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## SCHOOL EFFECTIVENESS: THE NEED OF ADMINISTRATIVE REFORMS

**Mr. R. Sivannatham<sup>1</sup>**

<sup>1</sup>Guest Teacher Educator, Department of Mathematics, Government College of Education, Orathanad- 614 625, Thanjavur-District, Tamil Nadu, India

### ABSTRACT

*The effective management of schools is a vital component of the educational system. School effectiveness to a large extent depends on the nature and the quality of leadership and management exhibited by school headmasters. The head of the institution holds the key to initiation and managing the process of change.*

*School headmasters have encountered considerable turmoil in recent times. The dwindling allocation of resources from the government on one hand and increase in parental awareness has made it necessary for the headmasters to utilize available resources optimally for the achievement of their institutional goals. Over the years, with the development of professionalism, consciousness for high quality performing schools is on the rise.*

**KEYWORDS:** schools, School Community, Pupil Development, Personnel Management

### INTRODUCTION

The effective management of schools is a vital component of the educational system. School effectiveness to a large extent depends on the nature and the quality of leadership and management exhibited by school headmasters. The head of the institution holds the key to initiation and managing the process of change.

School headmasters have encountered considerable turmoil in recent times. The dwindling allocation of resources from the government on one hand and increase in parental awareness has made it necessary for the headmasters to utilize available resources optimally for the achievement of their institutional goals. Over the years, with the development of professionalism, consciousness for high quality performing schools is on the rise.

In the light of the above, the schools today need a new breed of headmasters who are aware of the different factors which act as barriers to their effectiveness and can bring about relevant reforms. Therefore, it was necessary to study the factors in different functional areas like Pupil Development,

Personnel Management, School Community Interface, Financial Management, Curriculum Implementation and Management of Instruction, School Climate and School Improvement and Administrative methods and procedures. This would have implications for administrative reforms in schools and would lead to school effectiveness.

### RESEARCH OBJECTIVE

The objective was to study the factors acting as barriers to the effectiveness of secondary school headmasters.

### METHODOLOGY

#### Sample:-

The population of the study consisted of 140 secondary school headmasters of Thanjavur district, Tami Nadu. This included Tamil and English medium schools under different management types i.e., Government, Government-Aided and Private unaided. The sample selected by the random sampling technique consisted of 40 headmasters of these schools.

## Tools:-

The data was collected with the help of an unstructured interview schedule. The aspects covered in the schedule were

1. Pupil Development
2. Personnel Management
3. School Community Interface
4. Financial Management
5. Curriculum-Implementation and Management of Instruction
6. School Climate and School Improvement
7. Administrative Methods and Procedures.

The data collected was analyzed qualitatively by content analysis and findings are reported are-wise hereunder.

### 1. Pupil Development:-

The barriers revealed by headmasters were categorized under different heads for the purpose of systematization.

#### a) Co-curricular Activities:-

In relation to the organization of co-curricular activities of the schools, the headmasters revealed the following barriers.

- Shortage of funds and facilities,
- Lack of interest of parents and students. Thus both these factors working in tandem makes their task difficult.

#### b) Lack of Infrastructure Facilities:-

The headmaster revealed the lack of library facility, and facilities like light, fan, water-cooler etc. Thus it can be seen that lack of basic infrastructure facilities did affect pupil's development.

#### c) Tuition Problem:-

The tuition problem barrier comprised two facets.

- Lack of concentration in the studies in the classrooms and absenteeism in schools.
- The subject teachers especially science and mathematics teachers are not adopting modern techniques and using proper teaching aids.

#### d) Attitude of Students:-

With reference to the attitude of students the headmasters revealed the following barriers

- Students are exam-oriented
- Casual attitude of students
- Students absenteeism
- Students admitted through donation have a disturbing effect on other students.

#### e) Attitude of Teachers:-

Headmasters have revealed two major barriers in this regard.

- Lack of interest, initiative and motivation shown by teachers due to provide tuitions, taken by them.

