

Issues and Challenges in the Administration of Primary Education: A Case Study of District Sangrur, Punjab

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Abstract:

This research examines the concerns and challenges in the management of elementary education in District Sangrur, Punjab. Primary education is the cornerstone of the overall educational framework; nonetheless, its efficient management continues to pose challenges at the district level. The research investigates issues pertaining to infrastructure, teacher accessibility, administrative efficacy, resource allocation, and community engagement. It underscores how administrative deficiencies directly impact teaching and learning processes as well as student results, particularly in rural and economically disadvantaged regions. The results derive from primary and secondary data and seek to elucidate the current state of primary education administration in the district.

Keywords: Primary Education, Educational Administration, School Governance, Infrastructure Development, Teacher Management, Community Participation, Policy Implementation, etc.

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 OVERVIEW

A superior education always signifies a more advanced civilisation compared to less educated, impoverished regions. The literacy rate serves as the primary indication and metric of progress. Access to literacy is a fundamental prerequisite for attaining the overall well-being of the population in that region. Education is essential for sustainable growth. Consequently, literacy is seen as a fundamental instrument in fostering a developed and harmonious society in the 21st century. An educated society has the power to effectuate social and economic transformations. In almost all democratic nations, including India, men and women possess equal rights. Primary education is becoming an essential right. The Census of India defines a literate individual as one who can read and write with comprehension in any language and is beyond six years of age (Som & Mishra, 2014). ESCAP (2010) noted that the Asia-Pacific region comprises three-quarters of the world's illiterate population, representing a significant challenge for developing nations, including India, the second most populous country, which exhibits substantial disparities across urban-rural, male-female, and age demographics (Krishan & Shyam, 1978). India has an effective literacy rate of 74.04 percent. It is noteworthy that 82.14 percent of males and 65.46 percent of females are literate, indicating a significant gender disparity in literacy (Census of India, 2011).

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

Bukhari, Syeda & Rafiq-Uz-Zaman, Muhammad (2025) In Punjab, Pakistan, a region crucial to national growth, the educational system has substantial issues regarding access, quality, and equality. Notwithstanding a lengthy history of ambitious educational programs, a significant and pressing disparity persists between policy goals and their actual execution, resulting in many kids lacking appropriate learning opportunities and instructors receiving insufficient assistance. This narrative study examines the evolution of education policy and reform since 2001, integrating extensive information from policy documents, peer-reviewed academic studies, and government reports to identify the fundamental reasons

of systemic implementation failure. The results indicate many interrelated impediments that constantly hinder progress. Chronic policy inconsistency, fuelled by fluctuating political cycles, hinders the establishment of long-term strategy. Inadequate monitoring and evaluation procedures hinder the ability to assess progress or implement evidence-based modifications, while entrenched urban-rural gaps in financing and resources sustain cycles of inequality. These problems are exacerbated by systemic corruption and administrative incompetence that misallocate essential resources and undermine public confidence. The evaluation emphasises a significant deficiency in substantive stakeholder participation in the policy process, which compromises local ownership and the durability of changes. The study contends that disrupting this loop requires a fundamental transition from top-down reforms to more flexible and participative tactics. This is a coordinated endeavour to enhance policy coherence, invest in teacher capacity via ongoing professional development, use technology for transparency, and empower communities via participatory monitoring to ultimately close the policy-practice gap.

Badar, Robina & Shah, Muhammad (2025) Community involvement in the development and administration of enhanced educational opportunities is essential for fostering understanding and collaboration between local residents and school management. In 1994, the Government of Pakistan established the School Management Committee (SMC). The major goals of the research were (i) to examine the impact of School Management Committees (SMCs) on academic activities at the primary school level, and (ii) to evaluate the influence of SMCs on non-academic activities at the primary school level. The research population included all instructors from selected government elementary schools and the parents of pupils enrolled in such institutions in Tehsil Attock. Data was gathered using a questionnaire. Two distinct surveys were developed for SMC members and educators. The analysis of data was conducted using the percentage formula. The research proved advantageous for the enhancement of schools collaborating with SMC. The examination of the gathered data disclosed the following conclusions. The study's findings indicated that the school management committee significantly influenced both academic and non-academic achievements at the primary school level. The study used a limited sample size; subsequent researchers may broaden the sample to get objective data suitable for generalisation.

