacies in infrastructure of the government schools, which acts as a hindrance in providing conducive environment for providing quality education in government schools (GoI, 2017). Such inadequacy of resource base of public schools and the need for backing up public education system with adequate resources has been emphasised in various

studies (Tilak, 2017; Bose, Ghosh, & Sardana, 2020). However, despite the resource constraints that have been associated with government school functioning, in almost all the surveyed schools, the teachers were found to have met this requirement through various resource mobilisation measures.

Though the government acts as the major funding sources, both in terms of physical and financial resources, at the ground level, the successful schools seems to have mobilised the needed resources from sources such as community, panchayats, alumni of the school, individual well-wishers of government schools, civil society organisations (CSOs) and also private firms. Apart from these sources, some of the teachers have also contributed from their own pocket for school development activities.

In both Bihar and Tamil Nadu, the grants for elementary education have been majorly received from the Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan (SSA) and the Rashtriya Madhyamik Shiksha Abhiyan (RMSA), as reported by the teachers during the survey year 2018-2019. In 2018, there was the integration of the SSA, RMSA and the scheme for Teacher Education under the single Centrally Sponsored Scheme of Samagra Shiksha Abhiyan, which was not covered during the survey. In Bihar, almost all the surveyed schools, reported of receiving the SSA grant, annual grant, development fund and the maintenance grant from the government for various purposes such as repair and maintenance, replacement of non-functional school equipment, purchasing sports material etc. In addition, every teacher is also given Rs.500 per year for purchasing teaching learning material (TLM). However, in comparison to Tamil Nadu, there was variation in the amounts stated. The funding in Bihar was in the range of Rs.22,000, Rs.12,000 and Rs.10,000 for various purposes (Table 5.2). In Tamil Nadu, the grant from SSA was stated to be Rs.25,000 and Rs. 10,000 for maintenance and Rs. 7000 for development purposes. Except for the panchayat-run schools, the other schools were also getting the RMSA grant of Rs.25,000, Rs.50,000, Rs.75,000 and Rs. 1 lakh, and this variation was based on the strength of the students. In Tamil Nadu, it was also reported that the state government was also providing a cash award of Rs. 1 lakh and Rs. 2 lakh to middle schools and higher secondary schools respectively, for making innovations in schools. This ‘Puthumai Palli’ (Innovative School) award basically recognises the performance of schools in terms of increasing enrolment, adoption of innovative teaching methodology, meeting infrastructure requirements and actively working in collaboration with the public. Among the 15 surveyed schools of Tamil Nadu, 6 schools had received this award.

Table 5.2: Resource Mobilisation for School Development			
Financial Resource	**Human Resources**	**Physical Infrastructure**	**Learning Infrastructure**
BIHAR			
Grant from Government: ❖ SSA grant of Rs. 22,000/year ❖ Development Fund of Rs. 12,000 ❖ Annual grant of Rs.12,000 ❖ Maintenance grant of Rs. 10,000 ❖ Rs. 500 per teacher for TLM **Community:** ❖ Rs.25 lakhs (UHS Indarwa I, Sitamarhi) ❖ Rs. 10 lakhs (MS Mohanpur, Begusarai) ❖ Rs.6.5 lakhs for school building (MS Madhuban, Sitamarhi) ❖ Rs. 3 lakhs (MS Badarpura, Begusarai) ❖ Rs.30,000/year (Ms Sonbarsa, Sitamarhi) **Teachers:** ❖ Rs. 1 lakh/year by teachers (Nagarpalika School, Bhawdepur, Sitamarhi) ❖ Siksha Patrika –Rs.5,000/month (Ms Mordiwa, Samastipur) ❖ Rs. 50,000 (MS Barheta, Samastipur) ❖ Rs. 1,50,000 (MS Gopalpur, Samastipur) ❖ Rs. 1,000 (MS Sonbarsa, Sitamarhi) ❖ Rs. 60,000 (MS Buthibazar, Sitamarhi) ❖ Rs. 500/teacher (MS Barheta and MS Nandani, Samastipur)) ❖ Rs. 20,000 (MS Suryakanth Lagunia, Samastipur) ❖ Rs. 1,50,000 from single teacher (MS Gopalpur, Samastipur)	**Government:** ❖ MDM organiser, MDM cook **School:** ❖ Teacher Interns (MS Gopalpur, Samastipur) ❖ Hired PT teacher for physical health ❖ Staff for Cleaning Toilet (MS Sonbarsa, Sitamarhi) ❖ 4 Cook to provide breakfast and dinner (UHS Indarwa-I, Sitamarhi)	**Community:** ❖ Donation of Land for school building (MS Matihani, Begusarai & MS Indarwa-I, Sitamarhi); ❖ Table, Fan, Chairs, Generators, stabilisers ❖ Purchase of sports equipment; ❖ Levelling of ground, Boundary walls ❖ Library ❖ RO water Plant ❖ Cupboards ❖ CCTV **Teacher:** ❖ Mobilisation of Rs. 1 lakh per year for school development (Nagarpalika School, Sitamarhi) **Others:** ❖ CFL Bulbs ❖ 100 Benches ❖ Projectors ❖ MDM hall, Train shaped classrooms, Tiles & white wash of school building, games & painting on walls (Panchayat Sarpanch in MS Nandani, Samastipur) ❖ Smart classroom (HCL – MS Sri Rampur Ayodhya)	**Community**: ❖ Painting on Wall on the Concepts from Lessons; ❖ Computers **Teachers**: ❖ Setting up of LED TV for teaching through YouTube ❖ Projector for school **Anandshala (NGO):** ❖ Computers (MS Gopalpur, Samastipur) **Panchayat Sarpanch** ❖ Snake & Ladder Game on Floor (MS Nandani, Samastipur) **HCL** ❖ Smartclass room (MS Sri Rampur, Aayodhya, Samastipur)
TAMIL NADU			
Grant from Government: ❖ RMSA grant of Rs.25,000, Rs. 50,000, Rs.75,000 & Rs. 1 lakh (based on student strength) ❖ SSA grant of Rs. 25,000 ❖ Maintenance Grant of Rs. 10,000 & Rs. 25,000 (based on strength) ❖ Rs. 500 per teacher for TLM	**Government:** ❖ MDM organiser, MDM cook **School:** ❖ Cleaning and sweeping staff (PUMS, Meenakshi Nagar, Madurai) ❖ Mobilisation of volunteers and	**Government fund for Model School:** ❖ School building construction, Labs for Physics, Chemistry, Biology, Computer, Library, Cycle Shed, Kitchen Shed, Furniture (GHSS Model School, Astinapuram, Ariyalur) **Through Sponsorship:**	**Government fund for Model School:** ❖ Maths Lab, Physics Lab, Chemistry Lab, Computer Lab, Biology Lab, Library (GHS, Astinapuram, Ariyalur)

❖ School Development Grant of Rs. 7,000 ❖ Innovative School Award of Rs. 2 lakhs (GHSS, J.Suthamalli, Ariyalur) **Community:** ❖ Rs. 8,00,000 (PUMS, Kothavasal, Perambalur) ❖ Kalvi Seer (PUMS, Kothavasal, Perambalur & PUMS, Idayathankudi, Ariyalur) **Teachers:** ❖ Rs. 2,00,000 (PUMS, Kothavasal) ❖ Rs. 30,000 (Government Hr. Sec. School, Kurumbalur) ❖ Rs. 25,000 (GHS, J. Suthamalli) ❖ Rs. 15,000 (PUMS, Idayathankudi) **Others:** ❖ Rs. 52 lakhs from Industries, NGOs, SMC, Panchayat (PUPS, Othakadai, Madurai) ❖ Rs. 50 lakhs (MLA fund, Industries, Rotary Club) (GGHSS Othakadai, Madurai) ❖ Rs.16 lakhs & 20 lakhs from Lion's club, State Bank, Rotary Club, Round table, Alumni, Panchayat (PUMS, Meenakshi Nagar & PUPS, Pottapanaiyur, Madurai) ❖ Rs. 50,000/year by Panchayat (GHSS, Vikramangalam, Ariyalur) ❖ Rs. 40,000 from PTA (GHSS, Vikramangalam, Ariyalur) ❖ Rs. 56,000- 65,000 (School Patron Scheme - Puravalar Thittam- PUPS, Kathalaimedu & PUMS, Nochikulam, Perambalur) ❖ Rs. 1 lakh by an individual (GHSS, J. Suthamalli, Ariyalur) ❖ Rs. 10,000 from Alumni (GHS, Vennivelampatti) ❖ MP fund, MLA fund, Alumni contribution & NABARD fund (GHSS, Kurumbalur, Perambalur)	other human resources such as Street play artists, yoga teachers, doctors for health campaign, etc. There are 2 foreign volunteers who also study the culture of the children. (PUPS, Othakadai, Madurai) ❖ MGNREGS worker for cleaning school ground (PUMS, Kothavasal) ❖ Part Time sweeper (PUMS, Kothavasal- Paid by Panchayat) ❖ Night watchman, gardener, sweeper (GHS, Ashitanapuram, Ariyalur) ❖ Staff for Toilet cleaning (PUMS, Idayathankudi, Ariyalur; PUPS, Nochukulam & PUPS, Kathalaimedu, Perambalur) ❖ Youth Forum to strengthen government schools - organise various events, cycle drive, awareness drive in the village on pollution, planting of seeds, etc. (GHS, Sillakudi, Perambalur)	❖ Desk, Benches, Cycle shed, Learning shed (GHSS, J. Suthamalli, Ariyalur) ❖ New building construction from panchayat & NABARD fund; Tables and chairs from MLA fund. Proper road for the school was made by the MLA (GHSS, Vikramangalam, Ariyalur) ❖ Gates, boundary wall construction, toilet for boys & girls ❖ School Building Construction (MLA fund), pavement, RO water, Cupboard, table, chairs, fan, radio set, borewell, toilet construction, thiruvalluvar statue, painting on wall, sports equipment, cleaning of ground, stage construction, flag pole, wiring work, etc. (PUPS, Pottapanaiyur & PUPS, Othakadai, Madurai) **Contribution by Individual well-wishers:** ❖ Construction of boundary wall, Paintings and Key quotations on walls; Provision of seeds for school garden (PUMS, Idayathankudi, Ariyalur) **Others**: ❖ 20 computers, Stage construction, Cupboards, tables, chairs, benches, Smartclassroom (Alumni Association – GHSS, Kurumbalur) ❖ Ultra Tech has given benches for auditorium (GHS, Asthinapuram, Ariyalur)	❖ Smart classroom by central government fund (GHS, Vannivelampatti, Madurai) **Sponsorship:** ❖ Lab Equipment (GHSS, J.Suthamalli, Ariyalur ❖ Smart class room + 15 computers are available in the school; educational CDs are mobilised from various sources and children are taught to work on Photoshop, MS Office Packages, etc. (PUPS, Othakadai, Madurai) ❖ Computer Lab, Math Lab, English Lab, collection of 400 Educational CDs for language improvement (PUMS, Kothavasal & PUMS, Nochikulam, Perambalur) **Contribution by Individual well-wishers:** ❖ Skype classroom, Smartclass, Tamil & English Magazine subscriptions, Sports equipment like carom board, chessboard, payment for instructors for yoga, silambam, etc. **Others:** ❖ Radio, computers, smart classroom (11,45,000 from round table NGO)

***Source*:** Interview with Teachers & Head Teachers, 2018-2019.

Apart from the contribution from government, other resources were also mobilised from the teachers, community and other players. It can be noticed that in Bihar, the community involvement is quite strong in terms of contribution of resources and other support required by the school. In UHS Indarwa-I of Sitamarhi district, it can be noticed that over the years, the community has mobilised about Rs. 25 lakhs for school development activities. After seeing the sincerity of the new head teacher, before 8 years, the community also started showing its involvement. It had also donated land for the school and the community took own initiative to talk to the respective land owners and provided land in exchange in lieu of the land in the school area. The community members in some of the schools in Begusarai and Sitamarhi district has contributed about 6 to 10 lakhs for school development measures. In some schools, individual teachers have also made their contribution which was ranging between Rs.1000 to Rs. 1 lakhs. In some schools, all the teachers were mobilising fund every year among themselves, which was used for school development activities. In UHS Mordiwa of Samastipur, an individual teacher contributes about Rs.5000 per month for bringing out Shiksha Patrika, which is a Newsletter for the school. In Nagarpalika School of Sitamarhi, students are asked to donate soaps to the schools on their birthdays, instead of distributing toffees. This was a measure towards the Swachch Bharat Vidhyalaya, which creates the awareness among the students on hygienic practices.

In Bihar, human resources were also mobilised in some of the schools. While Mid-day Meal (MDM) organisers and cooks are paid by the government, other staff were hired by the school. In MS Gopalpura, Samastipur, teacher interns were also present during the time of interview, who were supporting the activities of teachers. Staff members to clean the toilets were hired in the MS Sonbarsa of Sitamarhi for which payment was made by teachers. In UHS Indarwa-I of Sitamarhi, apart from the MDM staff available to provide noon-meal, the school has also appointed about 4 employees to cook breakfast and dinner for children. After school hours, the school is converted as hostels, and about 80 boys were accommodated in the school. Three times of free meal was provided by the school for those children and the supply of food grains and payment to cook was taken care by the community. Mostly, the financial resources so mobilised from the community was utilised for strengthening the physical infrastructure of the schools. For instance, tables, fans, invertor, stabilisers, generators, benches, purchase of sports equipment, levelling of school ground and construction of boundary walls were the major items of expenditure that was procured from the mobilised fund. In MS Nandani of Samastipur, financial resources was contributed by

panchayat sarpanch, who had made his contribution for Tiling the toilets, whitewashing the buildings, painting the classrooms in the form of train and for construction of MDM hall. In MS Sri Rampur Aayodhya, Samastipur district, a retired alumni of the school showed interest towards school development activities and mobilised fund from HCL for installation of smart classroom in the school. Compared to Tamil Nadu, the contribution of civil society organisations and private firms has been quite minimal in Bihar. Similarly, procurement of computers for teaching has also been minimum in Bihar. On the whole, only about 3 to 4 schools reported of having computers in the school.

Box 5.2: Kalvi Seer to Increase Resource Base and Patronage

The idea of 'Kalvi Seer' was introduced by one of the teachers in Tamil Nadu in 2014, who was later felicitated with the National Award for Best Teacher. This is somewhat like the dowry system in education (Rajasekaran, 2019). Like how, gifts to the bridegroom are displayed during the wedding, gifts are provided to the school by the community. The gifts for the school are carried with lot of festivities, wherein large number of people carry the gifts as a procession to the school, with drum beats and music. The community members, students and teachers, showed pride in taking part in the procession and later, the gifts are displayed in the school. This concept or idea, served as a measure to facelift the school and at the same time, the needed resources in the form of chairs, tables, smart TV, vessels, etc. are mobilised to meet school requirements.

This concept gained popularity far and wide and within a short span, this concept was implemented across various districts of Tamil Nadu. Later, the State Education Department also issued a Government Order (GO), asking every schools to implement the concept of Kalvi Seer. However, many are also critical of this measure by the government, as they see it as a measure imposed on the schools and community, which so far had a voluntary spirit. Further, it was also seen as a move to shift the responsibility from the government to the people and teachers.

On the contrary, in Tamil Nadu, it can be noticed that the resource mobilisation measures in Tamil Nadu was quite different and such mobilisation of resources were from diverse sources. Almost in all the surveyed schools, the teachers were found to be maintaining a sponsor list in their respective district and the teachers visited various Non-Governmental organisations (NGOs) and private firms and industries in their locality to get sponsors for school development activities. In PUPS Othakadai and GGHSS, Othakadai of Madurai, the key teachers has mobilised about Rs.50 lakhs over the years for school development activities (see table 5.2). In PUMS Kothavasal of Perambalur district, an individual teacher has contributed about 2 lakhs from his own pocket for school development. In this school, community involvement is also quite strong, who has mobilised about Rs.8 lakhs in the last 5

years. Kalvi Seer is a concept which is quite popular in Tamil Nadu, which is an initiative taken by a teacher, which has spread across the entire state (see box item 5.2) and resource mobilisation through this method was found to be practiced in PUMS Kothavasal of Perambalur district and PUMS, Idayathankudi of Ariyalur district. Apart from this, School Patron Scheme (Puravalar Thittam[2]) is also popular in Tamil Nadu, and some schools reported of having about Rs.60,000 in the bank account. In addition, financial resources are also mobilised from MLA fund, MP fund, Alumni contribution, panchayats, etc. as stated by some of the surveyed schools.

In Tamil Nadu, the schools were found to be giving equal attention to strengthening the learning infrastructure too, along with strengthening the physical infrastructure. In addition, human resources needed for various purposes were mobilised by schools based on requirement. Staff for cleaning and sweeping was found to be appointed in more than 6 to 8 surveyed schools and the payment was taken care by the teachers or panchayats. Youth Forum for strengthening Government schools was active in the GHS Sillakudi, Ariyalur district. Labourers working abroad in Singapore, Gulf countries, etc. have started this forum and provide the needed fund. At the local level, the youth of the forum along with the students organise various events and carry out awareness campaigns in the community, on various issues such as pollution, plastic ban, ill effects of alcohol, etc. In PUPS Othakadai, Madurai, the head teacher reported about mobilisation of volunteers and other human resources such as Streetplay artists, Yoga teachers, doctors for Health campaign, etc. to teach various skills to students. PUMS, Kothavasal of Perambalur district reported of taking the help of Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Scheme (MGNREGS) workers for cleaning and levelling the school ground.

In most of the surveyed schools in Tamil Nadu, the fund mobilised from various sources are used for the purpose of construction or renovation of school buildings, construction of boundary walls, installation of RO water plant, construction of neat and clean toilets for boys and girls, construction of stage and auditorium and purchase of furniture, sports equipment, etc. Under the Kalvi Seer concept, furniture and other equipment, plates, etc. are given as gift by the community.

[2] Puravalar Thittam or the School Patron Scheme was introduced by the Education Department of Tamil Nadu, under which, the parents or community members can make a deposit for Rs.1000 or more for the school. Only the interest amount of the deposited sum in a nationalised bank can be utilised by the school for meeting school related expenditure.

The key teacher of PUMS Idayathankudi, Ariyalur district stated that:

> "Through Facebook and YouTube Channels, people see the activities of the school and approach school on their own. So far, even a single penny has not been taken from anyone. Interested people, ask for the requirements and fulfil it on their own in the form of kind. For improving the school garden, seeds were given, for Skype classes, smart classrooms were set up. There are still pending requirements like need for sanitary napkins. I am sure, someone will volunteer in the future to take care of that requirement".

In Tamil Nadu, major attention was placed by the teachers on improving the learning infrastructure and in that context, specific attention was placed on Information and Communications Technology (ICT) education and spoken English. In the Model School in Asthinapuram, Ariyalur, there are laboratories separately for physics, chemistry, biology, computer, etc. and there is a huge library as well. Almost all the schools that were visited had computers and there were smart classrooms in more than 6 to 8 schools. In particular, ICT education was quite prominent in about 3 to 4 schools, such as PUMS Kothavasal and PUMS Nochikulam of Perambalur, PUMS Idayathankudi of Ariyalur and PUPS, Othakadai of Madurai district. In the schools in Perambalur, there are about 8 computers and a collection of about 400 educational CDs are procured, which is basically for improving the spoken English of students. In the Panchayat Union middle school in Ariyalur, there is installation of smart classroom in the school and Skype classes every day is held by Non-Residents of India (NRIs) working in the United States. The performances of children are uploaded in YouTube channels and after seeing these videos, there are many individuals who had volunteered to make various contribution for the schools. Some of such contribution has been for subscription of English and Tamil Magazines for the school, purchase of books for library, purchase of chess board and carom boards.

It can thus be noted that various measures were taken by the key teachers for strengthening the resource base of the school, which seems to have contributed in a big way in improving the image of the public schools in the surveyed locations.

