

An Analytic Study of the Uneconomic Lower Primary Schools

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Abstract - A few studies have been conducted on area of uneconomic schools. And most of these studies are related with fertility decline in the state. The study intended to find out physical conditions of uneconomic lower primary schools, to identify the factors causing the schools uneconomic and to provide suggestions for improving the conditions of uneconomic lower primary schools. In the descriptive study two questionnaires and one interview schedule were used for collecting information. One questionnaire is used for collecting information from parents and another one is used for teachers. And the interview schedule used for interviewing Head Masters. The present study used normative survey method and sample for it was selected using random sampling method. The investigator tried to analyse the conditions of thirty schools by taking a sample of thirty Headmasters, fifty teachers and 100 parents of sixteen Educational Sub Districts of Malappuram District. The physical conditions of the uneconomic schools were satisfactory in most of the schools.

INTRODUCTION

The educational statistics published by the Directorate of Public Instruction (DPI) shows that there has been a rapid decline of enrolment in different types of schools, particularly Government and private aided schools. At the same time it was observed that, when the enrolments in Government and private aided schools have began dropping down, the number of private unaided English medium schools have been spurting up even in the remote villages.

A school is labeled as uneconomic if the minimum strength of students in lower primary, upper primary, and high schools per standard is 25 or a total of 100 students per school. The number of uneconomic schools in Kerala has gone up from 2500 to 3661 in a span of two years (2007-2009). Among the 3661 schools, 1839 are Government schools and 1822 are private aided schools. Based on Kerala Education Rules norms, in the total number of uneconomic schools in Kerala 49.91 percent are in Government sector and 50.09 percent are in Private sector. When we look into details, Lower primary schools are more in number than Upper Primary Schools and high schools which are declared as uneconomic. Lower primary schools account for 79.99 percent of the uneconomic schools; where as 1.93 percent is accounted by Upper Primary Schools and 4.08 percent by High Schools.

The investigator made a thorough review of the conditions to be satisfied by a lower primary school in Kerala to get approval. When empirical works in this area were analysed, it was found that only a few studies are conducted in this area.

Method

Participants

The investigator selected the sample through Stratified Random Sampling method. Thirty schools were selected from seventy six uneconomic schools giving due representation to Government and aided and from all the sixteen educational sub districts. Out of the thirty schools twenty were government uneconomic lower primary schools and the remaining ten were aided uneconomic lower primary schools. The data was collected from 30 Head Masters/Mistresses and 50 teachers of the selected schools. Using convenient sampling method, 100 parents of nearby houses were also included for the study.

Instrument

For the present study the investigator used interview schedule to collect data from school head masters. The schedule contains 46 items and the investigator interviewed the Head Master/Mistress within the frame work of these items. To collect information from teachers and parents the investigator used questionnaires as a tool. The questionnaires are closed ended type and the items are to be responded as satisfied or unsatisfied. The two questionnaires contained 20 and 31 items respectively.

Procedure

After the selection of required sample the investigator consulted the headmasters of the randomly selected schools and sought permission for collecting data. Time schedule for the interview was fixed at the convenience of the Head Masters/Mistresses. Then teachers of these schools were contacted and the questionnaire was distributed. When the teachers completed their responses the questionnaires were collected back. Houses near by the schools were visited by the investigator and data was

collected from the parents, either mother or father using the questionnaire prepared for parents. Then using simple proportions the collected data were described.

Results

1. Information collected from Head Masters or Mistresses.

A consolidated list of data collected from Head Masters/Mistresses of various schools regarding details about formation, number of teachers, number of students, physical condition of building, staffroom, kanjippura, classroom, transport facilities, mid -day meal, availability of pure water, details about other lower primary schools within two kilometers, toilet, urinal, understanding among staff, co-operation of common people, parents care on studies, availability of time for teaching for Head Masters/Mistresses etc are presented as table 1.

TABLE 1. *Details of information collected from Head Masters/Mistress*

Dimensions		Aided	Govt	Total
Number of Teachers	Permanent	42	88	130
	Temporary	--	8	8
Number of Students	Boys	328	749	1077
	Girls	311	694	1005
Building	Rented	--	7	7
	Owned	10	13	23
Physical condition of building	Satisfactory	6	15	21
	Not Satisfactory	4	5	9
Classroom	Present	10	15	25
	Absent	--	5	5
Condition of classroom	Satisfactory	5	16	21
	Unsatisfactory	--	3	3
Staffroom	Present	--	--	--
	Absent	10	20	30
Bench, desk etc	Satisfactory	10	17	27
	Unsatisfactory	--	3	3
Provision of mid day meal		10	20	30
Pure water	Available	8	16	24
	Not Available	2	4	6
Transport facility	Available	10	17	27
	Not Available	--	3	3
Toilet (absent)		8	7	15
Urinal (absent)		5	12	17
Co operation of common people		10	20	30
No of nearby schools containing lower primary education		117		