Shahid, Sabihee & Waqar, Yasira (2023) The main objective of this study was to examine the impacts of privatisation on the quality of elementary schools in Punjab operating under the Punjab Education Foundation (PEF) and to identify the elements that positively or adversely influence educational quality. The research was conducted under the positivist framework with a quantitative technique. Two self-constructed 5-point Likert scale questionnaires were used to gather data. A cross-sectional survey methodology was used to gather data from the participants. A multistage sampling method was used to collect data from 746 educators. The view of educators in privatised schools facilitated the assessment and measurement of the consequences and effects of PEF schools on educational quality. The data was analysed using Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) version 21. The outcome reveals a modest association ($r=.435$) between privatisation and educational quality. The findings indicated a significant association ($r=.231$) between privatisation and educational quality. It was shown that public schools are deficient in infrastructure, resources, and perceived quality compared to PEF-funded institutions. A substantial association was seen between student performance and the quality of PEF schools. An optimal physical environment in classrooms supports the psychological and social well-being of students, while contemporary teaching approaches improve the quality of education in PEF schools.

M., Dr & Pushkarna, Mridula (2020) Education is a fundamental need for the development of any country; it is a crucial necessity. It allows individuals to comprehend the universe and their environment, while also altering societal perspectives. Educational institutions and literacy rates are essential metrics for assessing the region's success. In the current century, a well-educated people with a comprehensive array of information, attitudes, and abilities is needed. This research aims to examine the disparities in

educational facilities in Punjab. Punjab's educational situation is bleak, with a literacy rate of 76.7% according to the 2011 census. Punjab's rating has declined from 16th place in 2001 to 21st position in the current all-India literacy ranking. This report examines the disparities in literacy across several regions of Punjab and the accessibility of educational institutions in these locations.

Jassal, Rajni (2018) In recent years, it has been noted that despite significant efforts by the State Government to enhance the basic education system and attain universal primary education, the expected outcomes have not been realised. Nevertheless, the State's focus on quantitative metrics in primary education may not inherently lead to quality education, which is essential for the employability of youth in today's competitive landscape. This report critically evaluates the statistical data on elementary education in Punjab.

3. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This study employs a descriptive research approach to investigate the concerns and challenges in the administration of elementary education in District Sangrur, Punjab. Both primary and secondary data were used to get a thorough comprehension of the topic. elementary data were obtained via structured surveys and informal interactions with teachers, head teachers, parents, and education officials from government elementary schools in the district. Secondary data were collected from official government papers, education department records, documents pertaining to Samagra Shiksha Abhiyan, as well as pertinent publications, journals, and research studies. The gathered data was examined using basic statistical methods, including percentages, accompanied with descriptive interpretation to convey the results clearly and effectively.

4. EDUCATIONAL STATUS OF RURAL YOUTH IN SANGRUR DISTRICT OF PUNJAB

Youth being vibrant, dynamic, innovative, and enthusiastic in nature is the most powerful section of population. Attributes of strong passion, motivation, and willpower make them the most valuable human resource for fostering economic, cultural, and political development of a nation. Proper care and attention paid to youth's physical, mental, and social development helps them to grow into well informed, useful, and responsible citizens. Youth as a demographic construct have both biological and sociological specificities. Biologically, it refers to the stage of life of human beings passing through between childhood and adulthood. But sociologically it is not only a stage of life but a category for analyses which further divides into sub-categories of early youth, middle youth, and late youth. While biological specificities like age, puberty, temperament, etc. are found in all the individuals irrespective of type of society, sociological specificities like role, status, expectations, and aspirations vary from society to society. Each nation has its own criteria to define youth according to its culture and needs of its youth. United Nations Organization (UNO) defines youth as all persons in the age group between 15-24 years. The India Ministry of Youth Affairs and Sports, which is the nodal ministry dealing with youth concerns defines youth as the population lies between the age group of 15- 35 years. However, in 2014, National Youth Policy modified it and redefined youth as all persons in the agegroup of 15-29 years. The size of youth population in a country determines its ability and potential for growth.