INFRASTRUCTURE DEVELOPMENT

Creating appropriate infrastructural facilities in public schools though is something that was ignored earlier, has taken the centre stage since the implementation of various programmes such as Operation Blackboard, District Primary Education Programme (DPEP) and SSA. The National Education Policy (NPE) 1986 recognised that if the school infrastructure facilities

and other basic amenities are not improved, it serves as a demotivating factor not only for students, but also for the community as a whole. Later the Right to Education (RTE) Act, 2009 had also established a set of norms that was considered a basic requirement for any school, which included a number of aspects such as pupil teacher ratio, adequate classrooms, playground, boundary walls, kitchen shed for MDM, provision of drinking water, separate toilet for boys and girls, etc. Due to such measures of the government and also the efforts taken by the respective school teachers, a significant improvement is visible today in the physical and learning infrastructure of government schools. In almost all the schools that was visited in Bihar and Tamil Nadu, the infrastructure facilities were found to be significantly remarkable and the schools had not only complied with the RTE norms, but has surpassed the minimum requirements set and made more achievements setting an example for other schools. Das (2004) argued that a crumbling school building is a sign of the lack of interest among teachers and the community. Conversely, the surveyed schools in Bihar and Tamil Nadu reveal the strong commitment and dedication of teachers towards school, which is visible from the good infrastructure facilities available in the school.

In terms of the physical infrastructure of the surveyed school, most of the schools had met the RTE norms, except for a hand few in limited indicators. All the schools had proper school building with sufficient classrooms and a room for the head teacher. Uniformity was observed in the colour codes of the school building. In Bihar, the government school building was painted in pink, while in Tamil Nadu, the colour code followed was green. However, there was no specification of colours for the primary and upper primary school buildings in Tamil Nadu. In Bihar, while most of the norms related to infrastructure is met, norms related to one classroom for every teacher is not met in the 2 schools in Samastipur and 1 school in Sitamarhi. Similarly, barrier free access is not available in 2 of the schools in Samastipur and playgrounds are also not available in other two schools (Table 5.3). In comparison to Tamil Nadu, most of the surveyed schools in Bihar, seemed to have better infrastructure, which is contrary to the general trend cited by many studies. RO water facility was available in 3 of the schools in Bihar. Kitchen sheds and dining halls in MS Nandani of Samastipur and UHS Indarwa-I of Sitamarhi was extremely good, which was quite spacious, with neat seating arrangements.

Table 5.3: Compliance of RTE Norms related to Basic Facilities, Infrastructure, Teacher and Teaching Norms

RTE Norms	Bihar															Tamil Nadu														
	Begusarai			Samastipur							Sitamarhi					Ariyalur					Madurai					Perambalur				
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30
Physical Infrastructure:																														
One Classroom for every teacher																														
Office-cum-store-cum-Head teacher's room																														
Barrier-free access																														
Separate Toilet for Boys (functional)																														
Separate Toilet for Girls (functional)																														
Safe & adequate drinking water																														
Kitchen Shed for MDM																														
Playground																														
Boundary wall																														
Learning Infrastructure:																														
Availability of TLM (I-V)																NA	NA	NA			NA				NA			NA	NA	
Availability of TLM (VI-VIII)																														
Availability of Library																														
Teacher & Teaching Related Norms:																														
Class I to V Teacher norm																NA	NA	NA			NA				NA			NA	NA	
Class VI to VIII Teacher Norm																														
Norm related to Working Days (I-V)																NA	NA	NA			NA				NA			NA	NA	
Norm related to Working Days (VI-VIII)																														
Norm related to Instructional Hours (I-V)																NA	NA	NA			NA				NA			NA	NA	
Norm related to Instructional Hours (VI-VIII)																														
No. of working hours per week																														

Source: Field Survey Observation 2018-19.

Note: **Bihar: Begusarai**: 1. MS Badarpura; 2. MS Matihani; 3. MS Mohanpur; **Samastipur**: 4. UMS Lagunia Suryakanth; 5. UMS Mordiwa; 6. MS Sri Rampur Aayodhya; 7. MS Gopalpur ; 8. MS Nandani; 9. MS Barheta; 10. MS Malinagar; **Sitamarhi**: 11. MS Nagarpalika School, Bhawdepur; 12. MS Buthibazar; 13. UHS Indarwa; 14. MS Sonbarsa; 15. MS Madhuban, Bangaon;
Tamil Nadu: Ariyalur: 16. GHSS, J. Suthamalli; 17. GHSS, Vikramangalam; 18. GMHSS,Asthinapuram; 19. PUMS, Idayathankudi; 20. PUMS, Puduchavadi; **Madurai:** 21. GHS, Vannivelampatti; 22. PUMS, Meenakshi Nagar; 23. PUPS, Pottapanaiyur; 24. PUPS, Othakadai; 25. GGHSS Othakadai**; Perambalur:** 26. PUPS, Kathalaimedu; 27. PUMS, Kothavasal; 28. GHSS, Kurumbalur; 29. GHS, Sillakudi; 30. PUMS, Nochikulam.

No RTE Compliance

RTE Compliance

Provisions beyond RTE norms

The norm of one classroom for every teacher was missing in about 7 schools out of the total 15 schools surveyed in Tamil Nadu. Similarly, about 2 schools in Madurai and 1 in Perambalur did not have boundary walls. PUPS, Kathalaimedu of Perambalur had well maintained toilets for both boys and girls. The school, which was named 'Happy Home', by the head teacher, himself cleans the toilets once a day, an appointed staff cleans it once and a third time cleaning of toilets is made by students. Some of the schools had very good infrastructure facilities and this was mainly the case in the Government Model School in Ariyalur, which was equipped thoroughly. This is mainly due to the adequacy of funding received from the government for model schools. It can be noted from Table 5.3 that the PUMS Puduchavadi of Ariyalur, seems to have not met any of the RTE norms. However, this was the scenario of the school when the survey was undertaken. The teacher who took voluntary transfer to this bad performing school has slowly brought about remarkable change in terms of infrastructure facilities of the school.

In terms of learning infrastructure, except for a hand few schools, there was availability of teaching learning material and library in most of the schools in Bihar and Tamil Nadu. In particular, schools such as GHSS J.Suthamalli, GHSS Vikramangalam and PUMS Kothavasal had about 1000 books in their libraries. In GHS, Vannivelampatti, Madurai, interested students are asked to donate books for the libraries on their birthdays.

With respect to teacher and teaching related norm, it can be noted that the norms were not seriously followed and this was particularly the case in Bihar. Less teachers had to teach more number of students; working days and even the working hours were more than the time period stipulated in the RTE norm. While the pupil teacher ratio (PTR) of 1:30 and 1:35 was met in Tamil Nadu for both primary and upper primary classes respectively, this was not the case in Bihar. At the primary and upper primary level, the norm related to PTR was not followed in 4 and 7 of the schools respectively. In these schools, a single teacher had to teach about 50 to 60 students. While the norm related to instructional days was 200 and 220 days respectively for the primary and upper primary classes, in some of the schools, the instructional days were for about 240 days, both in primary and upper primary classes. Similarly, while the instructional hours for the primary and upper primary classes were 800 and 1000 instructional hours respectively, in some of the schools, the instructional hours exceeded, which was in the range of 1100 to 1400 hours.

Apart from the basic norms that are specified, some of the surveyed schools, had made arrangements to improve various other facilities in the school and performance of the schools in improving both the physical and learning infrastructure of the schools has been shown in Table 5.4.

Table 5.4: Availability of other Facilities and Provisions in Surveyed Schools

Particulars	Bihar			Tamil Nadu		
	Begusarai	Samastipur	Sitamarhi	Ariyalur	Madurai	Perambalur
Sports Equipment	1	4	4	2	4	3
Mic-Set, Speakers	2	3	3	5	5	5
Projectors	2	2	3	5	5	5
Computers	1		1	3	4	4
Smart Classroom	--	1	--	3	3	2
Subscription of Magazines for Library		1	--	4	3	1
Science Kit	1	2	--	3	2	3
Maths Kit	--	--	--	3	2	3
TLMS (Charts, apparatus, posters, others)	2	2	2	5	5	5
Free Breakfast & Dinner	--	--	1	--	--	--
School Garden	2	5	3	2	2	2
Cycle Shed	2	3	3	--	--	--
Skype Classroom	--	--	--	1	--	--
Provision for Street Play, Drama Club	--	--	--	--	1	--
Provision for Silambam, Yoga, Dance, Karate	--	--	--	1	3	3
Air Conditioner/Air Cooler for Computer Lab	--	--	--	--	--	2
Traditional Games	--	--	--	--	--	1
Honestly Shop (Stationeries)	--	1	--	--	--	1

Source: Field Survey 2018-19.

Additional provisions and facilities were made available in different ways possible in most of the schools. Most of the schools in both Bihar and Tamil Nadu, seems to have provided 3 basic provisions such as sports equipment, Mic-set and speakers and Projectors, etc. Similarly, TLMs such as charts, posters, drawings and paintings on wall, etc. was also common in both Bihar and Tamil Nadu. As discussed earlier, while the schools of Bihar had given more emphasis to the physical infrastructure of the schools, surveyed schools of Tamil Nadu focused more on the learning infrastructure. Similarly, while computers and smart classrooms were available in limited schools of Bihar, the case was reverse in Tamil Nadu, wherein almost all the schools had computers or smart classrooms. In most of the schools in Bihar, the garden was well maintained. However, in Tamil Nadu, though neatly maintained gardens were not there, some of the schools, made emphasis on cultivation of fruits and vegetables and herbal gardens within the school premises. Provision for street play, drama,

dance, yoga, traditional folk arts such as silambam, parai, kolattam, etc. was made available in few of the schools in Tamil Nadu.

Interview with the parents revealed that the parents had shown major concern on the environment and facilities of the school, especially the availability of toilet and drinking water. Improvement shown on the aspects of infrastructural development, served as a motivating factor for sending their wards to government schools. Thus as stated by the head teacher of MS Bhutibazar, Samastipur, lack of appropriate facilities used to act as a hindrance in increasing the enrolment and once with the support of community, when such barriers were overcome, enrolment naturally started increasing.

It was mostly noted that the successful schools laid their attention on the overall development of school and the commitment of the teachers was visible from the emphasis on basic infrastructure, cleanliness, beautification work, etc.

SCHOOL MANAGEMENT MEASURES

In the successful schools that were surveyed, it was noted that due to the dynamic role of the committed head teacher or other teachers, the schools were well managed both in Bihar and Tamil Nadu and a vibrant environment was seen in these schools. School activities were managed in diverse ways and different strategies were followed for dealing with various aspects. In good performing schools, teacher motivation was also paid attention in some schools, as it was well understood by the key teacher that only a motivated teacher can bring about the visualised change in the schools.

Teacher Motivation: Principals have a central role to play, by setting directions, developing commitment, building capacity, monitoring progress and constructing appropriate strategic response (Hill & Rowe, 1996, cited in Caldwell, 1998; cited in Hallinger & Heck, 2002). Such measures of the teacher were visible in more than 20 schools, out of the 30 schools surveyed in both Bihar and Tamil Nadu. In all these schools, the head teachers by exhibiting their commitment towards the school had motivated the other teachers too to perform well. In Inderwa-I, the head teacher had never considered teaching a 9 to 5 job and even beyond class hours, his focus was on thinking about ways to strengthen the ability of their children and he spent his time in school from 7 am to 10 pm. Seeing his sincerity, almost all the teachers of the school became disciplined and attended school regularly. One of the teachers also volunteered to stay within the school campus, to act as a guardian for the children who are

provided accommodation in school after school hours. In PUPS, Othakadai, the appreciation given by the head teacher for the innovative measures carried out by teachers motivated them to attempt more of such methods. In PUMS Idayathankudi, Ariyalur, and PUMS Kothavasal, Perambalur, the English teachers of these schools were instrumental in promoting the motivation among teachers and the community, due to which there is mutual understanding and coordination among the teachers and the community in creating a positive outcome in these schools. During field visit, the research team appreciated the efforts of teachers of PUMS, Idayathankudi of Ariyalur for the various efforts of teachers—visible in the way the motivational quotes were written on boards; the approach of tri-verb technique that was stuck on the walls—to ensure continuous learning practice of children. The teachers were on tears and were very happy to get the appreciation on these aspects and said, for the first time they were receiving appreciation from someone on all these aspects. Otherwise, generally visit is made by officials to see what is missing or to check the records. Thus as noted by Ramachandran (2018), the indices of education has to move beyond enrolment, attendance, etc. and see how academic monitoring and support can be provided to the teachers in the real sense. As argued by her, rather than focusing on teachers' compliance on predefined tasks and procedures, encouragement should be provided to teachers to analyse their teaching practices in light of their students' learning outcomes (p.237). Such encouragement provided by some of the head teachers in the surveyed schools, served as a strong motivation to teachers to work for the betterment of the school. In Tamil Nadu, like-minded teachers wanted to be of support and motivation for each other and initiated a forum in facebook called A-3 (Asathum Arasu Palli Asiriyalgal), i.e. the 'Dazzling Teachers of Government Schools'. This forum serves as a source of inspiration for teachers to contribute towards improving the government schools (see box 5.3).

Box 5.3: A-3: A Forum for Self-Inspiration in Tamil Nadu

Teachers who are passionate about improving self and also the performance of children in government schools have become members of this facebook forum, which was started in 2016. There are more than 3000 teachers who are members of this forum and they post their achievements in terms of increasing enrolment, strengthening the participation of parents in school management, measures towards infrastructure development, developing innovative TLMs etc. Success stories thus shared acts as an inspiration for other teachers and also to upkeep their momentum and motivation level. The seed which was sown before 4 years, has emerged as a major initiative, wherein, teachers make their own contribution to organise an annual event of A-3. In addition, various small workshops are organised on ICT skills, street plays, drama as a measure to teach, etc. to facilitate teachers to improve their teaching skill. This initiative has now become a huge network, through which the teachers mobilise the needed support from individuals, NGOs and other private players for procurement of books for library, computers for government schools across the state, etc.

Source: *Interview with Teacher Uma Maheshwari, the Admin of the A3 Forum in January 2019*

Promotion of Discipline: In some of the surveyed schools, the focus was on ensuring discipline among teachers and students, which is considered critical for the functioning of school in a proper manner. As noted by Brower & Balch (2005), implementation of discipline procedures ensures appropriate learning environment, defines acceptable behaviours for common good, encourages self-control and communicates clear expectations. FGD with community members in both Bihar and Tamil Nadu revealed that discipline and functioning of school in appropriate timings is something which increases the trust of the parents on the government schools. In Indarwa village of Sitamarhi district, the community members stated that before 8 years, the government school which is effective now, was not functioning properly. The teachers often came late to the school and the school also got over anytime. But later, when the current head teacher took charge, he made it a point that strict timing should be followed by the school. He streamlined the system, made rigid rules stating that, entry to the school will not be permitted both for teachers and students, beyond 9 am and strictly no one was allowed to leave the school campus during school hours, until and unless there is some emergency, for which the parents had to meet the head teacher to seek permission for early exit from school. Initially, the community was sarcastic of the initiatives of the head teacher and stated that nothing can change, as this is how a government school functions. However, later, after seeing the school functioning in an organised manner, the community members started associating themselves with the head teacher and volunteered to contribute for school development. Similar approach of the teacher was also found in the Panchayat Union Middle school in Puduchavadi village of Ariyalur district. When the head teacher took a volunteer transfer to this school in 2018, it was in a very bad shape and he could notice frequent teacher absenteeism without leave application, irregularity in following school timings, etc. There was the blame game between teachers and students, who blamed each other for lack of interest in attending school. The head teacher thus laid greater emphasis on discipline in the classroom and school. Once stability was shown on the functioning of school, the school is now slowly picking up momentum on other aspects too.

Orderly Morning Assemblies: Morning assemblies organised by students in a systematic manner was something that was visible in most of the schools. The survey team was able to attend the morning assemblies of about 10 to 12 schools in Bihar and Tamil Nadu. Most of the schools had installed the items such as drums, speakers, amplifiers, mic-set, etc. to organise the morning assemblies. The morning assembly consisted of prayers, national anthem, news reading, pledge, birthday celebration, observation of national leaders' birthday,

etc. which took place in a disciplined manner. Students when moving to classes from the ground maintained discipline and moved in queue. On the day of visit, in one of the schools in Samastipur, the morning assembly observed the birthday of Dr. Rajendra Prasad. In most of the schools, students in leadership position in Bal Sansad and Meena Manch were leading the morning assemblies and there was a mix of both boys and girls in organising the assembly. In some schools, almost all the children above class V are given the opportunity to organise the assembly on a rotational basis and every week a group of 5 to 6 students organise the assembly. In MS Lagunia Suryakant of Samastipur district, the best student for the day is appreciated on the basis of punctuality, discipline and hygienic practices during assembly. Separate badge with imprints 'Chand' and 'Chandni' is prepared for both boys and girls respectively and every day a girl and a boy who appears neatly dressed and shines like a moon asked to wear the badge for that day, which gives a sense of pride to the students. In Indarwa, when the morning assemblies are going on, the community members of this area also stop their activities and stand for prayers in their respective house or work place. In the morning assemblies in PUPS, Kathalaimedu, after prayers and pledge, the children are also asked to loudly state few important numbers such as child helpline, women helpline, fire engine, police station, ambulance, medical emergency numbers, etc. Every morning, the children are also asked to repeat safety rules that are written in school walls such as, "don't eat food given by strangers", "don't play with fire", "know your address and phone number", "differentiate between good and bad touch and report parents and teachers", etc. Thus, it was noted that, morning assemblies are considered quite important in almost all the schools, where discipline and order was the major focus, wherein children played the major role in leading the assemblies, and the head teacher and the other teachers support the children in the neat coordination of the same.

Student involvement in School Management: In Bihar and Tamil Nadu, there was active participation of students in school management activities. More or less, the same kind of activities was taken up by students in both these states; however, the collective efforts of students were called by different names in these states.

- ***Bal Sansads (Child Parliament):*** Bihar has active Bal Sansads and Meena Manch, through which the students on their own manage the activities of the school. Bal Sansads provided the opportunity to children to participate in the developmental activities of the schools. In Bihar, active Bal Sansads were visible in MS Mordiwa, MS Gopalpura and MS Lagunia Suryakant of Samastipur district. In MS Lagunia Suryakant, the Child Parliament, comprising the Prime Minister and the Cabinet

Ministers had taken the responsibility to organise morning assemblies and improving attendance. Students here have brought about real change in the school – from setting up the libraries to the establishment of students' Bank. Funds are collected from the students and are managed by the Ministers. Children used this money to give identity cards. During the visit, it was stated by the Cabinet, that a recent resolution has been made to sing birthday songs for those having birthdays and a note of thanks can be given by those celebrating birthdays in the general assembly. The cabinet members of MS Mordiwa, Samastipur reported of having regular interaction with students and also with parents, whose attendance is irregular, to attend school regularly on time and to stay till the school hours. In MS Nandani, Samastipur, the Bal Sansad plays an active role in making door-to-door canvassing and campaigning to get the socially and economically backward groups enrol and attend schools. The Bal Sansad of UHS Indarwa-I, Sitamarhi calls for the meeting of both villagers and the elected members of panchayat to discuss about the measures to be taken to develop the school. This serves as an encouragement for the local villagers to actively participate in the development process of school, either with their physical labour or financial contribution. In MS Mohanpur, Begusarai, the members of Bal Sansad and Meena Manch, with the guidance of the head teacher, has undertaken plantation drive and other measures towards beautification of the campus. The school looks green with lot of trees and other plants and the children have also made the traditional Madhubani painting on the walls. The Bal Sansad in this school has also started the "Bal Batua Campaign" (Students' Piggy Bank), under which every child contributes Rs.5 per month, which is used for keeping the school campus and the surroundings clean and green and the children proudly say that the motto of their school is "Clean Campus, Green Campus".