Thus it is clear that private tuitions have had adverse impact on teachers in their attitude towards student development.

### f) Lack of Guidance and Counseling Program:-

Under this head the following two barriers were revealed by the headmasters.

- Personal problems of students affect their growth and development.
- Media exerts a negative influence on student values.
- Immediate school environment has a negative impact on students.

## 2. Personnel Management:-

### i. In-service training:-

In order to enhance productivity of personnel in any system, in-service training at regular intervals is necessary. However, while interviewing headmasters it was found that they face a wide range of barriers in this regard.

- Lack of expertise exhibited by resource persons.
- Lack of interest exhibited by teachers.
- Less frequency of in-service programs.
- Organization of training programs not according to teachers' convenience and need.
- Lack of compulsion for teachers to attend training programs.
- Women teachers do not attend training programs due to family responsibilities.
- Lack of follow-up of training programmes.

From the above-mentioned barriers it is evident that the in-service training of teachers needs maximum attention.

### ii. Subject teachers:-

It is very difficult to get subject teachers in the mathematics and science subjects.

### 3. School - Community Interface:-

The modern day education system cannot afford to remain aloof from other sub-systems of society. It is necessary for the school headmasters to have continuous interactions with the community. However headmasters face innumerable barriers which have been mentioned under three major heads.

- The top position officers of Education Department do not co-operate in promoting school effectiveness.
- The parents and social workers of the political leaders are not aware of the difficulties faced by the school.
- They never visit the school and observe the activities only twice, viz. at the time of admission and at the time of results.
- Donation or funds are not forthcoming for improving the school.

### 4. Financial Management:-

#### Bureaucratic Hindrances from District Education Office (DEO):-

Since in the state of Tamil Nadu, the DSERT office is the grant-disbursing agency, headmasters face the following barriers.

- Malpractices in DEO's office.
- Delay in receipt of grants.
- Rigid bureaucratic procedures for receipt and utilization of grants.
- Lack of timely guidance from DEO's office.

Grants are major sources of income for schools and headmasters have to face numerous problems in this regard which makes their task of meeting different expenditures difficult.

## ii. **Autonomy in Financial Management:-**

For any principal, adequate autonomy is essential to manage resources optimally. The headmasters face many barriers in this regard.

- Lack of freedom to spend school-funds for school activities.
- Lack of autonomy for planning, budgeting and expenditure of funds.

It can be concluded that although headmasters are heads of institutions, in reality they hardly enjoy financial autonomy.

## 5. **Curriculum Implementation and Management of Instruction:-**

School headmasters have responsibilities with regard to curriculum and management of instruction. The headmasters have indicated the following barriers that have been reported under different heads.

### **Syllabus**

The syllabus prescribed by the textbook board is transacted in the classroom, with the headmasters encountering the following barriers.

- College and university experts, instead of school-level experts, often design textbooks.
- The syllabus is not related to real life.
- Rigidity is practiced in following the prescribed syllabus.
- Lack of reference and supplementary books for prescribed textbooks.

### **Classroom Instruction:-**

Classroom instruction process has to be properly managed to reach educational goals. Some of the barriers mentioned in this regard are as follows:

- No student-centered and activity-based teaching.
- Lack of content mastery on the part of teachers.
- Poor time-management.
- Lack of interest to use teaching-aids

Thus a teacher who is an important component of the instructional process is unable to discharge his functions effectively due to the above-mentioned barriers.

## 6. **School Climate and School Improvement:-**

School climate always has an impact on the achievement of educational goals. Therefore

headmasters need to overcome all those barriers that are mentioned below.

## **Barriers related to instructional process:-**

As we know it is through the classroom instructional process that school headmasters would try to achieve instructional objectives.

The barriers related to it are mentioned below:

- Lack of modern methodology
- Time constraint for completion of syllabus.
- Lack of continuous comprehensive evaluation system.
- Difficult examination system.
- Liberal promotion rules for students.

From the above-mentioned barriers it can be concluded that we need improvement in the various components of the instructional process to improve the school climate.