2. Information collected from teachers.

To supplement the data collected from Head Masters/Mistresses and to get more details about uneconomic schools, information were collected from 50 teachers of the respective schools using a questionnaire. The fifty teachers include fourteen from aided schools and thirty six from Government schools. The dimensions included are physical condition of building, overall condition of class room, black board, benches, desks, availability of resource material transport facility, library, salary, co -operation of co workers, parents teachers association, atmosphere of school, relation with students, availability of primary facilities, Leadership style of Head of the institution etc. The details of information collected from teachers are consolidated in Table 2.

TABLE 2 *Details of information collected from teachers*

Dimension	Satisfied/unsatisfied	Govt	aided	Total
Physical condition of building	satisfied	21	9	30
	Unsatisfied	15	5	20
Overall condition of class room	satisfied	7	4	11
	Unsatisfied	29	10	39
Black board	satisfied	22	11	33
	Unsatisfied	14	3	17
Condition of benches, desks etc	satisfied	25	7	32

	Unsatisfied	11	7	18
Availability of books, globe etc	satisfied	16	6	22
	Unsatisfied	20	8	28
Library	satisfied	21	8	29
	Unsatisfied	15	6	21
Atmosphere of the school	satisfied	30	11	41
	Unsatisfied	6	3	9
Relation with students	satisfied	34	14	48
	Unsatisfied	2	--	2
Availability of primary facilities	satisfied	8	4	12
	Unsatisfied	28	10	38
Transport facilities	satisfied	27	13	40
	Unsatisfied	9	1	10
Parents Teacher Association	satisfied	29	10	39
	Unsatisfied	7	4	11
Co-operation of co workers	satisfied	36	14	50
	Unsatisfied	--	--	--
Leader ship capacity of head of institution	satisfied	30		20
	Unsatisfied	--		--

3. Information collected from parents

Here an analysis of the reasons of sending or not sending their children to specific schools (uneconomic or unaided) was done. The necessary data was collected from 100 parents residing nearby the selected uneconomic schools using a questionnaire. Details of information collected from parents are given in Table 3.

TABLE 3 Details of data collected from Parents

Dimensions	Aided school (Total 22)	Government school (Total 27)	Unaided school (Total 51)
Transport facilities	11	10	50
Quality of instruction	8	6	51
Student teacher relation	22	20	47
Medium of instruction	18 (preferred regional language)	21 (preferred regional language)	51 (preferred English language)
Primary facilities	--	--	51
Expense of education	22	27	51
Previous experience	16	11	42
Facility for religious studies	17	--	38
School environment	3	6	51
Result percentage	8	8	51
Government /NGO's help	22	20	--
Mid-day meal	21	19	--
Free education	19	21	--

Conclusion

Majority of the buildings are very old as they are established even before independence and their physical conditions are satisfactory. As most of the schools are successful schools during nineties number of class rooms are enough in these schools. Overall condition of class rooms is also satisfactory in most of the schools but these schools not satisfy KER norms while constructing the class rooms. Condition of benches, desks etc in the schools are satisfactory in most of the schools. Resource materials such as book, globe, chart etc are available in most of the schools. Library facility is present in all these schools. Mid-day meal is provided properly in all the schools. The condition of kanjipura is worst in all the schools. Scarcity pure water is faced by about twenty percent schools. Even though toilets, urinals etc present in these schools there is no separate room for staff, boys and girls. Transport facilities to these schools are present in almost all of the schools.

The findings of the study helped the investigator to suggest the following for improving the quality of lower primary education. Make the buildings more attractive. Arrange enough facilities in the schools like separate urinals for girls and boys, instructional aides, fresh water, library, primary facilities etc. Improve quality of education by including new trends in education. Provide barrier free access to schools. Ensure community mobilization and participation. Make provisions for starting pre-primary education in these schools. Establish Village Education Committees, Mother-Teacher Associations to increase awareness about the importance of primary school education. Authorities should try to implement uniform syllabus throughout the nation. Provide facilities for giving education in English language according to the demands of the immediate community. The attitude of the parents towards public educational institutions should be improved through proper counseling

and guidance. Administration of incentives needs to be streamlined so that the students may avail all the facilities at proper time. Periodical evaluation of schools must be done. Merits scholarship, attendance scholarship, and more incentives should be provided to the students.

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