- ***Meena Manch:*** Meena Manch was also quite active in the state of Bihar in all the districts and through this initiative the girls exhibited active participation in leadership position. Meena Manch is a girls' group created in schools, which is inspired by the animation series "Meena", implemented by the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), which basically aimed at creating culturally appropriate ways to address empowerment of girls. The cartoon character 'Meena' was used as an advocacy and teaching tool to impart important messages related to child rights, education, protection, etc. in addition to building awareness on other aspects such as water and sanitation, health and nutrition and education of girl child (Kulkarni, 2018). In schools that were surveyed in Bihar, Meena Manch was found to be playing an active role, which not only empowered girl children of the forum, but also provided necessary encouragement to bring back out of school children to schools. The girls made frequent visits to the houses especially of those children, who were not regular to school and provided awareness on the importance of education. During interview with the students, one of the girl child in MS Gopalpura, Samastipur, said, "Parents are hesitant to send their girl child to school after a certain age. We as girls have no clue of why they are doing this to us; are we to be blamed if we are born as girls?" Meena Manch thus played an active role in taking up management of school related matters. Interview with a Sanchalika of Meena Manch in MS Indarwa-I, Sitamarhi, reveals

that she actively takes part on the issues of sanitation, which includes availability of proper toilet and urinal in the school premises.

- ***School Committees:*** While Meena Manch and Bal San Sad are the active forums for participation of students in school management in Bihar, in Tamil Nadu, the participation of students were promoted through the formation of various committees. Some of the committees include Committees for Campus Maintenance, Toilet Maintenance, Classroom Hygiene, Hygienic Food and Water, Cleanliness of Students, etc. In some schools, students with good academic records are given the leadership role for these committees. In other schools, on a rotational basis, 5 students are engaged in a committee and every student gets the opportunity to be a part of different committees and also hold leadership position. Students thus took care of various activities related to school management and ensured the smooth functioning of the school.

Management of MDM: The MDM provided in the schools were found to be carrying nutritional value, as balanced diet was provided to children. The survey team had visited about 8 schools during lunch break and was able to observe the way the meals are prepared and served. There was an organiser and 2 cooks to prepare the meal in both the states, for whom the payment was made by the government. The team had also eaten the same hot lunch that was provided to children in about 3 schools and found the meal to be of good quality, which had a variety of roti, rice, vegetables, salad and dal. In Tamil Nadu, the children were served rice, sambar, rasam, egg and vegetables, on the day of the visit. On the other days, along with vegetables and egg, mixed rice such as lemon rice, tomato rice, curd rice, tamarind rice, etc. is served. In few schools in Bihar, such as MS Sonbarsa of Sitamarhi, the menu for MDM was displayed on the walls. Proper construction of dining hall with proper seating arrangements was made in MS Nandani of Samastipur. Due to the Swachch Bharat Abhiyan, there was proper awareness on hygienic practices in both Bihar and Tamil Nadu and the children washed their hands with soap both before and after meal. The children observed the practice of standing in queue for washing the plates before and after food, washing hands and for receiving the food. In Bihar, the children used to collect the food items on plate and later ate together with friends. In Tamil Nadu, it was observed that children were made to sit continuously and food was served on their plates based on requirement. In some of the surveyed schools in Madurai, it was noted that thanks giving to god was made, after the food was served on plates and children ate the food after thanks giving. In PUMS, Kothavasal of Perambalur district, the students cultivated fruits and vegetables within the school campus and the fresh vegetables grown within the school campus was used for the noon meal. Children are also provided papaya, guava, water melon, etc. in the evening,

depending upon the yield in the different seasons. In PUPS, Kathalaimedu, Perambalur children of class IV and V, cultivated different variety of greens, which was included in their MDM. In Vannivelampatti, Madurai, children were provided food and snacks in the evening too, as some of the children from class VIII onwards stayed back in school for longer hours to prepare for exams and scholarships and expense related to evening tiffin was borne by the teachers. It was observed that the head teachers in most of the surveyed schools had paid special attention on the monitoring of MDM, as they felt that supply of nutritional meal to children is essential to ensure their good health and proper learning.

ESTABLISHMENT OF STRONG COLLABORATION

Active collaboration with key stakeholders is something that was preferred in both Bihar and Tamil Nadu, to share a sense of shared ownership and purpose. Such collaborative alignment of vision and mission with key stakeholders depended upon the interest shown by the key teachers in building such networks. As suggested by Peters (1987), leaders continually walk around, be visible, talk to employees and have meaningful conversations with everyone. This makes the stakeholders to feel valued and also gives the leader valuable feedback opportunities needed to run an institution successfully (Brower & Balch, 2005). In almost all the schools, that was visited, it was noted that the school leaders had a proper network with different kinds of stakeholders. In other words, it can be said, that wherever, the key teachers were proactive towards establishing meaningful network and relationship, the school was able to progress in a better way.

In the surveyed states, where the stakeholders were given the feeling of being valued, the school development activities were taking a different dimension and this was particularly the case in the schools of Bihar, where the schools preferred the involvement of the community in school management activities. This is mainly because of the historical legacy and the strong linkage that the community have with schools, right from colonial era. In most of the older districts of Bihar, the schools were run and managed by the community even till the takeover of schools by the government between 1976 and 1981. Some of the schools in Samastipur and Begusarai, still carry the names of the individual who had contributed land for school, along with the school name. The contribution of the philanthropist those days, did not end with just donation of land for the school. Rather they carried the zeal to construct the school. In MS Matihani, Begusarai, it was stated with pride by the elderly community members during FGD that the person who donated the land did not have money for school

construction and he made open announcement stating that he would marry anyone, who can give a dowry of Rs10,000 for school construction. Another person from the same village, got impressed with his dedication and married off her daughter to this person and also donated the needed money for school building. Such stories based on reminiscence are spread across the surveyed districts in Bihar.

Table 5.5: Collaboration of Surveyed Schools with Various Stakeholders

Bihar	Tamil Nadu

• BEEO/BRC/CRC
• Co-Teachers of other Schools
• Individuals interested in School Development – Retired Professor
• Community (Active in most of the schools)
• Elected Representatives of Panchayats (active involvement)
• NGOs such as:
  ○ Aanand Shala
  ○ Aga Khan Foundation
  ○ Pratham
  ○ Corestone
• Private Players:
  ○ HCL
	• BEEO/BRC/CRC
	• MLAs/MPs
	• Co-Teachers of other Schools
	• Active Forums of Teachers such as:
	  ○ Asathum Arasupalli Aasiriyargal (Dazzling Teachers of Government School)
	  ○ Butterfly (Beautification of Government School Campus with white wash and painting)
	  ○ Kalakala Vaguparai (Happy Classrooms)
	• Individuals interested in School Development
	  ○ Alumni Association
	  ○ Youth Forum of Village
	  ○ Individuals working abroad
	• SMC Members (only in 2 to 3 schools)
	• Elected Representatives of Panchayats (active in 2 to 3 schools)
	• NGOs such as:
	  ○ Forum for Child Friendly Schools
	  ○ Altius Foundation
	  ○ Palli Kalvi Paathukaapu Iyakkam (PKPI)-School Education Protection Movement
	  ○ D4V
	• Private Players & Others:
	  ○ Rotary Club
	  ○ Round Table
	  ○ Factories
	  ○ Alloy Industries
	  ○ Lion's Club
	  ○ State Bank

Source: Field Survey 2018-19.

On the other hand, in Tamil Nadu, the major collaboration in almost all the 3 surveyed districts was with the private players and NGOs, which was mainly for the purpose of mobilisation of needed resources. Active role of the community was found only in 2 to 3 schools. However, in Tamil Nadu, vibrant measures were exhibited by the various teachers' forum, informal association of rural youth, alumni association and also few individuals who showed interest towards school improvement.

In Bihar, the role of panchayats was quite active in most of the schools and on the contrary, in Tamil Nadu, the measures of panchayats were strong only in few schools, who were providing support for school development activities round the year. A retired professor from Sri Rampur, Aayodhya, Samastipur made a huge contribution from his pocket to pay the salary of 2 teachers and 2 support staff and also mobilised fund from HCL for boundary wall, smart boards, electrification, etc. In the schools of Kothavasal and Idayathankudi in Perambalur and Ariyalur of Tamil Nadu, there is active involvement of the parents, who take

Box 5.4: UHS Indarwa-I, Sitamarhi: A School owned and celebrated by the Community

In Sitamarhi, the Mukhiya of Indarwa-I, Gram Panchayat of Sonbarsa was instrumental in getting a visionary teacher transferred to this school. The panchayat leader believed that it needs a dedicated teacher, to develop and transform the school of his village which remains backward on various fronts. Initially, when the visionary teacher joined this school in 2009, it had only 3 rooms with thatched roof. With the active involvement of the panchayat and the community members, the teacher was able to make a complete transformation of this school. Some of the land, close to the school was occupied by illegal encroachments. In a joint meeting, the teachers, villagers and panchayat, decided to take this issue with the government and get this land allocated for school. A huge gathering was organised in front of the government office by the villages for many days, till the time, their request was accepted by the government. Some of the individuals sold their lands and donated 2 to 5 lakhs for school development. The villagers also bought some acres of land to rehabilitate the farmers and villagers who stayed near school area. A piece of land proportionate to the size of their respective land near the school area was given to the farmers, along with Rs.10,000 to each households that got rehabilitated. The villagers later took the support of the government to register all those lands in the name of the school. Thus, with the active financial contribution and manual labour of the villagers, the school was constructed. Later, the members of the Vidyalay Shiksha Samiti of this school constructed the boundary walls too. The Samiti along with the gram panchayats later worked together to get pucca road to the school. Today this school is equipped enough with all basic facilities and advanced facilities too. The key teacher, Bikhari Mahato is affectionately called as 'Mahato Ji' by the community members. This school served as a unique and inspiring model, which emphasised that localisation, contextualisation, community participation and ownership is important for any school to function effectively.

Source: *FGD with Community Members, 2019*

pride in contributing dowry for the school every year. In Kothavasal, the parents, who are farmers, doctors, carpenters, etc. come to the school as resource persons and take class on their area of expertise. In the school in Kurumbalur village, active role of Alumni was visible and they have indeed formed an association and contribute every year both for infrastructure development and organising various school related events. Youth Forum in the village of Sillakudi contribute a lot for the development of their local school and has formed a collective for the development of government schools. In Tamil Nadu, the teachers' forum

also plays a major role in contributing towards school development (see box 5.4 for the Forum A-3). The concept of Happy Classroom called 'Kalakala Vaguparai', was an initiative taken by an aided government school teacher of Madurai, Tamil Nadu. In this forum that was started in 2014, like-minded teachers come together to discuss their ideas on making their classrooms happy and joyful and at the same time, discuss their problems and share the strategies to deal with their problems. The forum also tries to highlight the creativity of teachers; further, meetings with teachers are organised in various districts. So far the forum had organised 3 workshops, 2 on Multiple Intelligence and 1 on drama training. Mother's Association is strong in the school in Vikramangalam village, Ariyalur.

One crucial collaboration that remained weak in both the states is the active collaboration with the officials and education department. Of course, there is linkage with the administrative officials, without which it is not possible for the schools, to receive the instruction of the government, pass the requirements of the schools to the government and receive the teaching learning materials and other funding support and grants from the government. However, the interaction between the schools and the educational officials had become quite mechanical. Even when visits are made by the officials, rather than having proper interaction to know how the school functions and to know the support requirements needed by the school, the visit is reduced to checking of official records and documents. Though the complete database about all the schools in their locality is available with the education departments at the block, district and state level, the functioning of the school is just known in statistical terms. For instance, during field visit, visit was also made to the education departments and the office of CEOs, BEOs, etc. When the research team sought their guidance on the identification of good performing schools in their locality, most of the officials highlighted good performing schools in terms of results. Beyond results they were not in a position to highlight key schools that are doing good work and in what way they were good. Again, when active role of key teachers were seen in all the schools, in most of the schools, equally present were those teachers, who were scared to take an initiative or those who wanted to maintain the status quo. Still there were others, who tried to destroy the activities and tarnish the image of the effective teachers. In spite of all these challenges, it was also noted that a teacher with strong determination and dedication, was in a position to overcome all odds, and bring about transformation, with the support of various networks, which varied from one place to the other.

MEASURES TOWARDS BUILDING SCHOOL REPUTATION

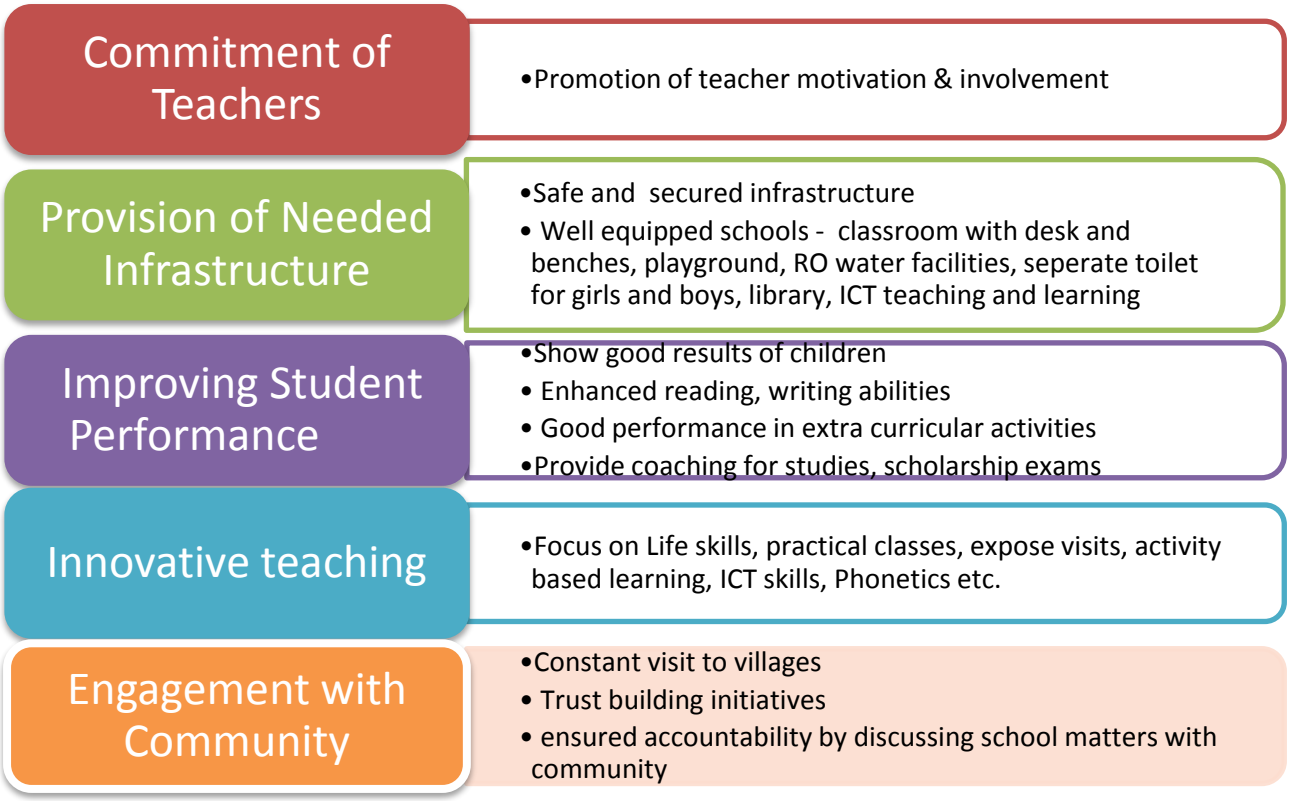
In the surveyed schools, it was highlighted by the teachers that the public opinion on government schools are not favourable and in fact suffers due to the low status accorded to government schools. As noted by Tilak (2017), a multi-pronged approach is needed to improve the image of the public schools. Such approach of teachers was visible in the surveyed schools and strong measures were taken by them in changing the opinion of people on government schools. The head teacher of the surveyed school in Barheta, Samastipur district of Bihar stated:

> "People have negative opinion about government schools and we want to change such opinion and thinking of the people. Government school is no less and we all are equipped, qualified and efficient"

The English teacher of PUMS, Kothavasal village of Perambalur, stated that there are certain basic things which are important for improving the reputation of government schools and he stated of practising those measures in improving the reputation. Firstly, it is important to know from the parents on their expectations from the school for the development of their children. Secondly, it is important to plan and execute measures towards meeting the expectation of the parents. Lastly, it is important to showcase parents on how they have met the expectations and show convincing evidence, so that the school cannot be overlooked by parents. Before four years, when the teacher joined this school, it was used as an open toilet and the campus was used as spots to have liquor at nights. Initially after joining the school, the teacher carried out a needs assessment survey in the entire village and discussed with the parents on their expectation and the reason for not sending their children to government schools. Some of the concerns highlighted include lack of English medium, lack of proper infrastructure, poor performance of students, etc. The teacher took it as a challenge, and within 2 to 3 months, focused on all these aspects. He made those drunkards of this area the brand ambassadors for the school and approached them to help him out in keeping the school campus clean. Later, he made the students organise the School Annual Day and trained the students to anchor the entire programme in English. He also showcased the ability of students through their performance in English and Tamil Skit, English and Tamil Speech, dance, drama, etc. MLAs and other big shots of the locality and the community members were invited for this event. When the audience became spell-bound with the performance of the children, the teacher questioned the parents, is there anything else, which prevents them from sending their children to government schools? From then onwards, the school has been

slowly on the path of progress. In both Bihar and Tamil Nadu, various strategies were adopted by the teachers in improving the reputation of the school.

Figure 5.1: Common Strategies used for Building School Reputation in Bihar and Tamil Nadu



Source: Prepared by the authors.

In Bihar, the schools were constantly engaged in being in touch with the community and their focus was on trust building initiatives. The key teachers believed that sincere discharge of duty is the essence, which will make the parents understand the value of the school. In Inderwa-1 of Samastipur, the teacher stated that genuine concern laid on the students will change the image of the school. In this school, considering the backward nature of this area and the kind of poverty stricken life led by people, the teachers focused on providing coaching classes for the children to clear scholarship exams and every year more than 40 students clear such examination. The success story of this school spread far and wide and every year, about 3000 students compete to get admission in this school. There was also a natural closure of about 4 to 5 private schools in the surrounding area, as they were not able to get sufficient enrolment. In one of the schools in Madurai, Tamil Nadu, the head teacher stated that teacher motivation and commitment along with the quality of teachers matters a lot in building the school reputation. Similar affirmations were also made by the teacher of the Girls' High school in Madurai, who stated that, if we are sincere to our work, our good work

will increase the goodwill of our school and no special measures are needed if we are committed to our work. The teacher of Nochikulam village, Ariyalur, stated that the perception of parents on government schools will change, if the public schools are accessed by the salaried employees, very important persons (VIPs), etc. Thus in some of the schools that were surveyed, the image is slowly changing and there are children of doctors, teachers, government employees, etc. who are studying in government schools and the name and fame of these schools, had made them to shift their children from private to public schools.

CONCLUSION

The chapter thus explored a set of best practices that has contributed towards enhancing the school development measures. The chapter had thrown light on various aspects such as the mission and vision of the school, measures taken towards infrastructure development, resource mobilisation, etc. The successful schools of Bihar seem to have made a lot of progress in terms of infrastructure development, on the other hand, the schools of Tamil Nadu, excelled not only on physical infrastructure, but also on learning infrastructure. The funding source for school development activities, majorly came from the community in Bihar, while in Tamil Nadu, it was from the NGOs and other civil society organisation. On the whole, it was noticed that the successful schools were able to build a strong network with various key stakeholders such as community, donors, parents, youth of the village, etc. by exhibiting a sincere commitment and dedication towards school.

CHAPTER 6

STUDENT DEVELOPMENT MEASURES

INTRODUCTION

Cohen (2006) observes that education should not be limited to intellectual achievement alone, but should also encompass the development of social, emotional and ethical competencies, which should be regarded as vital dimensions of educational aims. Similar views can also be found in the work of Dewey (1916), who states that pedagogic strategies are important, not only for academics, but also for social, emotional, and ethical domains of learning. However, contemporary schools in India are mostly conventional, having focus only on teaching the academic subjects and preparing students to memorise facts, face examination and get good grades and marks. Thus, the holistic development of children is compromised in meeting the short term goals of tests and examinations.

On the contrary, in the schools that were surveyed in Bihar and Tamil Nadu, it was noticed that the schools and teachers encouraged students to see beyond academic achievements and implemented measures towards student development. Some teachers tried fitting the process of learning to the interest of the students and their abilities. As reflected in the National Curriculum Framework 2005, some of the schools gave primacy to the experiences of children and promoted their voices and active participation through Bal Sansad, Meena Manch, etc. Some enhanced the performance of children through extra-curricular activities, while others emphasised on the promotion of active citizenship. Still others focused on the development of moral values and useful skills in children, both life skills and social skills so that students are in a position to handle various challenges of life at ease and make responsible decisions.