India is the young nation in the sense that share of its youth in total population in 2011 stands at 34.8 percent. It has provided great opportunity for the country to reap this demographic dividend for making rapid economic growth. Development of youth as a responsible citizen demands for better education, employment driven training and brighter future. It is the responsibility of the state to provide skill-based education and job placements for all its graduates. However presently, education and employment are the two major issues confronted by almost every young one in India. Youth unemployment in India is on rise. According to the World Development Report 2013, nine percent of males and 11 percent females aged between 15 to 35 years are unemployed. Among them, young graduates from urban areas suffer the most

as far as getting job is concerned. Other segment at the disadvantageous position is rural youth who find themselves unfit in the expeditiously changing conventional practices.

In response to globalization, where urban youth have changed accordingly and develop a bicultural or hybrid identity that provides the basis for living in their local culture along with flowing smoothly with the global culture, for rural youth, adapting to the sudden changes taking place in their cultures is more difficult. The images, values, and opportunities they perceive as being part of the global culture undermine their belief in the value of local cultural practices. At the same time, due to lack of education, the ways of global culture seem out of reach to them. Instead of being bicultural, they find themselves excluded from both the worlds, that is, their own culture as well as global culture. On one hand, the division of land holdings and decreasing earning in agriculture sector are pushing them to leave their traditional occupations and on the other hand, due to lack of higher education and technical skills, they are unable to compete with their urban counterparts in job markets. They are left with only two alternatives, either to run away from the country or to run away from the situation. Unable to cope up with the situation they either seek to migrate to foreign country indulge in drug abuse (Jiloha, 2009). In both the cases, there is a huge wastage of human resource potential. Presently, main streaming rural youth in development process of the country is a big challenge.

Education plays a crucial role in shaping the social, economic, and cultural development of rural youth. In the context of Sangrur district of Punjab, the educational status of rural youth reflects both progress and persistent challenges. Over the years, government initiatives and increased awareness have contributed to improved literacy levels and school enrollment among rural youth. However, disparities in access, quality, and continuity of education remain significant, particularly among economically weaker sections.

The rural youth of Sangrur primarily depend on government educational institutions for schooling and higher education. While primary and secondary schools are relatively accessible in most villages, issues related to infrastructure, availability of qualified teachers, and learning resources continue to affect educational quality. Limited exposure to modern teaching methods, digital learning tools, and career guidance further restrict the academic growth of rural students.

Socio-economic factors strongly influence the educational status of rural youth in the district. Many families depend on agriculture and daily wage labor, which often leads to early involvement of youth in economic activities. Financial constraints, lack of educational support at home, and parental illiteracy contribute to irregular attendance and school dropouts, especially at the secondary and higher secondary levels. Gender disparities also persist, with rural girls facing additional challenges such as early marriage, household responsibilities, and safety concerns related to commuting to distant educational institutions.

Another important aspect affecting the educational status of rural youth is the limited access to higher education and vocational training institutions within rural areas. Although colleges and skill development centers exist at the district level, distance, transportation costs, and lack of awareness discourage rural youth from pursuing further studies. As a result, many young people enter the workforce with limited qualifications and skills, reducing their employment opportunities and upward mobility.

The role of government policies and schemes has been significant in promoting rural education in Sangrur. Programs related to free education, scholarships, mid-day meals, and skill development have helped increase enrollment and retention. However, effective implementation, regular monitoring, and alignment of education with local employment opportunities remain areas of concern.

In conclusion, the educational status of rural youth in Sangrur district shows gradual improvement but continues to face structural, socio-economic, and institutional challenges. Strengthening rural educational

infrastructure, improving teaching quality, expanding access to higher and vocational education, and increasing community awareness are essential for enhancing educational outcomes. A focused and inclusive approach can empower rural youth with education and skills, enabling them to contribute meaningfully to the socio-economic development of the district and the state of Punjab.

5. ISSUES AND CHALLENGES IN THE ADMINISTRATION OF PRIMARY EDUCATION

The management of primary education is crucial in determining the quality, accessibility, and efficacy of grassroots schooling. In District Sangrur, Punjab, the administrative structure of elementary education functions within the overarching national and provincial educational policy, although encounters several systemic obstacles. These concerns extend beyond local contexts and signify fundamental issues often encountered in the regulation of elementary education in emerging nations.

A key theoretical difficulty in the management of elementary education is infrastructure insufficiency. Theory of educational administration emphasises the need of a conducive physical environment for optimal teaching and learning. In several districts, including Sangrur, challenges such as insufficient classrooms, poor sanitary facilities, absence of libraries, and restricted playground areas impede comprehensive child development. Inadequate infrastructure adversely impacts teacher morale and student retention, thereby undermining the administration goal of universal and excellent education.