## **Teacher and Student Related Problems:-**

With regard to the two major components of the school system i.e. teachers and students, schools are facing the following barriers.

- Lack of in-service training for teachers.
- Indifferent attitude and resistance to change on the part of senior teachers affecting school-climate.
- Lack of teamwork among teachers.
- Prevalence of tuition classes.
- Teacher absenteeism without prior intimation.
- Misunderstanding and conflicts among teachers.
- Spread of gossip and rumors among staff.

## 7. **Administrative Methods and Procedures:-**

Every school is governed by rules and regulations prescribed by competent government authorities. Though they exist for the smooth functioning of an institution it is apparent that frequently they act as barriers.

## **Correspondence / Communication with Deputy Director of Public Instruction (DDPI) Office:-**

School headmasters who are governed by Tamil Nadu Secondary Education Act need to have regular communication channels with DDPI.

In this interaction, headmasters face the following barriers:

- Lack of clarity in the interpretation of circulars from the DDPI.
- Delay in decision-making by the DDPI due to autonomy.

Thus lack of autonomy enjoyed by the DDPI as well as the ambiguity found in its messages act as barriers.

## 8. Administrative Reforms:-

Based on the findings, administrative reforms have been suggested, which can be undertaken at the Micro and Macro-level.

### a) Administrative Reforms at the Micro-Level:-

Headmasters of secondary schools can carry out these reforms at the school level.

- Headmasters should ensure student-centered and activity-based teaching in their schools. Teachers should be encouraged to use audiovisual aids.
- The school management trust should give enough autonomy to headmasters for purchases in order to ensure optimum utilization of school plant and infrastructure facilities.
- Awareness program/literacy programs need to be conducted for parents to fight parental indifference and illiteracy.
- Guidance and counseling programs should be offered in all schools. Students today face personal and professional problems that affect their growth and development.
- The teachers are made to attend in-service programs continuously.
- Efforts have to be made to mobilize resources from the community. This needs involvement of parents and industrial organizations in school activities.
- Parent-Teachers Association should be formed in all schools and be strengthened.

### b) Administrative Reforms at the Macro-Level:-

The reforms suggested can be implemented by State Department of Education.

- A policy decision should be taken to abolish private tuitions. Tuitions lead to a lack of interest, initiative and motivation on the part of school teachers.
- Recruitment-policy of secondary schoolteachers needs certain changes. A matrix system is followed where selections are made on the merit of their academic qualifications. More weight age needs to be given to interview performance and the observation of demonstration lesson should be included.
- Frequent recruitment bans should not be imposed as it is done at the cost of the students.
- More autonomy should be given to school headmasters for the termination of teachers which presently is a cumbersome and a time-consuming legal procedure.
- The Deputy Director of Public Instruction (DDPI), which is a grant-disbursing agency, should disburse grants without delay. It should be given in one-time

installment. Flexibility should be given to headmasters to spend government grants under any head. The disbursement of salary of newly recruited teaches needs to be on time.

- The District Education Office should be given more autonomy in decision-making.
- The circulars from the District Education Office require more clarity and need to be free from ambiguity.
- More copies of the Tamil Nadu Secondary Education Act should be made available in English and the latest amendments should be circulated in schools. Clarity and unambiguity in language should be ensured.
- Timely permission should be granted by DDPI for opening new classes; sections etc. and timely availability of 'No Objection Certificate' (NOC) should be the norm.
- The Textbook Board should involve more schoolteachers in the designing of textbooks. The quality of textbooks needs improvement and more continuity between 10<sup>th</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup> class syllabus is suggested. Handbooks regarding the use of audiovisual aids should be made available.

## CONCLUSION

On the headmaster's ability and skill as a sound and effective educational leader depends the success of a school, He is the key person who is entrusted with the responsibility of coordination and integrating the various school programs. It is imperative that he takes up reforms at the micro-level. However reforms need to be undertaken at the macro-level as well. The reforms implemented at both the levels would complement each other and would go a long way in ensuring school effectiveness.

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