On the whole, it was observed that the effective public schools that were surveyed had created a positive school climate to bring about better student outcomes – academically, socially and individually. Aspects of positive school climate, as highlighted in many studies, viz., high quality teacher-student relationship, implementation of innovative measures, etc. (Wang & Degol, 2016; Thapa, Cohen, Guffey, & Higgins-D'Alessandro, 2013) were observed in the surveyed schools too. In this chapter, some of the strategies and measures

taken by the surveyed public schools that had contributed towards the holistic development of children have been highlighted.

INNOVATIVE TEACHING LEARNING PRACTICE

Many of the teachers surveyed in both Bihar and Tamil Nadu affirmed that innovative teaching-learning measures are important to stimulate the interest of the children towards learning and also to hold the attention of children. According to the teachers surveyed, such measures stimulate even the shy or introvert students in regular class activity to actively take part in group discussion, engage in enactment of skit/drama, participate in competition and expand their capabilities without much hesitation. Teachers thus validated that students enjoy learning with art forms such as drama, skit and street play, Information and Communication Technology (ICT) means, play-way methods, real-time life experiences, etc. and not the system of rote learning with rigid syllabus and bookish knowledge. Some of the innovative measures adopted by the surveyed schools are as follows:

Play-way Methods: Organising the learning experiences of children in play-way pattern, rather than formal pattern is one of the key recommendations made by the Kothari Commission on Education (GoI, 1966). In states such as Delhi, Karnataka and Tamil Nadu, play-way method is already promoted by the state government through their respective programmes such as Happiness curriculum, Nali Kali and Activity Based Learning (ABL). In the surveyed schools of both Bihar and Tamil Nadu, play-way methods were practised in various schools, in order to make the learning experience fun and joyful for the children. For instance, in MS Nandani, Samastipur district of Bihar, play-way method is followed even while taking attendance. Students while taking attendance, rather than stating that they are present, they are asked to state the state and its capital. Once, the children become familiar with the names of states and capital, new topics are picked up for attendance. Similarly, snake & ladder games are made on the floor of Class I and II and while playing the game, children easily learn the numbers too. In MS Madhuban, Bangaon of Sitamarhi district, counting and mathematics is taught through games and riddles. In Tamil Nadu, ABL was redesigned as Simplified Activity Based Learning (SABL) and was launched in 2012 and the performance of students was evaluated using continuous and comprehensive evaluation (CCE) framework. Though few teachers regarded SABL as not beneficial for an over-crowded classroom, majority of the teachers regarded it as a joyful method to improve learning. Beyond SABL, the teachers in the surveyed schools also came up with various gaming ideas to make learning

interesting for children. For instance, in PUPS, Kathalaimedu, Perambalur district of Tamil Nadu, ropes are tied to the ceiling of the classroom to make it as a swing. A child is made to sit on the rope and made to swing, and the children count the number of times the child goes to and fro. One of the teachers in Madurai district stated that children are made to form circle and are asked to jump forward or backward for true or false. The teacher stated, "Just by observing the games of children adopted by them for learning, I have introduced these methods for various lessons. It is actually the teachers who need creativity; children already have creativity and if we can let them free and observe, we can realise how they play and learn".

Use of Art Forms: In both Bihar and Tamil Nadu, art forms such as skit, drama, songs and dance is used as a measure to teach students, in some of the schools. In UMS Mordiwa, Samastipur district of Bihar, Natak is performed by the students and scripts for the same are prepared by the students. In Madurai district, one of the teachers of a government school, introduced the method of converting the lessons into plays and drama, based on the suggestion given by a child in classroom. This measure picked up momentum across Madurai district and PUPS, Othakadai of Madurai, one of the surveyed schools, was following this practice. Thus drama and theatre was used as a tool to teach children, wherein students prepare a skit or play from their lessons and perform in the class. Picking up interest on this art form, children were going through the lessons even before they were taught, so that they can suggest some interesting ideas to convert the lessons into skit.

Preparation of Daily Newspaper: Preparation of every day newspaper for the school, called Bal Patrika was an innovative measure that was introduced in two of the surveyed schools in Samastipur district of Bihar. This was an initiative taken by one of the teachers from UMS Mordiwa and later, the idea was supported by the head teacher of MS Nandani and this practice was introduced in this school too. With the help of teachers, a set of 4 to 5 students are made to prepare daily news related to school activities and the newsitems are handwritted by the children. This way, every child from class V to VIII, get an opportunity to prepare the newspaper for the school, which not only enriches the observation skill of students on the everyday happenings around their school, but also improves their vocabulary and handwriting. This exercise further motivates the students to go through the newspapers to get a glimpse of how news items are presented. Further, the children also learn to express the key content in a precise manner.

Table 6.1: Innovative Teaching Learning Practice adopted in Surveyed Schools	
Bihar	• Play-Way Methods (Maths through games) • Organisation of Assembly in different shapes (UMS Mordiwa, Samastipur) • Songs, Dance & Natak & scripts are prepared by students (UHS Mordiva, Samastipur) • School Newspaper by Students (UMS Mordiwa & MS Nandani, Samastipur)
Tamil Nadu	• Play-Way Methods o SABL, ALM & Mind Map is used o Swing made of rope in classroom and child made to swing – children count the number of times the child goes to and fro • Use of Art Forms – drama, skit (PUPS, Othakadai, Madurai) • Use of ICT o Skype Classes by NRIs and foreigners (PUMS, Idayathankudi, Ariyalur) o QR Code Lessons o Educational CDs o YouTube Videos o Smart classrooms • Learning by Doing o Cultivation from school garden (PUMS, Kothavasal, Perambalur) o Sale of vegetables produced & Account Maintenance (PUPS, Kathalaimedu, Perambalur) • Practical Exposure o Exposure visits to Industries, Post office, Bank (PUPS Othakadai, Madurai) o Exposure visits to field sites to know about soil, plants, trees, etc. (GHSS, Sillakudi, Perambalur) o Visit to various States (GHS, Vannivellampatti, Madurai)

***Source*:** Field Survey, 2018 & 2019.

Use of ICT: Use of Information and Communication Technology (ICT) has been the order of the day and it plays a major role in enhancing the learning of children, though it has its own consequences too. Though ICT usage has been integrated into the schools, not all schools are adept in using ICT. In Bihar, ICT usage has been quite less and it is found to be used in only 3 to 4 of the surveyed schools. On the other hand, ICT usage is quite wide in Tamil Nadu and different modes of ICT are used by the teachers to enhance the learning of children. The Tamil Nadu government has introduced the quick response (QR) code system for the lessons and activities related to the lessons and QR codes are used in about 6 to 8 schools that were surveyed. In PUPS Kathalaimedu of Perambalur district use of Tab is promoted by the head teacher to access the QR codes and do the activities. Another innovative initiative is the introduction of online class via Skype for the children in the PUMS of Idayathankudi, Ariyalur district. The English teacher of this school uploaded the videos of English conversation of her students in her YouTube channel. Flabbergasted by this initiative and the performance of children, a non-resident Indian (NRI) residing in the United States (US) approached the school teacher, which led to the setting up of the Skype class initiative. Every day, from 4 to 5 pm in the evening, the NRI takes class from the US on various subjects. In recent times, the classes are also taken by the foreigners, and the children of this school are easily able to understand the accent and follow the class. In addition, YouTube videos and

other relevant sites are shown to the students to improve the understanding of children. Of the total 15 schools surveyed in Tamil Nadu, more than 10 to 12 schools have procured various educational CDs and are using the CDs to teach English, Mathematics and other subjects. In particular, in PUMS, Kothavasal of Perambalur district, the teacher has procured more than 400 educational CDs for the benefit of children. In both Bihar and Tamil Nadu, use of smart boards was also found in some of the schools. The PUMS of Idayathankudi, Ariyalur has been made a Wi-Fi zone, where access to internet is made available for the common public too.

Learning by Doing: In some of the schools, the children are actually made to do certain things and in the process they learn how to do it. Project work is assigned to children and children come up with their own ideas based on their topic of interest. On the topics taken up, models are demonstrated by the students and this approach was mostly followed for science subjects. This approach was popular in both Bihar and Tamil Nadu. In PUMS, Kothavasal, children are taught to cultivate fruits and vegetables in the school, which is used for the mid-day meal (MDM). Such cultivation of vegetables by the students, has promoted the interest of children in agriculture and some of the students, during focussed group discussion (FGD) proudly stated that they would become farmers when they grow up. In PUPS, Kathalaimedu, the vegetables cultivated by the students are also sold in the village after the basic consumption for school purpose. This way, the children are able to apply mathematics in practical life and the money so collected is maintained by the students, which is later used by the students for purchase of stationery and soaps for the school.

Practical Exposure: Practical exposure gives the students the experience of stepping out and getting exposed to outside activities and thus gets acquainted with the practical scenario, which gives a better understanding to the students. Again, such exposure visits was implemented mostly in the schools of Tamil Nadu. In Bihar, the teachers stated of taking the students to Patna, the state capital. On the other hand, various types of practical exposure were given by the teachers of some of the schools. In PUPS Othakadai, Madurai district, the teacher stated of taking children to the nearby post office, railway station, banks and other industries located in their district, which is expected to have a long impression on children. To teach about pollution, children are taken to the riverside, and are asked to observe and write what they have seen. In GHS, Sillakudi, Perambalur, exposure visits were made to science exhibitions and planetariums so that children could learn about solar system. The

teacher highlighted that with practical exposure, it is easy for the students to remember the lessons taught. For instance, to teach a lesson on the types of soil or types of plants, children are practically taken to the fields and made to observe and feel, so that they are able to develop better understanding. In PUMS Kothavasal of Perambalur district, the children are also taken to local fairs on organic farming, plastic eradication, etc. which has given them a better exposure on various issues, which otherwise was difficult to grasp from text books as stated by the students during FGD. However, the teachers also stated of facing various challenges in adopting these measures. Rigid teachers oriented towards traditional methods, raise question on the risk factors involved in taking students for visits. Further, teacher also stated that such visit creates trouble for the teachers, as they are questioned by the educational officers for not being present in school, during unannounced inspections.

ACADEMIC ACHIEVEMENT

Academic achievement depends upon the level of acceptance shown by children and their level of understanding on the lessons taught in the classroom. In the surveyed schools, measures towards academic achievement focused on basic aspects like literacy, viz., reading, writing, numeracy, etc. Such aspects were promoted through measures such as reading-writing practice, coaching, peer-dialogue and discussion, practical activities, group work, presentation, etc. Thus, various tools and techniques and teaching learning strategies were used by the successful schools, to enhance the academic achievements and overall development of students.

Oliveira, et al., (2013) highlighted different instructional approaches that are practised in successful schools which included inquiry-based teaching, collaborative instruction, and differentiated instruction. Almost all these approaches were visible in the efforts of teachers of the surveyed schools. Unlike the traditional method of text-book study through lecture, inquiry-based approach allows students to pose their own questions and receive direction from the teacher (Oliveira, et al., 2013). This provided the freedom to students to engage in investigative talks, without the fear of being wrong or questioning the teachers. This practice was mostly found in Tamil Nadu in some of the schools such as PUMS, Kothavasal of Perambalur district, the PUMS of Idayathankudi, Ariyalur district and PUPS, Othakadai of Madurai district. On the other hand, collaborative instruction is a model, in which students are made to form small groups in which children are engaged in common task and learn by

mutual interaction (Oliveira & Sadler 2008). Again this method was quite widely used in Tamil Nadu, since Simplified Activity Based Learning (SABL) and Active Learning Methods (ALM) were followed in Tamil Nadu, in which child-centred pedagogy is promoted at the primary level and in this method the learning outcome is improved by following peer group learning. Children are formed into small groups and they engage in learning in their own pace by getting the help of teachers and the peers. Thus, as noted by Dagget & McNulty (2005) small learning communities, i.e. theme academies so created help students to focus on their academic interests, learning styles and aptitudes and they are able to learn better. In GHS, Vannivellampatti, Madurai peer group learning is promoted at the middle and high school level too, wherein the students are formed into different groups based on their pace of learning and performance in studies. Progress made by children is recorded in the CCE record. However, as highlighted by some teachers, this method had its own disadvantages. Though SABL is regarded as an effective method for promoting the learning of children, this method becomes difficult for classrooms with more strength. Moreover, as reported by teachers, slow learners suffer and are left behind in this method, as most of the children move up the learning ladder soon.

Table 6.2: Measures implemented in Surveyed Schools to enhance Academic Achievement

Bihar	• Regular homework • Attractive TLMs • Regular readings practice (MS Srirampur Aayodhya & MS Gopalpur, Samastipur; MS Mohanpur, Begusarai) • Reading-writing practice • Free Coaching for Competitive Exams (UHS Indarwa-1, Sitamarhi, MS Nandani, Samastipur)

Tamil Nadu	• Reading Practice, Writing & Grammar
	• Puzzles, Quiz and Games
	• Phonetics
	• Spoken English
	  ○ Tri-Verb Technique
	  ○ Socio-linguistic approach
	  ○ Picture Narration
	• Group Work/Project work
	• Group Formation for Learning based on learning pace & Maintenance of CCE record (GHS Vannivelampatti, Madurai)
	• Tab & QR code for lesson activities
	• Karka Maths Lab
	• Results of children (GGHS, Othakadai & GHS, Vannivelampatti, Madurai)

***Source*:** Field Survey, 2018 & 2019.

Apart from the above mentioned strategies, various measures were taken by the surveyed schools of both Bihar and Tamil Nadu to improve the academic performance of all students. Motivating students to read, write and speak in front of all and solving problems on the board

are few activities which was visible in most of the surveyed schools. In Bihar, the common measures for improving the academic performance included giving homework to students, providing regular reading and writing practice and free coaching for competitive exams. For instance, in Bihar, in the UHS Indarwa-1 of Sitamarhi district, emphasis is placed on academic performance by the head teacher, as he believes that academic achievement is the only way to take children out of poverty. Hence, every day, there are study-hours in the evening and most of the children studying in this school do not miss the study-hours from 6 pm to 10 pm. Those children residing in the school stay back, while other children who attend the study hours are free to enter and exit the school at any time. Thus as discussed in the previous chapters, in this school emphasis on academic performance of children had shown good academic results and there are many students who clear the entrance examinations of various scholarship programmes, which ensures the completion of higher education of the students. Such emphasis on competitive exams was quite popular in Bihar and students were encouraged to participate in scholarship exams, Sainik school entrance, National Talent Search (NTS), National Merit-cum Means Scholarship (NMMS), etc. Such measures were also adopted by other schools such as MS Bhutibazar and MS Sonbarsa of Sitamarhi district, and MS Nandani of Samastipur district. In MS Sri Rampur Aayodhya of Samastipur district, teachers have created a reading slot for the students. Every day after lunch break, the students participate in the reading session from 1 pm to 2 pm. During field visit, it was observed in this school that the students were able to read without fear or hesitation and their ability to comprehend and their hold on vocabulary was clearly visible. In MS Mohanpur of Begusarai district, library with huge collection of books and reading space was made available to the students.

On the other hand, in Tamil Nadu diverse measures were undertaken, which varied depending upon the interest shown by key teachers. In the PUPS, Pottapanaiyur School of Madurai district, various practices are followed to enhance the learning of children which includes, reading and writing practice (filling the missing words), quiz on basic mathematics, grammar, general knowledge, etc. Teachers of this school give a lot of puzzles like word game, vocabulary game etc. In PUMS, Meenakshi Nagar and GGHSS Othakadai of Madurai district, emphasis is made on the reading ability of children and the students are also made to listen to various speeches. In PUPS, Kathalaimedu, there are more than 500 books in the school library and the students are asked to complete reading at least one book per week and

as reported by the teachers and students of this school, on an average, every child reads about 6 books per month.

Learning English language is considered a basic necessity by many of the parents in Tamil Nadu and to meet the preference of the parents, some of the government schools in Tamil Nadu are simultaneously running English medium schools too, though proficiency of teachers in English language is a concern. On the contrary, in the surveyed schools in Tamil Nadu, most of the English teachers expressed that it is not necessary to have the medium of instruction in English, as a child's understanding can be enhanced in a better way only in mother tongue. However, they expressed that English can be taught as a second language. In schools such as PUMS Kothavasal of Perambalur and PUMS Idayathankudi of Ariyalur, English is taught effectively through various methods, such as Triple-verb technique, socio-linguistic approach and picture narration technique. Apart from these measures, phonetics method of English teaching has gained popularity in Tamil Nadu, and more than 6 to 8 schools across the surveyed districts was using this method to teach English. During field visit, it was noticed that the students were able to pronounce even a very tough word written on the board quite easily, using phonetics.

Mostly, ICT was the common tool used in Tamil Nadu to improve academic performance. Educational CDs related to various subjects and YouTube videos are shown to the students. During FGD, the children of class V stated that the QR code activities are quite interesting and just to answer the questions using Tab or mobile phone, they complete their lessons soon and get to the activities. Karka MathLab is a software installed in the schools such as PUPS Othakadai, Madurai, PUMS Kothavasal, Perambalur and PUMS, Nochikulam to teach mathematics. Children again find it interesting to solve mathematical problems in this software.

In Tamil Nadu, it was also noticed that emphasis placed on academic performance has pushed both teachers and students to such an extent, where focus was laid mostly on results, rather than what children learns in school. It was noted in common that wherever, there was schooling till primary or upper primary education, the focus of teachers was on providing quality learning to children. On the other hand, in schools that cater class I to XII, the focus is mostly on preparing the class X and class XII students, so that ranks can be obtained or high academic results can be shown. In such schools, teachers direct their energies and time in

teaching test-taking techniques to get 100 per cent results, rather than focusing on the long run goal of improving the quality of learning (Hanson, 2001).

EXTRACURRICULAR ACTIVITIES

Involving students in extra-curricular activities, besides studies and academics have been an integrated part of the education system. Involvement and participation in various activities that are of interest to the students is expected to contribute to the social and academic success of students and create a positive impact (Singh & Mishra, 2013; Wilson, 2009). However, there is a misconception among people that public schools do not offer such activities. Nevertheless, in the surveyed public schools, it was observed that students of all age groups were provided various opportunities to participate in extra-curricular activities and the focus is not just on normal curriculum and instructional methods. Wide opportunities were provided to students in the areas such as games, sports, yoga, drawing, art and craft, music, drama, poetry, participation in various cultural clubs and events etc. in both Bihar and Tamil Nadu.

In Bihar, students were engaged in activities such as garden maintenance, painting on the walls of schools, etc. apart from their participation in sports, cultural activities and other extracurricular activities. Emphasis on sports such as volleyball, kabadi, high jump, long jump, etc. is made in the MS Badalpura of Begusarai district and MS Sri Rampur Aayodhya of Samastipur district and MS Sonbarsa of Sitamarhi district. Yoga is also given the emphasis in MS Mohanpur, Begusarai and UMS Lagunia Suryakanth. Apart from that, children are also encouraged to participate in various extracurricular activities, so that they are able to develop interest in new areas and build their additional skills. Children are taken to educational tours and encouraged to participate in various competitions related to debates, elocution, poem reciting, painting, dance, etc. in the surveyed schools in Badalpura village of Begusarai, Sri Rampur Aayodhya, Gopalpur and Mordiwa village of Samastipur. Garden maintenance by children is promoted in MS Nandani and MS Malinagar of Samastipur. The children are also engaged in decorating the school walls with Madhubani painting and this was particularly the case in MS Mohanpur of Begusarai district.

In Tamil Nadu, in addition to sports, yoga and extracurricular activities, emphasis was made on other activities too, to stimulate the interest of students in exploring various life skills, building their communication skills and boosting their personality. Martial Arts such as

Karate, Judo, Taekwondo, etc. are taught in GGHSS, Othakadai, GHS Pottapanaiyur, GHS, Vannivelampatti of Madurai district, and the PUMS of Kothavasal, Perambalur and Idayathankudi, Ariyalur. Such skills, in addition to keeping a balance on the mental and physical health of children, also provide them the confidence to take care of their own safety.