Teacher management is a significant administrative issue. From an administrative perspective, the efficient deployment, training, and motivation of educators are essential to school efficacy. Challenges include a deficiency of skilled educators, disproportionate staff allocation between rural and urban institutions, restricted avenues for professional advancement, and administrative burdens on instructors diminish instructional efficacy. The obligation of teachers to undertake non-academic responsibilities undermines the fundamental purpose of teaching, hence impacting educational achievement at the elementary level.

Administrative planning and governance represent an additional area of issue. Theory of educational administration emphasises the significance of decentralised decision-making, accountability, and consistent oversight. Nonetheless, insufficient coordination among school authorities, district education offices, and state-level administration often results in delays in policy execution, ineffective resource allocation, and poor oversight. The absence of efficient monitoring systems hinders the evaluation of school performance and the prompt resolution of emergent concerns.

A significant theoretical difficulty is the allocation of resources and financial management. Effective administration necessitates prompt allocation and appropriate utilisation of resources for infrastructure development, educational materials, midday meals, and student welfare programs. Administrative delays, procedural intricacies, and constrained financial autonomy at the school level hinder administrators' capacity to address local needs. This results in discrepancies between policy objectives and their actual execution at the grassroots level.

Community engagement and stakeholder participation are vital elements of efficient educational administration. Institutions like School Management Committees are theoretically established to enhance community involvement and responsibility. Nevertheless, insufficient understanding, socio-economic limitations, and inadequate administrative assistance often undermine parental participation in school governance. Consequently, schools operate independently from the communities they serve, diminishing transparency and collective accountability.

The amalgamation of technology and innovation offers both an opportunity and a difficulty in the management of elementary education. Educational administration theory acknowledges digital technologies as facilitators of efficiency, transparency, and enhanced learning outcomes. Nonetheless,

insufficient infrastructure, constrained administrative capacity, and a deficiency in training hinder the successful use of technology in school administration and classroom activities.

6. CONCLUSION

The management of elementary education constitutes the foundation of the educational system, since it immediately impacts access, quality, and equality in schooling. The situation in District Sangrur, Punjab, exemplifies the widespread administrative difficulties encountered in basic education in several regions of India. Challenges pertaining to infrastructure development, educator management, governance, resource distribution, community engagement, and technology integration persist in constraining the efficacy of administrative systems. Despite the introduction of several policies and programs aimed at enhancing elementary education, deficiencies in planning, coordination, and execution persist. Effective administration requires clearly articulated policies with robust institutional capability, accountability, and responsiveness at the community level. Enhancing administrative frameworks and fostering a conducive atmosphere for educators and students are crucial for attaining the goals of universal and high-quality elementary education.

6.1 Future Scope of the Study

This study presents several opportunities for further research and policy-focused investigation. Future research may concentrate on a comparative comparison of administrative methods across various districts in Punjab or across states to discern optimal practices in elementary school governance. There exists an opportunity to investigate the effects of recent educational changes, including the National Education Policy 2020, on the administrative operations of elementary schools. Subsequent study may investigate the impact of digital governance and e-administration on enhancing efficiency, transparency, and oversight in elementary education. Research may be conducted to evaluate the efficacy of community engagement methods, such as School Management Committees, in enhancing school administration. Moreover, next research might use interdisciplinary methodologies by integrating educational administration with socio-economic development, public finance, and local government to formulate more holistic and sustainable administrative frameworks for primary education.

6.2 Suggestions

1. The government need to enhance educational infrastructure in rural regions by upgrading school buildings, classrooms, libraries, labs, and sanitary facilities to provide a conducive learning environment for rural kids.
2. Qualified and educated educators must be assigned in sufficient numbers in rural schools, and regular in-service training programs should be implemented to improve teaching quality and the use of contemporary instructional techniques.
3. Access to secondary, upper secondary, and tertiary educational institutions should be augmented in rural and semi-rural regions to mitigate dropout rates attributable to distance and transportation challenges.
4. Vocational education and skill development programs must be linked with school and college curricula to enhance employability and impart practical skills pertinent to local economic activity.
5. Focus must be directed towards the education of rural females via the provision of scholarships, hostels, secure transportation, and awareness programs to mitigate gender inequities in education.

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