Table 6.3: Extra-curricular Activities provided in the Surveyed Schools

Bihar	• Sports (volleyball, kabadi, high jump, long jump) • Cultural activities • Yoga • Participation in debates, poem reciting, elocution, painting, dance, singing, etc. • Garden maintenance • Art and Craft – Children do painting on school walls for Bihar Diwas
Tamil Nadu	• Sports – Kabadi, throw ball, long jump, etc. • Yoga • Martial Arts training – Karate, Judo, Taekwondo • Skating, Silambam, Drama, Parai Isai, dance, Karagattam, Bharathanatiyam, streetplay (PUPS, Othakadai, PUPS Pottapanaiyur, Madurai) • Origamy workshop • Participation in Annual Day & other competitions – debates, poem reciting, elocution, painting, dance, singing, etc. • Participation in Physics Club, English Club, Tamil Club (GHS Model School, Ariyalur) • Art and Craft • English Conversations & Other videos of children in YouTube Channels • Museum visit • Coin Exhibition

***Source*:** Field Survey, 2018 & 2019.

In Tamil Nadu, children are also encouraged to learn the local arts in order to revive its lost glory. Thus, local folk arts such as *parai, kolattam, karagattam, silambattam*, etc. are promoted in the schools such as PUPS Othakadai of Madurai, GHS Sillakudi of Perambalur district and PUMS Idayathankudi of Ariyalur district. The surveyed school in Kothavasal village also teaches skating, gymnastic, bharatanatyam, origami (paper craft) classes, etc. In PUPS Othakadai, street plays are taught to children by hiring expert from the Art school of Pudhucherry. In providing these activities, the key teachers, takes sponsorship from local resources to pay the fees for the experts and teachers. Tamil Club, English club, Eco Club, Physics Club, etc. is quite active in GHSS, Kurumbalur and Government Model School, Astinapuram of Perambalur and Ariyalur respectively. All these clubs were used by the students as a platform to build their skills or exhibit their talents in various genre such as acting, singing, debating, reciting, articulating, etc. In addition, these clubs also fostered team spirit among the students. Other interesting activities were also undertaken by some of the schools teachers using ICT. In PUPS Kathalaimedu and PUMS Idayathankudi, video recordings of various performances of the school children is made and posted in their

respective YouTube channels. In the surveyed school in Kathalaimedu, the recordings so made are related to the cooking demonstrations or a speech related to the subjects taught. Right from class I to V show active involvement in making their videos and even come up with their own ideas and suggestion to the teachers. The visit was made to this school in peak summer and on the day of visit, a class I student was giving a demonstration on how to make lemon juice and narrated its benefits. Similarly, there are video recordings of students on how to make 'Nilavembu Kudineer', which is a drink made from a medicinal herb that has high immune-enhancing properties. Such recordings are posted during rainy season, to demonstrate the usefulness of this drink in protecting from malaria, dengue, etc. In Idayathankudi, English conversations and Bhasha Sangam conversations of children are recorded and posted in YouTube channels. Such measures stimulate the interest of students and as reported by the students during FGD, they eagerly wait for the opportunity to create useful videos to suit the current relevance. In addition visit to science exhibition, museums, organising coin and stamp exhibitions in schools are also undertaken by the students in the schools of Idayathankudi and Vikramangalam village of Ariyalur district.

Thus as stated by the teachers, parents and students during interviews and FGDs, such extracurricular activities are beneficial to the students in immense ways. Children are able to show interest in learning new skills, take pride in exhibiting their talents, feel confident and empowered and also learn to work as a team.

HOLISTIC DEVELOPMENT OF CHILDREN

Though academic achievement is something that was focused upon in most of the schools, learning priorities that are meaningful for life was also emphasised in some of the schools, which focused on the social, emotional and ethical domains of learning as put forward by Dewey. Focus on all these aspects leads to holistic development of children, which can promote the skills, knowledge and dispositions, that provide the foundation for learning, well-being and effective participation in a democracy (Cohen, 2006). As noted by the Delors Commission Report, the very idea of learning is to change from mere acquisition of skills to development of competence, adaptability and capacity to interlink with people and environment (Delors, 1996). Though the mainstream schools, both public and private miss out on all these aspects, some schools have taken efforts in this direction, which is often side-lined or rather such measures are expected only from alternative schools, and not the public schools. However, in the surveyed public schools such measures were visible in the efforts of

some of the teachers, who were sensitive enough to the requirements of the students, their families and the society.

Livelihood/Vocational Skills: Gandhiji's Nai Talim, talks about imparting basic skills in children, so that they become self-reliant at a later stage. The recently formulated Samagra Shiksha Abhiyan also emphasises on integrating work-based activities with the teaching-learning processes, so that children are able to develop basic skills related to few vocation or at least are in a position to respect the dignity of labour attached with certain manual work. While, imparting of such skills was not found in the surveyed schools of Bihar, in Tamil Nadu, such training on certain basic skills were visible in Tamil Nadu. In PUPS Othakadai of Madurai district, the children were also imparted few ICT skills, apart from using ICT as a tool for learning. In this school, packages such as MS Office and Photoshop is taught to the children of classes I to Class V. During field visit, it was noticed that even a class II child was able to create attractive and creative arts in Photoshop and was able to insert his photo amidst flowers, or in the face of famous scientist, poet, musician, cricketer, etc. Some children had also created greeting cards with images of family, scenery, national flag, etc. for conveying wishes for various festivals. Children thus learnt to apply their creative minds and were able to come up with unique creations. As discussed earlier, in PUPS, Kathalaimedu and PUMS, Kothavasal of Perambalur, children are also taught to cultivate fruits and vegetables in the school garden. This initiative has created interest in the minds of children on horticulture and agriculture and they in fact expressed their pride in sharing about the farming techniques that they followed, during the FGDs. In PUPS Kathalaimedu, other skills such as phenyl making, soap making, candle making, etc. is taught to the children. Further, children are also made to maintain herbal garden in the school, and every child is aware of the name and the medicinal values of each plant maintained in the school. Through such activities the students learnt to appreciate the manual work involved in different tasks and they also learnt the procedures and the raw materials needed for producing a particular product. In addition, students also developed the team spirit and learnt to coordinate their own activities.

Socio-Emotional Skills (SES): Cohen (2001) argues that it is important to focus on the social and emotional literacy in schools and he defines it as the 'ability to decode others and ourselves and use this information to solve real social-emotional problems'. He further states that this literacy is quite essential to address various societal problems such as increased violence, conflict and environmental destruction. On similar line, Elias et.al. (2007)

highlights that when children are equipped with this skill, they are likely to make healthy, caring, ethical and responsible decisions, and avoid behaviours that leads to negative consequences such as interpersonal violence, substance abuse and bullying (p.70).

- *Measures towards SES:* Measures towards enhancing the socio-emotional skills were visible in the efforts of some of the schools in both Bihar and Tamil Nadu, where children were engaged in addressing the problems at the classroom, school and community level. For instance, the common problem that was noticed in Bihar was the drop-out of children from schools during agricultural season. While boys are taken for work along with the parents, girls of school going age are kept at home to take care of household chores. It was thus reported in the schools of Mordiwa, Lagunia Suryakanth and Nandani village of Samasipur that parents are constantly visited by the representatives of Bal Sansad and Meena Manch, who keep a track of the drop outs in the school, find out the reasons for drop out and try to address it by counselling the parents on the importance of education. In some of the surveyed schools, the teachers also reported of giving relaxation to students who migrate seasonally; but they are constantly pursued to resume studies. Similarly, early marriage of girls was also brought to light and the students reported that they were instrumental in preventing such marriages that was about to take place in their locality. In MS Sonbarsa, Sitamarhi, counselling sessions are held with parents on child marriage. In Tamil Nadu, the most common problem faced by the children is the alcoholic addiction of fathers, cases of suicide attempts, broken family system due to multiple marriages, and conflict that arises due to caste system. Such issues had created problems not only at the community level, but also at the school level too. For instance, children make fun of students with 2 fathers or mothers; they try attempting suicide even for silly reasons; children of even classes VII and VIII fall in love and wants to elope; and children also get into conflicts in the name of caste. Thus, what children see in the family and society was getting reflected in the classroom atmosphere as well. In some of the surveyed schools, teachers paid attention to addressing the various challenges faced by the students and the parents and thus students themselves were engaged in dealing with the risks and challenges. For instance, in GHSS Vikramangalam, communal conflicts are the constant problems faced, and every day during general assembly, principle of equality is emphasised and children organising the assembly are made to read related quotes during prayer session. In Idayathankudi, Ariyalur, it was stated that family problems affect the studies of children and hence the school is engaged in providing constant

counselling to the parents and children. In GHS Vannivellampatti of Madurai, the teachers reported that parents of this area were not giving importance to the education of children. Hence to deal with it, practice of '*Paadha Pooja*[3]*'* was started by the school, which had become popular in other schools too. Through this practice, children were made to express their gratitude to parents and a ceremony is organised every year in the school in this regard. Parents felt honoured and realised that it is their responsibility to take care of the education of their children. In PUPS, Pottapanaiyur, children are engaged in various campaigns such as suicide prevention, alcohol prohibition and eradication of plastic usage. Children also made frequent visits to the SC households, who were not sending their children to school on a regular basis. In this school, psychological treatment and counselling sessions are provided on a regular basis. Through various such measures, the students were made to deal with social and emotional issues so that they are able to handle various challenges of life.

Table 6.4: Measures towards enhancing the Holistic Development of Children in the Surveyed Schools

Bihar	• Socio-Emotional Skills through: o Awareness session with parents on Problems of early marriage & Migration (MS Sonbarsa & UHS Inderwa-2, Sitamarhi; MS Mordiva, Samastipur) o Learn values by maintaining honesty shops • Promotion of Active Citizenship o Bal Sansads (Child Parliament) o Meena Manch
Tamil Nadu	• Livelihood/Vocational Skills o ICT Skills ▪ MS Office ▪ Photoshop o Cultivation of vegetables/fruits o Maintenance of Herbal garden o Soap making o Candle making o Phenyl making • Socio-Emotional Skills o Campaign against alcoholism o Campaign related to Caste system and related Conflicts o Learn values by maintaining Honesty Shop • Promotion of Active Citizenship o Aids Awareness Campaign o Campaign on Pollution and Plastic eradication o Community Service

***Source*:** Field Survey, 2018 & 2019.

- *Character and Value Education*: Some of the surveyed schools in both Bihar and Tamil Nadu also focus on building the values and character of children and thus emphasis was made on values such as honesty, empathy, respect for people, good behaviour, etc. In

[3] Paadha Pooja is a ritual of thanks giving to a revered person, to express our gratitude, which is expressed by washing the feet of the revered person.

UMS Lagunia Suryakanth, Samastipur district of Bihar and PUMS Nochikulam, Ariyalur district of Tamil Nadu, honesty box is kept in the school to teach the principle of honesty to children. In this box, stationery and snack items are kept along with the rates. Children are allowed to open the box, take what they want and keep the money in the box for what they have purchased. The teachers reported that initially when this initiative was implemented in the school, lot of items got stolen from the box and children were taught the virtue of honesty through various stories, without admonishing them. Slowly, the children realised that it is wrong to steal and they picked up the virtue honesty. In MS Nagarpalika Bhavdepur of Sitamarhi, Bihar best student is selected every month on the basis of 100 percent attendance, cleanliness and good behaviour. The photograph with the name and class of the student is displayed on the notice board which encourages other students to maintain the school's discipline and decorum with proper behaviour. This way the school imbibes better behavior in students. The teacher of this school stated, 'classroom is the test-tube in which moral values are to be incubated. The students should be encouraged to discover for themselves the moral values by practicing them through appropriate learning situations, both inside and outside the classroom.

Promotion of Active Citizenship: Development of active citizenship and better citizens of tomorrow should be an integral part of the schooling system. Thus to promote active citizenship in the school, '*Service Learning'* is implemented in several schools, which is a pedagogic method that seeks to engage students in active civic participation through organised service experiences (Cohen, 2006). As noted by Cohen, service learning thus compels students to think about the skills and knowledge needed to actually improve life in the neighbourhood.

- *Bal Sansads:* In Bihar, Bal Sansad is a measure implemented by the state government that promotes active citizenship. The child parliament, called Bal Sansads (discussed in the previous chapter), has given the opportunity to students to improve their personality and also made them aware of the democratic processes that is there in the country. It also has facilitated the students in creating self-awareness and also in improving leadership qualities, team building by working in a group, and also the communication skills, apart from motivating the students to participate in their own development. Thus, Bal Sansads were strengthening the voice of the students, promoted the sense of ownership towards school, connected communities to the school and also created space for students to

practice democratic processes. From the discussion that was had with the children, it was very clear that proper electoral processes were followed right from self-nomination by candidates, canvassing and campaigning, electoral debates, voting, selection and oath taking. There is proper announcements of the nominees for various posts, and there were debating sessions, wherein the nominees expressed their vision for school and student development in the next one year, voting of candidates, declaration of results and even the oath taking ceremony was followed and the students were clearly able to express all the processes that were followed. Through Bal Sansads, the children were taking up issues related to school development, such as health and hygiene of children, cleanliness of classroom, issues of drop-out, etc. In Bihar, Bal Sansads were found to be very active in UMS Mordiwa, MS Gopalpur, MS Nandani of Samastipur and MS Nagarpalika School, Bhawdepur, Sitamarhi. In MS Mohanpur, Begusarai, similar roles of Ban Sansad was played by the Bal Shiksha Samiti, where children make their own decisions related to school development.

- *Meena Manch:* Meena Manch (discussed in previous chapter), a forum at the school level to promote the rights of girl child was found to be active in UMS Mordiwa and MS Nandani of Samastiour district, Bihar. In UMS Mordiwa, the teachers empowered the girls of this forum to advocate against early child marriage in their locality. This increased the awareness level of girls on the challenges faced by girls in their community and empowered them to take firm decisions. The girls used measures such as folk dances, folk songs and nukkad natak, to spread the message on the importance of girls education and problems of early marriage.
- In MS Suryakanth Lagunia, Samastipur, social service and community activities are used as measures, not only to take care of the needs of the society, but also in dealing with the distruptive behaviour of children and release their superfluous energies into positive work.
- In Tamil Nadu, interventions in this direction is taken by several schools, and the key teachers of various schools echoed that schools have a major role in developing rsponsible citizens of tomorrow. Children are thus made to engage in various activities related to community development. In GHS Sillakudi, Perambalur district, monthly twice, children are made to engage in community development activities such as desilting of ponds, digging of canals, etc. In this school, children make about 100-200 balls of palm seeds, and they go for bicycle ride to sow the palm seeds around their village. Though

palm is a state tree of Tamil Nadu, there has been degeneration of palm groves in recent times. Such seed-sowing drive by the students is a measure to protect the environment of their locality. The children of PUPS Othakadai, Madurai are engaged in streetplays and the performance is made by children on buring sensitive issues of their area.

CONCLUSION

This chapter thus identified a set of measures and strategies taken by various schools to strengthen the performance of students in schooling environment. Though measures discussed above are not available in every school, still unique measures were visible which was introduced to tackle local problems. Like any other government schools, the surveyed schools too faced various challenges. However, in spite of the tests and trials faced by the school, a teacher with firm commitment was able to bring about the changes that he/she visualised in contributing towards holistic development of children. When a school tries to meet the best interest of students, the same level of enthusiasm, motivation and rigour for the school and studies is shown by the students. Thus, in all the surveyed schools, one common scenario that was observed was that, when a teacher seems encouraging and supportive, high excellence is visible in the performance of children.

CHAPTER 7

MEASURES TOWARDS EQUITY CONCERNS

"Overcoming the silence about class differences is a way of ensuring that our schools and classrooms are more inclusive, enabling fuller and more democratic participation by people…..Conversations in our schools and classrooms must not be based solely on middle-class experiences and continue to exclude or pathologise the lived experiences of the rest of society"

- Shields (2002: 123)

INTRODUCTION

Way back in the 1966, the Kothari Commission on Education observed that the social objective of education is to equalise the opportunity and enable the backward or underprivileged classes and individuals to use education as a lever for the improvement of their conditions (Government of India, 1966). Similar emphasis on equitable education has been made in various policy documents, such as the National Education Policy (NEP) of 1968, NEP of 1986 and the recent NEP of 2020. The NEP of 1968 stressed the importance of equalisation of education and the need to address the issues of regional imbalances, education of girls, backward classes, tribal population and the handicapped (GoI, 1968). The NEP of 1986 too laid the roadmap to address the educational needs of SCs/STs, minorities, girls, backward sections and children with special needs (GoI, 1986). Sentiments, alike are echoed in NEP 2020 too, which states that no child should lose any opportunity to learn and excel, because of circumstances of birth or background and reaffirmed that the major goals would be to bridge the social category gap in terms of access, participation and learning outcomes (GoI, 2020). However, what has to be looked at is that the challenges faced in the 1960s and 1980s are different from the challenges of today. Even before two decades, major issue was the access of education to all. However, in this globalised era, the modern challenge is the differential access to schools that is determined by the paying ability of parents. The policy pronouncement thus has to be sensitive enough to the issue of equity and equality that is diluted with the segregation of schools. Vimala Ramachandran in her study on 'Equity and Quality in Education' reflects on how till the 1970s we heard success stories of good school or motivated teacher providing academic support and guidance to children coming from poor and marginalised background (Ramachandran, 2014). She has expressed her concern on how such scenario of yesteryears have become so rare in the current scenario. However, this study

argues that with the expansion of private schools, the proponents of private schools have taken systemic efforts to highlight the flaws of the public schools and spotlight how private schools are providing quality education. Even the proponents of government schools, highlight the challenges faced by government schools through magnifying glass, while side-lining the success stories or key interventions of public schools. Hence, it is not a coincidence that the issue of equity concerns still remain unaddressed, which is mainly due to the deliberate intention on various fronts, viz., lack of political will, inadequate financial allocation to address equity concern and the policy of promoting private players in education.

Government schools already are the schools of the masses, which aims at promoting equitable education, as there is the constitutional obligation to provide free and compulsory education to all. Thus access to government schools is income neutral (Pankaj & Poornima, 2019), which caters to every section irrespective of regional, caste, class and gender difference. However, as argued by Velaskar (1990), differential access in government and private schools has perpetuated the inequality in education and thus government schools have become the schools of the poor, as it is accessed mostly by the poor segments, especially in those states where there is high level of privatisation. Tilak (2017) argues that with the entry of private players, the seeds of inequality are sown at the entry level of education and it is mostly the socially and economically backward class and the marginalised that access government schools. Consequently, children are growing up without getting the opportunity to mix with children of other social groups (Ramachandran, 2014). Thus, by highlighting the present context in which government schools are functioning, this chapter throws light on how the issue of equity concern is addressed in the surveyed schools of Bihar and Tamil Nadu. It not only throws light on the status of access available to different social and economic groups, but also showcases the various measures taken by the effective schools to provide equality of educational opportunity to all, while at the same time ensuring the equity concerns.

STATUS OF EQUITABLE ACCESS

Equality of educational opportunity implies that educational services should be accessible to everyone irrespective of their caste, class, gender, background etc. However, as highlighted above, inequalities in opportunities for education is exacerbated by the growth of unregulated private providers of education, with wealth or economic status becoming the most important criterion to access quality education (Singh, 2014). On the other hand, though

government schools provide equality of educational opportunity to all and provide various incentives to support the educational needs of diverse group, they are not preferred by many, as the public perceptions are not favourable to government schools and they figure relatively low, both in status and recognition (Tilak, 2017). However, in the surveyed schools of both Bihar and Tamil Nadu, a gradual change in this trend could be noticed. Again, though it is mostly the children belonging to low socio-economic status (SES) were accessing these government schools, preference were also executed by the households of middle and high SES too, though their proportion is relatively low. In the surveyed schools, the socio-economic status of those accessing the government schools has been discussed as below.

Access of Children in terms of Religion, Caste and Gender

In the surveyed schools in both Bihar and Tamil Nadu, Hindus were in high proportion. In Bihar, while one school each in Begusarai and Samastipur was completely accessed by the Hindus, in Tamil Nadu, such scenario was found in 3, 1 and 4 schools of Ariyalur, Madurai and Perambalur respectively. In Bihar, children belong to minority religion was found to be accessing the government schools and the proportion of Muslim children was reported to be around 15 to 20 per cent in the schools of Barheta village of Samastipur and Bhawdepur and Bangaon village of Sitamarhi district. On the other hand, low proportion of the minorities was accessing the government schools in Begusarai. In Tamil Nadu, about 18 per cent of Muslim enrolment was reported in PUPS, Othakadai in Madurai district. On the whole, though low proportion of Muslim community were accessing the surveyed government schools in Tamil Nadu, their number was found to be more in Madurai, while in Ariyalur and Perambalur, their presence was found only in the schools of Astinapuram and Kurumbalur, respectively. Access of the minority children in the surveyed schools is low, mainly because of the preference of the parents, who prefer to enrol their children in Madarsas. On the other hand, presence of children belonging to Christianity was reported only in Tamil Nadu and not in Bihar. In Madurai, 4 out of the 5 schools surveyed reported of having Christian children, while only the school in Suthamalli village of Ariyalur had the presence of Christian children, while none were Christians in the surveyed schools of Perambalur district. In the surveyed school in Othakadai, Madurai, 5.88 per cent belong to other categories was also accessing government schools. On further probing, it came to notice that these children belonged to Sourashtra Community, who are basically engaged in weaving and they are people who basically migrated from Gujarat, before few centuries.

Table 7.1: Access of Children to the Surveyed Government Schools in terms of Religion, Caste and Gender (%)											
			Religion				Caste				Gender	
State	District	Name of School	Hindu	Muslim	Christian	Others	SC	ST	OBC	General	Boys	Girls
Bihar	Begusarai	MS Badarpura	100.00				42.54	17.32	8.03	32.11	49.72	50.28
		MS Matihani	98.13	1.87			43.63		10.30	46.07	46.63	53.37
		MS Mohanpur	98.29	1.71			21.65	7.63	46.11	24.61	50.78	49.22
	Samastipur	UMS Lagunia Suryakanth	98.92	1.08			47.44	8.09	44.47		40.97	59.03
		UMS Mordiwa	98.94	1.06			27.87		70.19	1.94	53.09	46.91
		MS Sri Rampur Aayodhya	100.00				54.05		41.90	4.05	46.67	53.33
		MS Gopalpur	91.06	8.94			42.77		49.79	7.45	47.45	52.55
		MS Nandani	91.65	8.35			26.64		57.46	15.90	47.71	52.29
		MS Barheta	81.32	18.68			30.62		57.72	11.66	44.38	55.62
		MS Malinagar	98.24	1.76			30.82		63.52	5.66	48.18	51.82
	Sitamarhi	MS Nagarpalika School, Bhawdepur	80.65	19.35			24.66		58.64	16.70	50.39	49.61
		MS Buthibazar	96.40	3.60			8.89		66.32	24.79	47.11	52.89
		UHS Indarwa-1	92.43	7.57			17.59		82.41		55.21	44.79
		MS Sonbarsa	98.95	1.05			43.51		29.92	26.57	48.54	51.46
		MS Madhuban, Bangaon	84.28	15.72			20.28	2.20	70.91	6.60	34.91	65.09
Tamil Nadu	Ariyalur	GHSS, J. Suthamalli	99.36		0.64		29.51	3.18	67.30		52.97	47.03
		GHSS, Vikramangalam	100.00				43.54	2.80	53.65		51.85	48.15
		GHSS (Model School), Asthinapuram	98.73	1.27			25.45	0.25	74.30		61.58	38.42
		PUMS, Idayathankudi	100.00				5.49	6.59	87.91		47.25	52.75
		PUMS, Puduchavadi	100.00				27.92	1.02	71.07		52.28	47.72
	Madurai	GHS, Vannivelampatti	100.00						99.44	0.56	53.37	46.63
		PUMS, Meenakshi Nagar	97.10	2.51	0.39		16.02		83.98		55.02	44.98
		PUPS, Pottapanaiyur	92.75	7.25			15.94		28.99	55.07	47.83	52.17
		PUPS, Othakadai	75.53	18.35	0.24	5.88	35.76	0.24	63.29	0.71	50.35	49.65
		GGHSS, Othakadai	99.73	0.20	0.07		23.22	0.07	76.31	0.40		100.00
	Perambalur	PUPS, Kathalaimedu	100.00						100.00		50.00	50.00
		PUMS, Kothavasal	100.00				57.04		42.96		49.63	50.37
		GHSS, Kurumbalur	96.83	3.17			35.29	3.75	60.96		47.01	52.99
		GHS, Sillakudi	100.00				37.82		62.18		46.63	53.37
		PUMS, Nochikulam	100.00				12.59		87.41		43.36	56.64

Source: Field Survey 2018-19.

In terms of caste-wise access, as discussed in most of the studies, it is mostly the children belonging to socially backward group who are accessing the government schools. In both Bihar and Tamil Nadu, more proportion of children belonging to other backward caste (OBC) were accessing the government schools, followed by children belonging to scheduled caste (SC), general caste (GC) and scheduled tribe (ST). However, the contrast can be noted in Bihar and Tamil Nadu. Since Bihar is a state in which privatisation of education has not sprang up to a large extent, more enrolment of children belonging to general category is visible in the surveyed government schools. In particular, the enrolment of children belonging to general category has been high in those states that have active community involvement such as Badapura, Matihani and Mohanpur villages of Begusarai district. In Bihar, children belonging to various social groups were accessing the government schools on a proportionate basis, which highlights that there is not much differentiation in access as reported in the literature. On the other hand, Tamil Nadu is a state with high level of privatisation of education, which has created a scenario, wherein enrolment in government schools has been going down in recent times. In Tamil Nadu, it was mostly the Other Backward Caste (OBC) children, who were accessing the government schools, the most. In Ariyalur and Perambalur district none of the children belonging to general category were accessing the government schools. However, in Madurai district, representation of children belonging to general category was visible. In Tamil Nadu, the findings in terms of access reveals the general picture, wherein only the marginalised are accessing the government schools. However, in both Bihar and Tamil Nadu, based on the interaction had with the teachers and parents, it can be stated that, these schools were accessed by the various social group out of choice and not due to financial limitation. Many parents also reported that though they had enrolled their children in private school earlier, they had shifted their children to the current school, after knowing about the popularity gained by these government schools. Thus some parents stated that, “when good quality education is provided free of cost in this school, why should we spend money in private school”?

In terms of gender-wise access, existing studies highlight that mostly the parents prefer to send their girl child to government schools and boys to the private school (Pankaj & Poornima, 2019). However, the same is not the case with the gender-wise enrolment in the surveyed schools. Gender-parity is visible in almost all the surveyed schools, except for the schools in the Bangaon village of Sitamarhi, Bihar and the Astinapuram village of Ariyalur, Tamil Nadu. There has been the exception of one all-girls school in Madurai. In MS

Madhuban, Bangaon, about 65 per cent of the girls are accessing the government school. On the other hand, in the Model government school of Astinapuram, since many parents are attracted with the structure, infrastructure and quality of the teachers in this school, which they think is in par with the private school, they started sending their boy child to this school and about 61.5 per cent of the boys are accessing this school. During the field visit it was observed that parents compete to get admission to these schools because of the credibility earned by the schools through its teachers, results, facilities, extra-curricular activities etc.

Access of Children based on Parental Background

From the existing literature, the general trend that can be observed is that it is mostly the parents who enjoy high status in terms of education, occupation and income send their children to private schools, while those in low status send their wards to government schools. More or less the same scenario is visible in the surveyed government schools, in which mostly parents with no or primary level of education, parents engaged as labourers or parents with low income are sending their children to government schools. However, in spite of the general trend, a mild difference was also noted in the surveyed schools.

In terms of educational status of parents, it can be noted from Table 7.2, that mostly parents with no education are sending their children to government schools, followed by those with primary level of education, secondary level of education and those with graduation and above. In villages such as Badarpura, Matihani and Bhuti Bazar, the parents are either with no education or primary level of education. However, at the same time, what is interesting to note is that those with graduation and post-graduation level of education are also sending their wards to the government schools. In about 11 schools of Bihar and 12 schools of Tamil Nadu, parents with graduation and above are sending their children to government schools, though such parents are low in number. Some of those parents also had professional degrees, viz., B.Ed, M.B.B.S, etc. in both Bihar and Tamil Nadu.

Occupation-wise, mostly it is those engaged as labourers or those engaged in agriculture send their children to government schools. At the same time, children of those parents who are self-employed, i.e. engaged in own petty business, or those in salaried jobs such as those working in government office, private organisations, etc. also prefer to send their children to government schools. In MS Mordiwa of Samastipur and PUPS and GHS of Othakadai, Madurai, parents who are doctors are also sending their wards to the surveyed schools.

Table 7.2: Parental Background of Children accessing the Surveyed Schools															
State	**District**	**Name of the School**	**Educational Status**				**Occupational Status**					**Income Status**			
			No Education	**Primary**	**Secondary and Higher Secondary**	**Graduation and post-Graduation**	**Salaried**	**Agriculture**	**Labourer**	**Self Employed**	**Others**	**less than 1 lakhs**	**1 lakh to 2.5 lakh**	**2.5 lakhs to 5 lakhs**	**More than 5 lakhs**
Bihar	Begusarai	MS Badarpura													
		MS Matihani													
		MS Mohanpur													
	Samastipur	MS Lagunia Suryakanth													
		MS Mordiva													
		MS Sri Rampur Aayodhya													
		MS Gopalpur													
		MS Nandani													
		MS Barheta													
		MS Malinagar													
	Sitamarhi	MS Municiple School, Bhavdevpur													
		Ms Buthibazar													
		MS Inderwa													
		MS Sonbarsa													
		MS Bangaum Uttam													
Tamil Nadu	Ariyalur	GHSS, J. Suthamalli													
		GHSS, Vikramangalam													
		GMHSS, Asthinapuram													
		PUMS, Idayathankudi													
		PUMS, Puduchavadi													
	Madurai	GHS, Vanivellampatti													
		PUMS, Meenakshi Nagar													
		PUPS, Pottapanaiyur													
		PUPS, Othakadai													
		GGHSS, Othakadai													
	Perambalur	PUPS, Kathalaimedu													
		PUMS, Kothavaasal													
		GHSS, Kurumbalur													
		GHS, Sillakudi													
		PUMS, Nochikulam													

Source: Field Survey 2018-2019.

Note:

High	Moderate	Low

Some of the teachers, those working in post-office as head-post woman, those working abroad as labourers, etc. have started sending their children to the surveyed schools, after knowing about the performance of the school.

Again, in terms of income status, mostly it is the parents with low income of less than one lakh per year, followed by those in the income bracket of 1 to 2.5 lakhs are sending their children to government schools. At the same time, those with more than 5 lakh income per year and those with 2.5 to 5 lakh annual income are also found to be sending their children to these schools, though their numbers are quite low. In Bihar this is mainly the case with the farmers, who are earning good income, followed by those in salaried jobs. In Tamil Nadu, this is mostly the case in Perambalur, followed by Ariyalur. In both these districts, some of these parents are working in gulf countries in salaried job or as labourers, who reported of earning good income. In Bihar, in the villages of Mordiwa, Gopalpur and Nandani of Samastipur and the villages of Bhavdepur, Inderwa and Bangaum Uttam of Sitamarhi, the schools reported that some of the children studying here come from better-off families. In Tamil Nadu, such scenario was reported in the schools of the villages of J.Suthamalli of Ariyalur, Othakadai of Madurai and Kathalaimedu and Sillakudi of Perambalur. In MS Kothavasal, it was reported by the teachers that every year, a father a student working in Dubai, send some money for the overall development of the school.

Thus the difference made by the surveyed schools is that to promote inclusive education in the real sense, the teachers focused on improving the quality of education by introducing various interventions. By seeing the tremendous achievement shown by the school, children belonging to general category, belonging to middle class, educated families, children from salaried jobs, business class and professional jobs, etc. also started sending their children to government school. However, this is not the case in all of the surveyed schools. The trend is slowly reversing seeing the performance of good performing schools. The surveyed schools tried to provide every service to every child and where difficulty is faced by some children, their special needs are addressed. Otherwise, equality of opportunity to all was implemented in the real sense, which is reflected in the words of a teacher surveyed in Mordiwa village, Samastipur who asked, “when the talent of children in both the government and private school children are the same, then why different kinds of education should be provided to them? Every opportunity should be made available to the government school children too”

MEASURES TOWARDS PROVISION OF EQUITABLE EDUCATION

Educational access or outcome of children should not be based on the socio-economic background of children and thus the educational quality that each and every child receives in this country should not depend upon the level of income or occupation of the parents. Thus, as stressed in the Constitution, equality of educational opportunity should be provided to all.

However, some students have different needs than others because of the disadvantage that they face in the social environment or because of their differential educational needs. Hence, it is important to focus on equitable education too, as fairness and social justice is met in delivering education. In the surveyed schools, it came to the notice that the needs of the marginalised sections are taken care by means of incentives and entitlements. Even if not for entitlements, the government school teachers were found to be very friendly with the parents and showed genuine concerns in addressing the social problems faced by children, be it in terms of finding solution to the problems of seasonal migration in Bihar or in terms of providing psychological support to parents because of the broken family system that exists or because of the alcoholic addiction of problems that was visible in Tamil Nadu. Thus, various measures were undertaken to address the equity concerns. Some of the measures implemented in the surveyed schools are as follows:

Provision of Educational Incentives: Nawani (2014) notes that the policy makers overrate the educational incentive schemes on the assumption that it increases enrolment and attendance. Through a research on incentive schemes in Maharashtra, she argued that such incentives offer temporary and partial relief and it should not be substituted for poor learning environment in schools (Nawani, 2014). Nevertheless, in the schools that were surveyed in Bihar and Tamil Nadu, it could be noted that such incentives for the students were considered as a supplementary measure in providing quality education to children. In addition to the educational incentives such as uniforms, textbooks, scholarships, mid-day meal, etc. provided by the government, schools also provided various incentives in meeting the educational aspirations of parents and students. While some of the incentives were provided to all the students, some were distributed to the minority communities, girl child, or children from SC/ST background, which included scholarships, provision of bicycle, etc.

Table 7.3: Educational Incentives offered in Bihar and Tamil Nadu		
	Incentives Provided by Government*	**Incentives Provided by School**
Bihar	• Text-Book Stationery items • Two set of Uniforms (I to VIII) • One pair of Shoes (VI to VIII) • Mid-Day Meal (MDM) • Bicycle for boys with more than 75% attendance in class VIII • Rs.500/year (I to V) • Rs.700/year (VI to VIII)	• Notebooks • Books for library (MS Mohanpur, Begusarai) • Smart Classroom (MS Sri Rampur, Aayodhya, Samastipur; MS Mohanpur, Begusarai) • Computers (UHS Indarwa-I, Sitamarhi; MS Mohanpur, Begusarai) • Identity Cards (MS Lagunia Suryakanth, Samastipur) • Hostel Facilities within school (UHS Indarwa-I, Sitamarhi) • Coaching for students of Class VIII to clear Merit-cum-Means scholarship to pursue higher education (MS Mohanpur, Begusarai, MS Sonbarsa & UHS Indarwa-I od Sitamarhi) • Support of Additional Teachers (MS Sri Rampur, Aayodhya, Samastipur) • Follow-up measures of ex-students enrolled for class IX in other schools (MS Sonbarsa, Sitamarhi)
Tamil Nadu	• Text-Book • Two sets of Uniform (I to VIII) • One Pair of Shoes (VI to VIII) • Slippers (I to V) • Mid-Day Meal (MDM) • Bus Pass (I to VIII) • Rs.500/year for the marginalised (III to V) • Rs.1000/year for the marginalised (VI to VIII)	• Notebooks • Books for library • Smart classrooms • Computers • School Belt, Tie, ID Card (PUPS, Othakadai Madurai, Kathalaimedu) • Sports Uniform – Track Suit (PUMS, Kothavasal) • White Uniform to be worn one day per week (PUPS, Kathalaimedu) • Additional Teachers to teach various skills • Coaching class to clear scholarships (GHS, Vannivelampatti, Madurai)

***Source:* * Bihar:** Education Department, Government of Bihar 2015-16;

Tamil Nadu: https://www.tn.gov.in/scheme/department_wise/28

The incentives provided by the government basically tried to cover the basic requirements of children and encourage parents to send their children to school, without feeling the burden of incurring educational expenditures. Some of the surveyed schools had also taken own initiative to provide additional incentives to the students for several reasons. Firstly, the teachers wanted to meet the requirements of students, which are not met by the government. Some of the teachers stated that the uniforms given by the government gets worn-out very soon and hence, they get sponsorship to meet such additional requirements. Secondly, the schools also wanted to give a feel to the poor parents that the education provided in government schools were on par with that of the private schools. Hence, belt, tie, identity cards, etc. were also given to the students, so that they can carry an elegant look, which is longed for by the parents. In Bihar, as discussed earlier, one of the schools had converted the school premise into hostels and facilitated stay arrangement

of children after school hours. Two to three of the schools in Sitamarhi and Madurai also provided coaching class to children so as to enable them to clear the National Merit-cum-Means scholarship (NMMS). Since most of the students come from poor background, the teachers feared that the children might discontinue education and hence, was instrumental in conducting such classes. In UHS Indarwa-I, every year more than 40 children of this school, clear the NMMS. In MS Sonbarsa, fearing that the children might discontinue education due to financial requirements of family or disinterest in studies, the teachers organise a follow-up class every month in their school, wherein the Class VIII pass out of the previous year is invited. Through such follow-up measures, teachers identify drop out students, identify the reasons and try to sort out the problems and provide counselling and remedial classes to enable them to pursue higher education. It could thus be noted that the concern of teachers was on the future of their students and provided the needed support, even after they got shifted to other schools for higher studies. Mostly, the argument given against the incentive scheme is that poor parents are not in a position to afford the educational expenditure and the incentives address the financial problems of poverty stricken families. However, this was mostly the case only in such schools where the incentive schemes were fulfilled as a formality. On the contrary, interview with parents and teachers reveal that when the parents are able to see the genuine efforts of school and the teachers, even the poorest of the poor want to be a part of the school development measures and provide the needed support in terms of cash, kind, service or manual labour. In Indarwa-I, it was observed that even a daily wage labourer wants to contribute his one week's earning of Rs.1000 for school development and even when denied by teachers, he compel the teachers to take the money. Similarly, in Kothavasal village, Perambalur a labourer working in Singapore has contributed Rs.50,000 per year and the reason stated by him is that,

> "Previously, an equivalent amount was paid as fees for my daughter in a private school, but my daughter was hardly able to read, write or speak. Due to her poor performance in studies, we shifted her to this government school. Now seeing the improvement in her studies, I want to express my gratification for this school".

Other Initiatives

In the surveyed schools, it can be observed that various other measures were also taken to provide equality of education to all. At the same time, when the needs of some of the children

could not be met, the school had taken extra measures to address the special needs of the poor, migrants, girl child, and other marginalized etc. thus trying to ensure equity in their interventions. Some of such measures are as follows:

- In MS Mordiwa and MS Sonbarsa the teachers stated that provision of quality food with nutritious diet in MDM acts as an incentive for the children to access school. In Mordiwa, as reported by the teachers, the attendance level of students is almost full on the Fridays, due to distribution of lunch in MDM;
- In MS Lagunia Suryakanth of Samastipur, in order to prevent drop-out rate, students are asked to enter and leave school, in a batch of two. It becomes the duty of the single child to track the participation of his/her partner and take measure to bring his/her partner to school. Such drive of this school has contributed in reducing the drop-out rate;
- In MS Mordiwa, Samastipur, students are engaged in going for door-to-door canvassing, rally in roads, and also perform nukkad natak, in order to get the socially and economically backward groups get enrolled in school. Thus as discussed earlier, the drop-out rate of the disadvantaged group is reduced with the help of the active Bal Sansads and Meena Manch;
- Again as discussed in detail in the previous chapter, Meena Manch plays an active role in addressing the educational needs of girl children. The young ambassadors of education help build awareness on issues related to education, health and nutrition, and water and sanitation at the community level and use this platform to address the grievances of girl children. In Mordiwa, the ambassadors of Meena Manch were instrumental in preventing early marriage of their classmates.
- Incorporating the lived experience so that the students from the diverse groups are able to get a mixed experience of different social groups is a very crucial attempt made by the key teacher of PUMS, Kothavasal of Perambalur district, Tamil Nadu. In his school, every month, a parent of the school is invited and asked to take class for the children on his area of expertise. For instance, parents specialised in carpentry are called upon to teach children about carpentry. Similarly, parents who are farmers, gardeners, doctors, post-man, etc. are also called upon, to deliver a lecture on their respective field. This way, every child feels unique and they learn to appreciate every type of work and the dignity

of labour involved in it. Thus as noted by Scheurich (1998), effective schools, that aims at the development of all children are highly collaborative and democratic and aims at empowering all participants including parents and further deeply value the racial culture of every child and never treat a student as a passive consumer of knowledge.

- In PUMS Kothavasal, the key teacher undertakes needs-based assessment around the village, in order to understand the expectations of parents from school and the differential needs that are to be addressed apart from tracking information on the challenges faced by them. Such assessment, helps the teacher to ensure equity and equality;
- In Kathalaimedu, the teacher of the surveyed village has kept a database of the child population in the entire village and the database is available right from new born to 14 years of age. Whenever, a child attains the school going age, the teacher visits the parents and asks the parents to send the child to his school. This measure again tries to ensure equality of opportunity;
- In schools such as PUMS Kothavasal and Kathalaimedu, students are made to clean the school and the toilet on a rotational basis. Since the head teacher himself cleans the toilet of the toilet every day, the children also do not feel humiliated in asking them to clean the toilet. Thus, every child is involved in maintaining school hygiene, rather than involving a particular group of children for this purpose.

CONCLUSION

The measures undertaken by the teachers of the surveyed schools, clearly reflects the model of effective school put forward by Edmonds. Edmonds (1979) argues that, schools can successfully teach the basic school skills to all children, as the schools are basically determined to serve all of their pupils without regard to family background. Such schools recognise the necessity of modifying curricular design, text selection, teaching strategy, etc. in response to differences in family background of students. In the surveyed schools, teachers who were sensitive to all these aspects were found which is discernible from the interventions discussed above.

On the whole, a reflection on the concerns raised by Shields would highlight how important it is for a school to focus on equity concerns. As argued by Shields (2004), it is important that the school curriculum is left open (formal, informal & hidden curriculum), so that it creates spaces

for all children to highlight and reflect on their lived experiences. Thus overcoming the silence about class differences is a way of ensuring that our schools and classrooms are more inclusive, enabling democratic participation by people. When the space in schools, becomes a space to understand the realities of more students, it creates a space for development of meaningful relationships.

CHAPTER 8

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

INTRODUCTION

Public schools are often criticised as being dysfunctional due to concerns such as lacking infrastructure, teacher inadequacy, teacher inefficiency, teacher absenteeism, etc. (Kremer & Muralidharan, 2007). However, the fact that there are many success stories of the good performing government schools at the ground level, is often missed out. In this regard, this study made an attempt to illuminate some of the indigenous and best practices undertaken by effective public schools. Thus by showcasing some of the interventions taken indigenous to address concerns of school development, student development and equity concerns, this study highlights how quality education is pursued in government schools, despite the various challenges faced by them. Through an in-depth study of about 30 government schools in Bihar and Tamil Nadu, this study throws light on positive case studies, and at the same time highlights the challenges faced by public schools. The hope is that the practices so adopted in the surveyed schools are of use in emulating the same in other states. The subsequent section presents the key findings of this study on the components such as school development, student development and equity concerns.

KEY FINDINGS

The key findings reveal that various measures were taken at the local level in addressing the key components discussed above. The measures so implemented varied from one state to another and even within the same state, the measures varied from one setting to the other, depending upon the local context and the needs of the children. The key teachers of these surveyed schools were constantly found to be taking initiative, who used various styles of leadership and different strategies to see the kind of change that they have visualised. The following findings thus emerged from the field:

School Development

- *Vision:* In almost all the surveyed schools, the key teacher was highly motivated, who did not need an external push to carry out their responsibilities and he/she had his/her own guiding vision and had the zeal to pursue hard towards attaining the same. There was however, change in the vision and mission statement of key teachers, but by and large, their focus was on providing quality education to children of the government schools;
- *Resource Mobilisation:* Since the financial allocation received from the government was not sufficient to meet the dreams and aspirations of the key teachers, the surveyed schools were actively engaged in mobilising the needed resources. In Bihar, while community members were the major source of contributing material, financial and other resources, in Tamil Nadu, the major resource mobilisation sources were the private organisations, industries, civil society organisations, foundations, alumni associations, individuals interested in public education, etc. While resource mobilisation from panchayats was reported in both the states in some schools, mobilisation of fund from MPLAD and MLALAD was reported in Tamil Nadu. The fund so mobilised from various sources were utilised for school development activities;
- *Infrastructure Development:* In almost all the schools that were visited in Bihar and Tamil Nadu, the infrastructure facilities were significantly remarkable and the schools had not only complied with the RTE norms, but had surpassed the minimum requirements set and made more achievements setting an example for other schools. Except for the norm of 'Pupil-Teacher ratio' and the inadequacy of classrooms, the surveyed schools had complied with most of the other infrastructure and teaching related norms. Extra measures such as, setting up of smart classrooms, installation of RO water plants, tiled bathrooms with sanitary items, etc. were also undertaken by the surveyed schools;
- *School Management:* Almost all the key teachers of the surveyed schools in both the state had strong management skills, who promptly coordinated various activities of the school, right from conducting orderly morning assemblies, ensuring discipline in the school, involving the students in school management, and prompt management of MDM in the school. Classroom hygiene, toilet maintenance, cleanliness of the students, provision of hygienic food and water, campus maintenance, etc. were the other activities that were

taken care. However, all these aspects were not visible in all the surveyed school; but still most of these aspects were present in about 15 to 20 schools;

- *Active Collaboration:* The surveyed schools in Bihar had the active involvement of the community members and the panchayats, who took active interest in the school related matters and they had the sense of ownership towards school. On the other hand, in Tamil Nadu, the key teachers had maintained active collaboration with various stakeholders viz., private organisations, civil society organisation, local individuals, etc. However, in some of the schools of Tamil Nadu, active community involvement was through various forums such as Alumni Association, Youth forum for strengthening schools, etc. Mostly, the school management committee was not functional practically; however, their involvement and the resolution passed by them, etc. appear in documents maintained by the school.
- *Reputation-Building:* The surveyed schools of both Bihar and Tamil Nadu, emphasised on the importance of earning the trust of the people and once if trust is built, it is easy to gain the confidence of the community. Thus, to gain the trust, focus was laid on providing quality education and enhancing the skills of students, which was a major attraction of the parents. In this direction, activities undertaken include demonstration of performance of children in Annual day, achievement in academics, sports, extra-curricular activities, improving English speaking ability of children, etc.

Student Development

- *Innovative Teaching Learning Methods:* In Bihar, mostly the traditional teaching practice was followed; however in some schools, play-way method, puzzles, games and riddles was used for making children perform basic arithmetic. One of the interesting initiatives taken in 2 of the schools of Bihar is the preparation of daily news item by the students for school related activities. This measure has contributed in enriching the observation skill of students on the everyday happenings around their school, apart from improving their vocabulary and handwriting. On the other hand, in Tamil Nadu, various teaching learning methods were used, which included the state-government initiative of Simplified Activity Based Learning, other play-way methods, use of games, art forms, etc. in converting the lesson plans into drama, skit, etc. In Tamil Nadu, different modes of ICT are used by the

teachers to enhance the learning levels of children. Some of the ICT initiative include, use of QR codes for lesson activities (implemented by state government), online class by NRI and foreigner via Skype, use of software such as MathLab for practising basic arithmetic, use of educational CDs, smartboards, etc. In Tamil Nadu students are taught to cultivate their own vegetables and fruits and in one of the schools they even sell the produce to the villagers. This serves as measure to apply arithmetic in daily life. In two of the surveyed schools in Tamil Nadu, children are taken to exposure visits to science exhibition, planetariums etc. Children are even taken to post-office, railway stations, banks and other industries which create a long term impression on children. However, it was also observed that some of the rigid teachers oriented towards traditional methods, raised questions on the usefulness of such methods.

- *Academic Achievements:* Schools in both the states focussed on the basic aspects like literacy, reading, writing, numeracy etc. Such aspects were promoted through measures such as reading-writing practice, coaching, peer-dialogue and discussion, practical activities, group work, presentation, etc. To promote English speaking, reading and writing abilities, socio-linguistic approach, narrative techniques and tri-verbs techniques were used in 2 of the schools in Tamil Nadu and phonetics in most of the schools in Tamil Nadu. In Bihar, regular homework, study hours and regular coaching was used to promote the academic achievement of children.
- *Extra-curricular Activities*: Wide opportunities were provided to students in the areas such as games, sports, yoga, drawing, art and craft, music, drama, poetry, participation in various cultural clubs and events etc. in both Bihar and Tamil Nadu.

  In Bihar, students were engaged in activities such as garden maintenance, painting on the walls of schools, etc. apart from their participation in sports, cultural activities and other extracurricular activities. In Tamil Nadu, in addition to sports, yoga and extracurricular activities, emphasis was made on other activities such as Martial Arts (Karate, Judo, Taekwondo), skating, gymnastic, local folk art such as *silambam, parai isai, karagattam, bharathanatyam*, etc. in order to revive its lost glory. Apart from that, English clubs, science club, Tamil club, Eco club, etc. is quite in 2 of the schools in Tamil Nadu, which is used as a platform to exhibit the talents of children.

- *Holistic Development of Children:* Training was provided on certain basic skills in Tamil Nadu, such as ICT skills (MS Office, Photoshop, etc.), vocational skills, socio-emotional skills, character and value education, etc. Cultivation of fruits and vegetables in the school garden, making of phenyl, soap, candles, paper craft, etc. is taught to the children. In Bihar, the socio-emotional skills of children were promoted through Meena Manch, Bal San Sad, etc. where children were engaged in solving the difficulties faced by their peer group and in Tamil Nadu, such skills promoted was helpful to deal with broken family system, alcoholic addiction of fathers, cases of suicide attempt, caste related conflicts, etc. Children were also trained to be active citizens, through community service and other activities such as campaign against plastic use and environmental protection, engaging children in desilting of ponds, etc. In one school each in Bihar and Tamil Nadu, children were maintaining the honesty shop, where stationeries and snacks are openly kept.

Equity Concerns

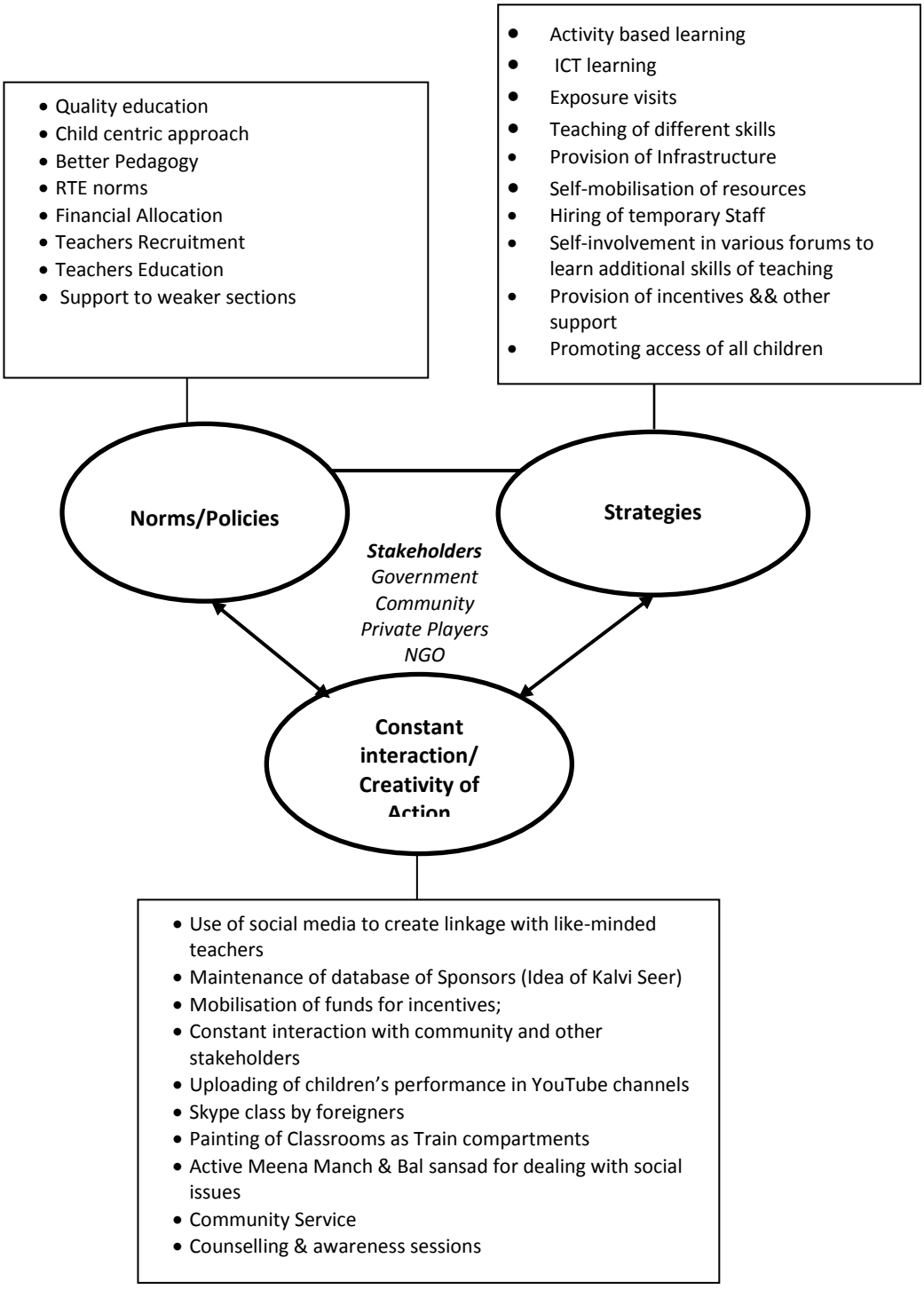
- Though equal and equitable access is provided in government schools, those who are accessing government schools were mostly the children belonging to low socio-economic status. However, the trend is gradually changing, were preference were also executed by the households of middle and high SES too in accessing government schools, though their proportion is relatively low.
- In both Bihar and Tamil Nadu, more proportion of children belonging to other backward caste (OBC) were accessing the government schools, followed by children belonging to scheduled caste (SC), general caste (GC) and scheduled tribe (ST).
- In Bihar, more of general category children were accessing government schools, while in Tamil Nadu, none of the children belonging to general category were accessing government schools in Ariyalur and Perambalur. This is mainly due to high and low privatisation of education in Tamil Nadu and Bihar, respectively.
- Some of the parents in both Bihar and Tamil Nadu, belonging to better socio-economic group, stated of sending their children to government schools, mainly out of choice and not due to financial limitation.
- Gender-parity is visible in almost all the surveyed schools, except for one school each in Bihar and Tamil Nadu.

- It was also noted that parents were competing to get admission in some of the government schools, which was possible because of the credibility earned by the schools through its teachers, results, facilities, infrastructure, extra-curricular activities etc.
- Mostly, the parents from low status in terms of education, occupation and income were sending their children to the government schools in both the states, which is the general trend. However, in spite of the general trend, a mild difference was also noted in the surveyed schools. By seeing the tremendous achievement shown by the schools, children belonging to general category, belonging to middle class, educated families, parents with salaried jobs, business class and professional jobs, etc. also started sending their children to government school.
- In the surveyed schools, it came to the notice that the needs of the marginalised sections are taken care by means of incentives and entitlements. Even if not for entitlements, the government school teachers were found to be very friendly with the parents and showed genuine concerns in addressing the social problems faced by children, be it in terms of finding solution to the problems of seasonal migration or education of girl child in Bihar or in terms of providing psychological support to parents because of the broken family system that exists or because of the alcoholic addiction of problems that was visible in Tamil Nadu.
- Through SSA, various incentives in the form of free books, uniforms, scholarships, MDM, etc. were provided by the government, which was promptly distributed in the surveyed schools. In addition, the teachers had also taken own initiative to provide additional incentives to the students such as free books for the library, notebooks, hostel facilities within school, free coaching facilities for students, etc.
- In order to promote the voice of every socio-economic group in the schools, parents belonging to different working group are invited to deliver lecture on their respective field such as farming, carpentry, medicine, etc. This way, every child feels unique and they learn to appreciate every type of work and the dignity of labour involved in it.
- In two of the surveyed schools in Tamil Nadu, students are made to clean the school and the toilet on a rotational basis. Thus, every child is involved in maintaining school hygiene, rather than involving a particular group of children for this purpose.

DISCUSSION

As discussed earlier, by taking guidance from the Institutional Theory of Leadership, put forward by Biggart and Hamilton, this study has taken three elements and thus argues that in an effective school that has the presence of an effective leader, the elements of Norms, Strategies and Constant Interaction or Creativity of Action is embedded in the actions of the leader(s) in improving the functioning of an institution or organisation.

Figure 8.1: Application of Institutional Theory of Leadership



Conversely, this study sets forth that if the elements of norms, strategies and constant interaction or creativity of action is embedded in the action of the leader, it will contribute towards improving the performance of any institution or school in our case. This section, through the analysis of field findings, discusses how effective leaders had integrated various elements discussed above in improving the performance of schools (see Figure 8.1).

In the schools that were surveyed, it was observed that there was an adherence to the educational policies, programmes, legislations and the related norms and principles that has been formulated by the central or state government from time to time, viz. National Education Policy of 1968, 1986 and 2020, Right to Education Act of 2009 or the Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan or the recently formulated Samagra Shiksha Abhiyan. The core aspect that has been reiterated in various policy documents right from independence till date is the 'provision of quality education for all'. Thus, it was noted in the field that the activities of every successful school were aligned with the policies and norms and in accordance to that strategies were evolved at the local level in imparting quality education to all. In implementing the strategies that were formulated, the effective leaders of the school, applied their creativity of action and constantly interacted with the various stakeholders such as government officials, community, parents, students, private players, civil society organisations, alumni etc. At the same time, despite the adherence of the practices to the policies and legislations, the effective leaders had also simultaneously evaluated the policies and programmes against the larger interest of the students or the society, based on their experience. Some of the reflections made by the surveyed teachers in this direction are as follows:

- *RTE Norms:* In the surveyed schools, high regard was expressed on the RTE Act of 2009 which is a measure towards providing free and compulsory education to all children from 6 to 14 years of age. Almost all the surveyed schools have tried to meet the RTE norms related to infrastructure and teaching and many schools had complied with the norms and had provided additional facilities too. At the same time, the teachers expressed their concerns on the clause related to 25 per cent reservation of economically weaker sections in private schools that is stipulated in the Act. The teachers regretted stating that such measure of the government undermines the government schools on one hand, and contradicts the very base of the Act, i.e. 'free and compulsory education to all'.

- *Teacher Recruitment:* Similarly, teachers also raised their concerns on the provisions in the policy documents related to teacher requirements and pupil-teacher ratio (PTR). Though adequate recruitment of teachers has been emphasised, such concern is not met in most of the schools, due to which the PTR is high in many schools and teachers are also given the pressure to handle multi-grade classrooms. The surveyed teachers emphasised that such concern of teachers should be addressed by filling the vacant positions of teachers;
- *Teacher Training:* Professional Development of teachers again is something that has been emphasised in various policy documents. However, as highlighted by the surveyed teachers, such training though is regularly organised by the government, mostly is held as a routine exercise, which is implemented just to show the record that such a requirement is complied with. Further, the teachers expressed that effective teachers bringing about change in the schools are invited as resource persons to provide the training to teachers. In this process, most of the time of resource persons gets lost in delivering the lecture in training sessions. Such initiative of the government makes even the teachers who are firmly grounded to lose touch with the reality, as their connection with children in schools is reduced, through these trainings, which are mostly carried out as a ritual. It was thus emphasised that resource persons should be changed frequently. Still other teachers pointed out that, though content for training is well designed and implemented at the state level, the essence and the rigour gets diluted once it reaches the district, Block Resource Coordinator (BRC) and Cluster Resource Person (CRC). It was also pointed out that most of the trainings are out-dated, that takes place again and again without much change and expressed that the government should take the feedback of the teachers on training and understand the actual requirements.
- *Financial Allocation:* Some teachers also brought to light the provisions related to financial responsibilities of the centre and the state government. Though it has been specified right from the Education Commission of 1964 to spend 6 per cent of the GDP on education, that is something which is far from reality even after 6 decades and the government has not crossed more than 3.3 per cent of the GDP for education. In the surveyed schools, most of the teachers had used various strategies to mobilise material and financial resources from various stakeholders to implement school development

measures. One popular initiative followed in Tamil Nadu was the idea of 'Kalvi Seer', wherein the community was encouraged to give various gifts to the school. This was implemented as a measure to increase the resource base and patronage. However, later when the Tamil Nadu government came with the order to implement the concept in every school, the teachers regretted stating that it had lost its voluntary spirit, after such rules were imposed by the government. Further, it was also seen as a move of the government to shed away their responsibilities and shift it to the teachers and people.

- *Child-Centred Approach*: Child centred approach again is something which has been emphasised in various policy documents, Yash Pal committee report on Learning without Burden, the NCF to the NEP 2020. However, it is not practised widely and only in recent times, change in this direction is visible in some of the states. In the surveyed state of Tamil Nadu, ABL is implemented right from 2007, and the SABL since 2012. However, approach towards ABL is varied depending upon the local context. For instance, in a surveyed school in Perambalur, the head teacher was appreciative of the method, which is effective to teach the children as per their pace. On the other hand, as reported by another teacher in Ariyalur, where the enrolment is quite high, the teacher is not able to follow ABL, as amongst the larger crowd, the slow learners are lagging behind. However, child centred approach is still followed in this school, by engaging students through dance, songs etc. Thus, based on the local requirements, the teachers were able to point out the local concerns and feed to the policy.

TOWARDS A MODEL FOR REPLICATION

The basic intention of this study is to illuminate the positive case studies of good performing government schools that serve as a model for replication. The key findings and the discussions made above illustrates that we can learn from their success stories. In most of the surveyed schools, there was the presence of an effective leader, be it the head teacher or other teacher in each school, who was instrumental in playing a transformative role. Irrespective of the style of leadership that they followed, they were able to generate the positive impact that they visualised. Further, presence of holistic approach was visible in their interventions, rather than piecemeal efforts. Though the findings reveal variation in the strategies of leadership from one setting to the other, still these are models with the scope for replication. Thus the patterns of interaction that

works out in India may not be the case for other countries because of different cultural setting. However, patterns of interaction followed in one school set up within the country, can work out in another school set up of the same country, despite the diversity. At the micro level, the pattern of interaction that exists in the successful schools in one state may hold true and applicable in the other schools of the same state.

Hence, the framework so developed in this study based on the secondary research and also revised based on the evidence seen at the ground level, can be used as a yardstick to revive government schools. Schools, in order to be effective or successful, the actions/strategies taken by every school should be in line with the guiding policies/legislations/principles or norms. Thus, some of the key elements of the Institutional Theory of Leadership have been reiterated here:

- Actions taken in a school should be guided by the policies/legislations/principles of norms. In this process, while adhering to the policies and norms, the intentions of the policy should be verified against the larger interest of the society;
- Strategies implemented in schools should emerge from the policies and norms and through strategies, school should influence the tasks or roles in school;
- Performance of school should be strengthened through creativity of action and constant interaction with stakeholders in implementing the strategies

CONCLUSION

Final remark which this study intends to make is that if government schools are to be made the schools of every one, that delivers quality education to all, then it will be possible only with the strong commitment of the government in terms of strong political will, substantial allocation of financial resources, recruitment of teachers, etc. to bring that into effect. Otherwise, rather than taking staunch measures to strengthen the system, only acceptance will be developed by the government, which will carry the belief system that government schools are schools of the marginalised which lacks in quality and hence the private intervention is needed to provide an alternative as seen in various policy documents. Thus, if genuine attempt is to be made in reviving government schools and strengthen the public education system, what is needed is the eye to look for the success stories that are already there in the ground level and convey the same

to BRCs and CRCs for replication. Though monitoring and evaluation of government schools are undertaken by the district and state officials, "it monitors what it wants to show in record to the higher authorities" and this exercise is undertaken by keeping the eyes and ears shut to interventions that exists in schools, but rather remains open to what they think they must show or highlight".

Good quality education, in essence, involves creating a system that enables children to learn to know, learn to do, learn to live with others and appreciate interdependence and diversity, and above all learn to "act with ever greater autonomy, judgment and personal responsibility" (Jacques Delors et al, 1996). While there is no question on what has been highlighted as the quality of education from the words of Delors Commission Report, the concern that this study would like to highlight is that, the system is so busy in monitoring what is given in paper by the policy and legislation and what is shown in paper by the educational officials in schools. In this process, so many beautiful and path-breaking interventions that are actually taking place in the real world, in the world of passionate teachers and children are missed out. The examples and case studies discussed in this study is spread across the entire country, in both the categories of States, the states that are identified as educationally better-off and the states identified as educationally backward. What is missing is the eye to look for the positive stories or the *Nai Taleem* (new approach) in Education, put forward by Gandhiji that is making the real change that is taking place at the ground level.

For instance, in the schools that are surveyed, in practice, there is active involvement of the community in contributing to the development of the school in the form of strong youth forums, or alumni association, which takes care of the needs of the school. There is active involvement of government school proponents, who contribute in their own small ways in improvising school performance. But such cases or instances of community involvement is not recorded officially, which are real measures, depending upon local setting. Rather, evaluation is made on whether SMC is constituted, whether meeting has taken place and whether resolution has been passed. Thus, in the eyes of the government or officials, such schools are schools without active community participation. In the surveyed schools, tools and techniques such as picture narration, triple verb technique, socio-linguistic approach, etc. are used to enhance the learning of children. But in the eyes of the evaluators, focus would be on the lacking charts or TLMs. In the surveyed

schools, when children with sparking eyes were able to demonstrate what they had learnt from the school, be it in terms of new folk art that they have learnt, the kind of livelihood skill that they have learnt or the ability or coping mechanism that they have developed to deal with the real life challenges or their enhanced ability in reading, writing or speaking skill. These aspects are not seen; rather, what is captured in such school is the results of children or the marks obtained, or the rating done by ASER or PISA test, which becomes the ground for determining the learning levels or the reason for 'detention' of children, as the system is not able to see what the child has learnt. Thus, this study concludes by highlighting the famous quote of a famous scientist.

"Everybody is a genius. But if you judge a fish by its ability to climb a tree, it will live its whole life believing that it is stupid."

- Albert Einstein

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APPENDICES

School Schedule: 2018

Schedule No:

Name of Respondent: _____, Mobile No: _____

School Name: _____

Classes available from Std: _____ to Std: _____

Village/Ward_____, Block/Municipality_____

District_____, State_____

1. School Profile

S. No	Particulars	Response		
1	School Type (Girls -1, Boys – 2, Co-Ed-3)			
2	Management Type (Education Department – 1, Tribal/Social Welfare Department – 2, Local Body – 3, Others – 4)			
3	Medium of Instruction (English – 1, Hindi – 2, Tamil – 3, Regional language – 4, Other- 5 ----------specify, In case of mix of language-6 ----------specify)			
4	Is school connected by all-weather roads (Yes – 1, No – 2)			
5	What all subjects are offered in the school? List it			
		Regular	**Contractual**	**Total**
6	Number of Sanctioned Teachers			
7	Number of Teachers Filled			
8	Number of Vacant Position			

2. Compliance of School with RTE Norms (Investigator's Observation)

S.No	Items		Actual Status	RTE Compliance (Tick where necessary)		
				< RTE Norm	**RTE Norm**	**> RTE Norm**
1.	Number of Teachers in Class I to V: < 60 children = 2 teachers 61 to 90 = 3 teachers 91 to 120 = 4 teachers 121 to 200 = 5 teachers	No. of Children				
		No. of Teacher				
		Ratio				

	> 150 children = 5 + 1 head teacher > 200 children = (1:40) + 1 head teacher					
	Number of Teachers in Class VI to VIII: PTR: 1:35	No. of Children				
		No. of Teacher				
		Ratio				
2.	**School Building & Facilities:**		**Yes/No**		**RTE Norm**	
i.	One Classroom for every teacher					
ii.	Office-cum-store-cum-Head teacher's room					
iii.	Barrier-free access					
iv.	Separate Toilet for Boys (functional too)					
v.	Separate Toilet for Girls (functional too)					
vi.	Safe & adequate drinking water for all children					
vii.	A kitchen to cook mid-day-meal					
viii.	Playground					
ix.	Boundary wall or fences for school building					
3.	No. of working days in a year for: class I to V: (200 as per norm)		**Actual Status**	**< RTE Norm**	**RTE Norm**	**> RTE Norm**
	Class VI to VIII: (220 as per norm)					
4.	No. of Instructional hours in a year for: Class I to V: 800 instructional hours as per norms					
	Class VI to VIII: 1000 instructional hours as per norms					
5.	No. of working hours per week for teachers (45 hours including preparation hours as per norm)					
6.	Whether teaching learning equipment available for each class? If yes, what is available:		**Yes/No**		**RTE Norm**	
		Class I				
		Class II				
		Class III				
		Class IV				
		Class V				
		Class VI				
		Class VII				
		Class VIII				
7.	Is there a library in the school? If yes what all are available					
		Newspaper				
		Magazines				
		Subject Books				
		Story Books				
8.	Availability of play material, games and sports equipment					

Additional Remarks on Infrastructure & Facilities in Schools Any other (e.g. Smart Classroom, Projector etc.)**:**

3. Information on Parental Background

1	What is the Educational Profile of the Parents (Rank in terms of frequency)	
	No Education	
	Primary level of Education	
	Secondary and Higher Secondary Level of Education	
	Graduation and post-Graduation	
2	What is the Occupational Profile of the Parents (Rank in terms of frequency)	
	Salaried	
	Agriculture	
	Labourer	
	Self Employed	
	Others	
3	What is the annual income level of parents? (Rank in terms of frequency)	
	less than 1 lakhs	
	1 lakh to 2.5 lakh	
	2.5 lakhs to 5 lakhs	
	More than 5 lakhs	
Additional Remarks on Parental Background:		

4. Enrolment & Drop out in the School

S.No.	**Particulars**	**Response**		
1	Total Enrolment in the Schools at various levels			
2	Classification of Students in terms of religion		**Boys**	**Girls**
		Hindu		
		Muslim		
		Christian		
		Sikh		
		Parsi		
		Jains		
		Others		
3	Enrolment of Students in terms of social background:		**Boys**	**Girls**
		SC		
		ST		
		OBC		
		Gen		
		Total		
4	Dropout rate in various classes:	In terms of caste	**Boys**	**Girls**
		SC		
		ST		
		OBC		
		Gen		
		Total		

Additional Remarks on Enrolment/Drop-out (e.g. how enrolment is increased? Reason for drop-out? What can be done to address issue of dropout, etc.)**:**

5. Various Types of Grants received by the School

S.No	Items	Amount	From where & For what purpose
1	**Grants**		
i.	Grant received from the Government		
ii.	Annual School Grant		
iii.	Maintenance Grant		
iv.	Other Grants ----------		
v.	Other Grants ----------		
2	**Sources of fund mobilised by the school**		
i.	Contribution from NGOs if any		
ii.	Contribution from Panchayats		
iii.	Contribution from CSR		
iv.	Other Sources----------		
v.	Other Sources----------		
vi.	Others Sources----------		
vii.	Others Sources----------		
viii.	Others Sources----------		
Additional Remarks on how funds are mobilized/utilization of grants:			

6. Community Participation in School Management Committees

S.No	Items	Response
1	Is there a School Management Committee in the School? (Yes – 1, No - 2)	
2	Number of SMC meetings held in a year (once in a year – 1, once in 6 months – 2, once in a quarter – 3, every month – 4, as & when the need arises – 5, no meeting held – 6, others – 7 (specify)	
3	Participation of parents in SMC meetings (Minimum participation – 1, moderate participation – 2, maximum participation – 3, others – 4 (specify)	

4	Achievements made by SMC in the past one year (e.g. preparation of school development plan, school infrastructure, monitoring of school, etc.)
Additional Remarks on the Role of Parents in School Management (Get information on participant details in previous SMC):	
Innovation brought about by the panchayats in School Management:	

7. Profile of Teachers and other staff

S.No	Name	Age	M/F	Religion	Caste	Highest Educational Qualification	Whether trained?	In-service training attended	Salary per month	Permanent/ Contractual	Total period of service till date (YY/MM)	Since when in this school	Subjects taught	Classes taught
1. School Teachers														
i.														
ii.														
iii.														
iv.														
v.														
vi.														
vii.														
viii.														
ix.														
x.														
xi.														
xii.														
xiii.														
xiv.														
xv.														
xvi.														
xvii.														
xviii.														
xix.														
xx.														
2. Non-Teaching Staff														
i.													*********	*********
ii.													*********	*********
iii.													*********	*********
iv.													*********	*********
v.													*********	*********

8. Kind of Training attended by Teachers in the last two years

S.No	Name			
		Duration of Training	On What	By whom
1.				
2.				
3.				
4.				
5.				
6.				
7.				
8.				
9.				
10.				
Remarks on Training:				

9. Achievements/Challenges of the School on various aspects

1	What are the best practices adopted by the school administration:
i.	In Improving School Infrastructure:
ii.	In Increasing Enrolment (whether all children in the locality are enrolled):
iii.	Adoption of Innovative Teaching and Learning Methods
iv.	Improving Learning outcome of Children
v.	Meeting the Needs/Preference of Children/Parents
vi.	Others:

Overall Observation/Remarks

Teachers Schedule: 2018

Schedule No:

School Type ☐ (Education Department-1, Tribal Welfare/Social Welfare – 2, Local Body School – 3, Others – 4 (specify) _____)

School: _____

Village/Ward: _____, **Block/Municipality:** _____

District: _____, **State:** _____

Mobile No: _____, **Email:** _____

1. Basic Information

S. No	Particulars	Response
1	Name of the Teacher	
2	Gender (M-1, F-2)	
3	Age	
4	Caste (SC-1, ST-2, OBC-3, General-4, Others-5 (specify) _____)	
5	Religion (Hindu-1, Muslim-2, Christian-3, Sikh-4, Parsi-5, Jain-6, Others-7(specify_____)	
6	Marital Status (Married-1, unmarried-2, others – 3 (specify) _____)	
7	What is your Designation? (BT-1, TGT-2, PGT-3, Others-4 (specify)_____	
8	What is your educational qualification? (graduate-1, post graduate-2, MPhil-3, PhD-4, any other – 9_____ (specify)	
9	What is your nature of appointment? (Permanent-1, Contractual – 2)	
10	What is your total year of experience in teaching?	
11	Teaching experience in this school?	
12	What all subjects do you teach?	
13	What all classes do you teach?	

14	What is the number of hours devoted for teaching in a week?	
15	What is the total number of hours devoted for administrative work in a week?	

2. Educational Vision and Role Played by the Teacher

S. No.	Particulars			
1	What motivated you to become a teacher and work for school development or child development?			
2	How do you visualise your school to be?			
3	How did you mobilise the needed resources to meet your vision Financial Resource: Human Resource: Physical Infrastructure: Technology/IT:			
4	Have you been awarded? If yes, what all awards have you received and for what purpose?			
	Name of the Award	**Year**	**Given by:**	**Recognising what:**
A				
B				
C				

4. Training Attended in the last 2 Years

S.No	Details of the Training Attended	In service Training			
		Duration of Training#	Who organized the training$	Opinion on the usefulness of the training*	Application of the Training in teaching learning practice School@
1.					
2.					
3.					
4.					
5.					
6.					

# 1 day – 1, 2 day– 2, 1 week – 3, 2 week – 4, 1 month – 5, 1 year – 6, 2 years – 7, others – 8 (specify)_____)
$ state government – 1, central government – 2, school – 3, DIET – 4, NGOs – 5, Private – 6, others – 7 (specify)_____)
* very bad – 1, bad – 2, Ok – 3, Good – 4, Very Good – 5
@ Never – 1, sometimes – 2, always – 3

In what way the training was helpful?

What kind of change is needed in teacher training?

3. Interventions/Activities/Strategies undertaken by the Teacher

S.No	Particulars	Response
1	What kind of innovative work/activities have you taken up for the following:	
	Strategies undertaken for various activities	**Challenges Faced**
i.	**School Infrastructure Development:**	
ii.	**Student Development:** (reading cell, improving subject knowledge, extra-curricular activities: music, dance, martial arts, arts & crafts, swimming, skating, etc.)	
iii.	**Increasing Enrolment**	

iv.	**Dealing with Drop-out/Out of School Children**	
v.	**Innovative Teaching Methods adopted** (Study tours, debate & quizzes, active classroom discussions, project and chart work, creative learning method, Use of ICT, practical exposure, story-telling)	
vi.	**Lively Learning Styles introduced**	
vii.	**Improving School Reputation**	
viii.	**Social Interventions** (Attracting parents with high-middle-low profile to this school, addressing challenges faced by children)	
ix.	**Promoting Community Involvement**	
x.	**Networking with other Stakeholders**	
Additional Remarks/Observations:		

4. General Remarks

S. No	Particulars	Response
1	Why Parents are not willing to send their children to government school?	
2	How this scenario can be changed	
3	What measures have you undertaken to change perception of parents about government school?	
4	Do you think that the measures that you have undertaken will continue after you leave the school? What have you done to ensure its sustainability?	
5	What kind of support is needed from the government in reviving government schools?	
General remarks/Observations:		

Student Schedule: 2018

FGD Pointers

Schedule No:

School: _____

Village/Ward: _____, **Block/Municipality:** _____

District: _____, **State:** _____

1. Basic Information

S.No.	Particulars	Responses	
1	Total Number of Children		
2	Number of	**Girls**	**Boys**
3	Class		

2. Student Satisfaction

S.No.	Particulars
1	What do you like about this school? (Teachers, Infrastructure, School Environment, Friends, extra-curricular activities, teaching methods, learning practice)
2	What innovative measures have been adopted in this school?
	i.
	ii.
	iii.
	iv.
	v.
	vi.
	vii.
	viii.
	ix.
	x.

3	What do you like about these initiatives adopted in your school?
	i.
	ii.
	iii.
	iv.
	v.
	vi.
	vii.
	viii.
	ix.
	x.

Additional Notes:

Parent Schedule: 2018

FGD Pointers

Schedule No:

Village/Ward: _____, **Block/Municipality:** _____

District: _____, **State:** _____

1. Basic Information

S.No.	Particulars	Responses	
1	Total Number of Parents		
2	Number of	**Female**	**Male**

2. Parental Perception on Initiatives and Interventions

S.No.	Particulars
1	Has the school been preforming well since the beginning? If no, who has been the change maker?
2	What all initiatives were taken by the teachers/others to improve the school? (Teaching methods, teaching and learning aid, teachers, innovative teaching styles, infrastructure, extra-curricular activities etc.)
3	What change has these initiatives made to the children or school as a whole?
4	What difference do you see in the performance of children in this school in comparison to others?
Additional Notes:	

Government Official Schedule: 2018

Schedule No:

District: _____, State: _____

1. Basic Information

S.No.	Particulars	Responses
1	Name of the Respondent	
2	Gender	
3	Designation	
4	Department	

2. Governmental Measures to Strengthen Public Schools

S.No.	Particulars
1	What all measures have been taken by the government to strengthen the public schools?
	i. Infrastructure Development
	ii. Curriculum Development
	iii. Teacher Recruitment
	iv. Educational Quality
	v. Attracting Parents/Children to Government Schools
	vi. Others
	vii. Others
2	What are the challenges faced in strengthening government schools?

Additional Remarks: