

MANAGEMENT OF SCHOOL EDUCATION : ROLE OF PANCHAYATI RAJ INSTITUTIONS

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ABSTRACT

This paper considers how Panchayati Raj Institutions manage elementary education in coordination with the Education Department in Madhya Pradesh. It is based on a field study on Recent Trends in Educational Administration in Madhya Pradesh. Its objective was to critically examine the linkages and coordination between the development administration and the Panchayati Raj Department. The methodology of the study was based on survey research, obtaining primary and secondary data through interviews and document analysis. Open-ended questions and interviews were transcribed and inferences were drawn. Conducted on a sample selected from two districts of Madhya Pradesh, namely, Datiya and Ratlam, the study found that Madhya Pradesh has transferred the management of school education to Panchayati Raj Institutions and has evolved a well-knitted structure of development administration for elementary education in the form of Shiksha Kendras. It has been found that while Panchayati Raj Institutions are generally entrusted with the responsibility of recruitment, transfer and decision-making, they face inadequacy of capacity-building programmes for them; while participation of the local community in school management is increased to a great extent, lakhs of children are still out-of-school; and that there is hardly interface between Panchayati Raj Institutions and the Parent Teacher Associations at school level. Coordination between Panchayati Raj Institutions and various bodies of educational administration at district, block and habitation levels has also been a major concern.

Introduction

Development administration is concerned with providing service delivery to all citizens in a required quantity as well as quality and, in a timely manner with participation of all the stakeholders. In India, the administration of school education has rapidly marched towards development administration and witnessed a major

transformation in its approaches, structures and functions (NUEPA Country-wide Studies on Educational Administration, 1991-2001). Emphasis on structural changes has made administration more responsive to the educational needs of people at the grassroot (Tyagi, 2006). Efforts have been made to decentralise planning and management of education to the local level so as to make the delivery of educational programmes more

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effective. It is in this context that the establishment of grassroots level democracy through local self-governance has become significant. Association of local bodies with management of primary education in the country is not a new phenomenon; it started during the last quarter of 19th century. Over the years, the National Policies on Education, Education Commissions and Committees have consistently elaborated the role of Panchayati Raj Institutions (PRIs) in the management of school education. The 73rd and 74th Constitutional Amendments, where power is sought to be devolved on the local bodies, again required the states to change educational administrative structures and functions.

Development administration emphasises the need for local specific strategies which necessitate decentralisation in decision-making to identify and bring those children to schools who are not with the system at present. The Total Literacy Campaign introduced in decentralised mode in the country and implemented through a participatory management approach was a significant step towards localising educational decision-making process, besides other state level development programmes such as the Bihar Education Project, the *Lok Jumbish* Project and *Shiksha Karmi* Project in Rajasthan and the Basic Education Project (Education for all Project) in Uttar Pradesh. These development programmes provided experiences for launching the District Primary Education Programme (DPEP) and the *Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan* (SSA) where the focus of planning and decision-making is decentralised administration and management with the involvement of all the stakeholders. Development administration has brought about a much-needed shift in the delivery mechanism, increased investment in basic education, in expenditure pattern specifically from staff-salary-oriented budget to

infrastructure-development oriented budget, with the financial aid from international agencies. There is also a shift in supply-oriented paradigm to demand oriented paradigm as far as the educational needs at local level are concerned. As a result, planning and management of elementary education has become participatory at the local level with the help of Village Education Committees and School Management Committees (Govinda, 1997) where PRIs have an important role to play.

Inferences from Research Studies

It is necessary to recall how recent research has viewed the role of PRIs in managing school education. These are divergent views and even critical about the role of Panchayati Raj Institutions in the management of education. It was originally a fond hope that transferring education to PR bodies will provide on-the-spot supervision and control of schools which will lead to quality improvement in education. However, the quality of supervision has considerably gone down due to ineffective supervision, haphazard inspection, tardiness of administration and insecurity of teaching staff (Krishnamacharylu, 1993), despite another observation that ever since the responsibility of construction of building has been given to *pradhans* and headmasters, the buildings were constructed in time, and of the better quality (Zaidi, 1993). It was also found that the interference of non-officials in posting and transfer of teachers and using them for purposes other than teaching, affected their performance and morale (Chalapati, 1992). The dual control over education without clear definition of powers and functions of the Panchayati Raj Institutions and the Education Department naturally resulted in confrontation and conflict between them (Bhargava and Venkata Krishnan, 1993). In the last two decades of the last century, primary education in West Bengal under PRIs has not been at all

encouraging (Acharya, 2002). Many stakeholders now seem to feel that the hierarchical and bureaucratic control over the primary education system has not decreased in any way even after the establishment of the Panchayati Raj Institutions (Govinda, 2003). The involvement of panchayats is only in terms of providing community support; their role is peripheral, if not nil, in the management and administration of education.

There is poor coordination between the PRIs and the schools. The ground reality indicates very weak and ineffective implementation of the panchayat system as regards role of women in PRIs, resulting in little progress on the path of real decentralisation (Josephine, 2009). PRIs cannot deliver the desired results as they are rarely empowered to share any meaningful responsibility in the field of education. Empowerment of panchayats is ultimately the only solution to all the related education problems at the village level (Mathew, 2008). The importance of panchayats in universalisation of primary education is often sidelined by contradiction in the guidelines of specific programmes, leaving very little scope for local governance to be involved in it (Ray, Dale and Chatterjee, 2008). Elected members of PRIs do not have any administrative powers; they cannot take any disciplinary action against any teacher, even if found guilty of any irregularity. There is hardly any capacity building programme for PRIs in school management. In spite of provisions in the guidelines that PRIs will be responsible for recruitment and selection of teachers, they are not included in the selection committees of teachers, but are simply assigned the task of posting of teachers in schools from the list of selected teachers (Tyagi and Akhtar, 2009).

Research Methodology

The paper, based on a field study on 'Recent Trends in Educational Administration

in Madhya Pradesh (Khandelwal and Tyagi, 2003)' was conducted on a sample selected from two districts, namely, Datia and Ratlam. Latest data and information available on the subject have also been incorporated to the paper. It critically examines the linkages and coordination between the development administration and the Panchayati Raj Department and identifies deficiencies in interface between development administration and PRIs. The methodology of the study was based on survey research, obtaining primary and secondary data through interviews, and document analysis related to educational development and interface. Open-ended questions and interviews were transcribed and inferences were drawn. Interviews were conducted with all the stakeholders including officers and elected representatives of PRIs and officers of Education Department.

Structural Reforms

Transfer of Management of School Education to Panchayati Raj Institutions : Madhya Pradesh has made continuous efforts, since 1994, to decentralise the management of school education to local level and to empower the community to make education responsive to the people's needs. The responsibility of managing school education (from classes I-XII) was transferred to three-tier Panchayati Raj Institutions vide Government Order of 30.10.1996 of the School Education Department, Government of Madhya Pradesh to make further effort to strengthen Panchayati Raj Institutions and to develop them as units of self-governance in consonance with the 73rd Constitutional Amendment. Accordingly, the staff of school education at the Zilla (district) and Janpad (block) level were transferred to the Zilla Panchayat and Janpad Panchayat, respectively. There are Standing Committees on Education (Shiksha Sthayi Samitis) of PRIs at Zilla Panchayat and Janpad Panchayat levels and

Village Education Committee at Gram Panchayat level for looking after management of school education. The presidents of Zilla Panchayat, Janpad Panchayat are the Chairmen of the respective Committees. Any proposal related to education emanates at school level, moves through the VEC to Block Education Officer (BEO) to Standing Committees at Janpad Panchayat. The proposal is thereafter received by the District Project Coordinator of Zilla Shiksha Kendra and submitted to the Standing Committee on Education at district level. There are Chief Executive Officers (CEOs) at Janpad and Zilla levels under PRIs for helping the Standing Committees on Education.

At the initial stage, the Standing Committee on Education (SCE) of Zilla Panchayat was responsible for: maintenance of school buildings, cleanliness of school premises, furniture and tat pattis, school staff, playground, tree plantation, maintenance of environment, arrangements of toilets and drinking water and constitution of Village Education Committees (VECs); and for coordination, the SCE would ensure regular attendance of teachers and students in school, regular teaching, all the work related to school development, take note of all the programmes conducted by Central or state government from time to time, encourage co-curricular activities, appropriate use of school funds, conduct enrolment drives and awareness generation programmes for general public and parents. Table 1 indicates the transfer of powers to PRIs under Madhya Pradesh Panchayati Raj Act, 1994; powers of the Standing Committees on Education at Zilla and Janpad (block) Panchayats and Village Education Committee at Gram Panchayat level for managing school education and also the powers of School Education Department.

Establishment of Shiksha Kendras at Zilla, Janpad and Cluster Levels : The State government has created *Shiksha Missions*

(advisory bodies) and *Shiksha Kendras* (implementing bodies) at State, district, block and cluster levels under the overall command of *Rajiv Gandhi Shiksha Mission* (RGSM) at the State level to provide support to the Panchayati Raj Institutions via mission mode approach for the management of elementary education. At the State level, *Rajya Shiksha Kendra* was created by bringing together the Directorate of Adult Education and Literacy, the State Council of Educational Research and Training, and the set-up of *Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan*. Similarly, at the district level *Zilla Shiksha Kendras* were created under the overall command of the Chief Executive Officer, Zilla Panchayat. District Project Coordinator of SSA being its principal coordinator and representatives from the District Institute of Education and Training, adult education and literacy, non-formal education brought under the umbrella of *Zilla Shiksha Kendra* as shown in Figure 1. At the Janpad level, Block Education Officer, Block Resource Centre (BRC) Coordinator and a representative of the District Institute of Education and Training work under *Janpad Shiksha Kendra*. Below the Janpad level, *Jan Shiksha Kendras* have been created at the cluster level for monitoring and implementing purposes. The headmaster of local middle school would be the *Jan Shiksha Prabhari*.

Parent-Teacher Associations : The Parent-Teachers Associations (PTAs) were established as statutory bodies at school level through the Madhya Pradesh *Jan Shiksha Adhiniyam 2002* with administrative and financial powers given to these bodies, all functions of gram panchayats related to school management were given to Gram Sabha (a village under a gram panchayat); and the functions of VECs transferred to PTAs. VECs, known as Education Committees, constituted under Gram Sabhas are supervisory and monitoring bodies for primary and upper primary schools. They do not participate in the school management

Figure 1 : Structure under Development Administration for Missing Mode

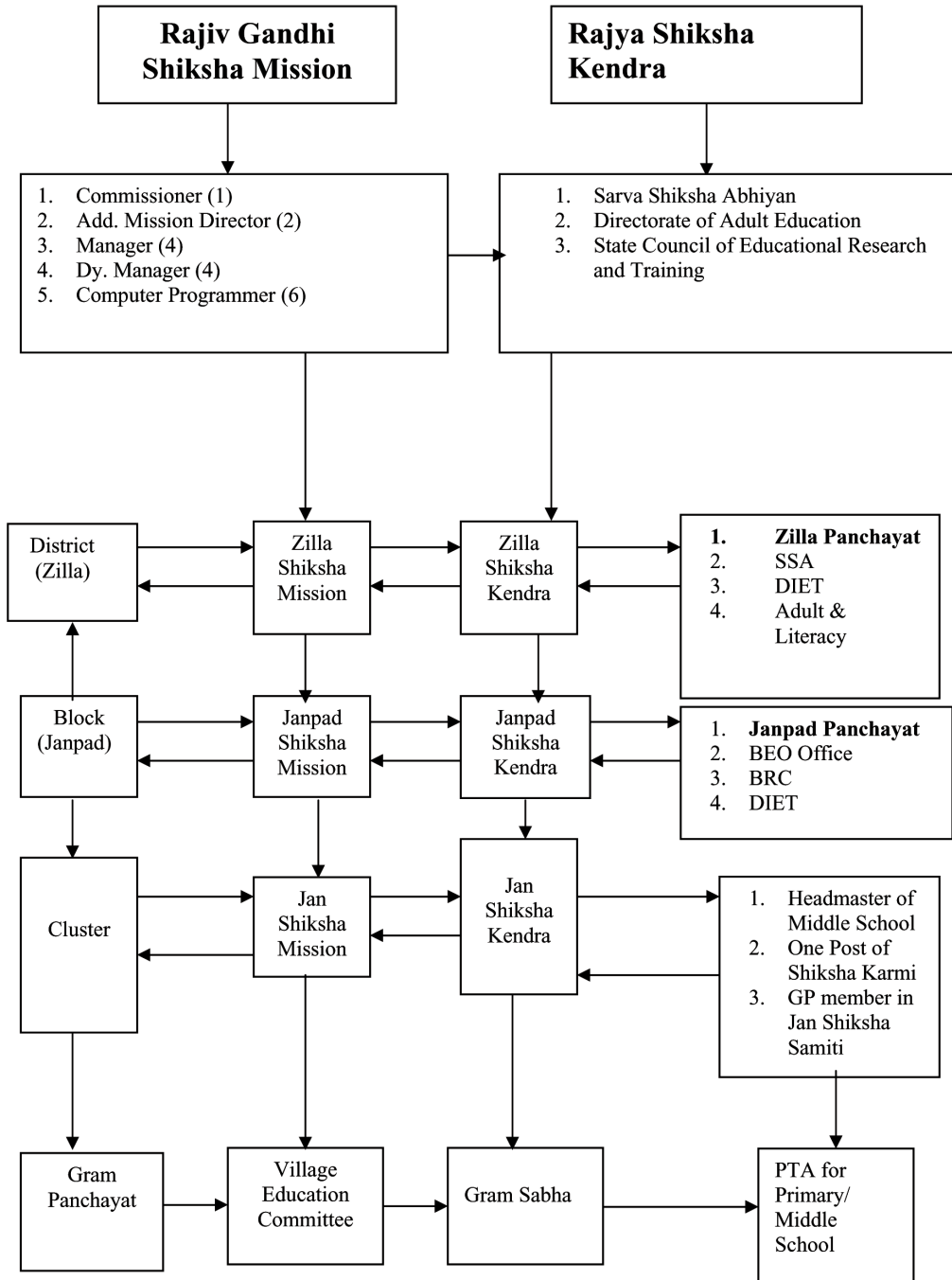


Table 1: Powers and Functions of Management of School Education Transferred to PRIs under Madhya Pradesh Panchayati Raj Act, 1994

S.No.	Powers under State Sector State Education Department	Powers under Panchayati Raj Institutions		
		Zilla Panchayat (Standing Committee on Education)	Janpad Panchayat (block)(Standing Committee on Education)	Gram Panchayat(Village Education Committee)
(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)
1.	Recognition of school	Management and running of schools	Inspection of all schools falling under village self-governments	Establishment, management and conduct of primary, secondary and senior secondary schools
2.	Specification of curriculum and textbooks	Arrangement of school building etc.	Advocacy-publicity for literacy campaigns	Collection and distribution of textbooks and school material
3.	Planning and conducting examinations	Duration of study and vacations in schools	Construction, extension and maintenance of primary school buildings	Construction, repair and maintenance of secondary school building costing up to ₹ 500,000
4.	Assessment of students' educational levels	Purchase of teaching material	Supply of free uniforms to girl students	Distribution of scholarship
5.	Preparation of annual academic calendar	Supply of free textbooks and Book bank scheme	Book bank scheme	Book bank scheme
6.	Approval for starting new courses in schools	Distribution of free uniforms	Conduct of formal school programmes	Appointment of instructors and supervisors
7.	All co-curricular activities at divisional and state levels	Non-formal education programme	Total literacy campaign	Selection of Gurujis in EGS schools
8.	Innovations in school-based activities	Mid-day meal programme	Recruitment, selection and posting of teachers in primary schools	-

(Contd.)

Table 1: (Contd.)

(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)
9.	All activities related to collection and analysis of educational data	Operation blackboard scheme	–	–
10.	Implementation, supervision and monitoring of Central and Centrally sponsored schemes	Distribution of 'free ship' and scholarship		
11.	Responsibility for training of teachers and other staff; Control over the staff of teacher training institutions such as DIET, and BTI	Recruitment, selection and posting and transfers of teachers in upper primary, secondary and senior secondary schools.	–	–
12.	Power for decision making regarding opening of new schools and construction or extension of school buildings using funds provided by the State government; constitution of district planning committees according to the policies provided by the State government.	–	–	

Source : Directorate of Public Instruction, Madhya Pradesh, Bhopal.

activities. Madhya Pradesh *Jan Shiksha Adhinyam*, 2002 envisages that plan proposals emanating from PTA would be sent to Gram Sabha through Education Committee for its approval, which would further transmit them to Jan Shiksha Kendra at Cluster level. Construction of school buildings and their infrastructure under SSA are done by the *Village Nirman Samiti*. At present, these powers have been delegated to the Gram Sabha. The members of PTA include mothers and fathers of all children enrolled in schools. Earlier, elections to Executive Committee of PTA were held annually but an amendment made in the *Jan Shiksha Adhinyam* in 2006

envisages that members of the Executive Committee shall be elected for two academic sessions. At the primary level, there would be 14 members of Executive Committee and at the upper primary level there would be only 12 members.

In primary and upper primary schools, mother or father or guardian of each of such child who secured highest percentage of marks in the annual examination of the preceding academic session in classes I-IV and in classes V-VII will be the members of the Executive Committee. President and Vice-President will be selected from members of

the Executive Committee. A *Shala Shiksha Kosh* has been established for each Parent-Teacher Association; about 80 per cent grants given to the school under SSA are transferred from *Zilla Shiksha Kendra* to this *Shala Kosh*; and the decision to use the resources is taken by PTA. Funds to distribute incentives like uniforms are also provided to PTAs account directly. The role of PTA in school improvement, apart from general management of school includes developing village-level educational plans, financial planning, procurement plan, decision-making, record keeping and audit.

Linkages of PTA with PRIs : The Madhya Pradesh *Jan Shiksha Adhiniyam*, 2002, envisages for the PTA the following linkages with the PRIs: the PTA to present its quarterly report before the Education Committee of the Village (Gram Sabha); informs the Education Committee to initiate disciplinary action against teachers found to be irresponsible towards their duty; and for the Education Committee to review activities of the PTA and help them carry out their responsibilities; monitors activities of the PTA and extends support to solve the problems faced by them; and makes efforts to augment resources for *Shala Shiksha Kosh* of the school.

Progress of Education : The State of Madhya Pradesh has intensively made unique structural reforms in administration of elementary education by creating *shiksha kendras* and transferring management of school education to PRIs. It is necessary to assess the progress of elementary education under this form of development administration and to see how these two are coordinating as a single unit to achieve educational development at the desired level. The subsequent discussion reveals the interface between two management structures in respect to the progress of education and the issues and concerns which still need to be addressed and further interventions. *Zilla*

Shiksha Kendras conduct programmes for formal schooling. Besides, the alternative schooling facilities that lead to mainstreaming of the out-of school children include: non-residential bridge courses and residential bridge courses for the children of migratory labour, modernisation of *madrakas*, human development centres for urban deprived children and the *shiksha ghar* programme. The opening of Education Guarantee Scheme (EGS) centres started earlier, are now being upgraded to primary and upper primary schools to contribute to the progress of elementary education in the State as seen in Table 2.

Table 2 reflects phenomenal growth in enrolment of children in the age group 6-14, indicating that the gap of non-enrolled children has narrowed down by 63.3 per cent, from 7.7 lakh children out of the system in 2003-04 to 2.82 lakh in 2006-07. Its impact on enrolment of children recorded 30.6 per cent growth at primary stage, from 91.51 lakh children in 2003-04 to 119.52 lakh in 2006-07, and 19.3 per cent, at upper primary stage which has been lower as compared to the primary stage, that is, from 25.54 lakh children to 44.81 lakh during the corresponding period. As regards progress of education of disadvantaged groups, the data relating to girls indicate that participation of girls at the primary stage increased from 46.6 per cent in 2003-04 to 47.5 per cent in 2006-07, while there has been a marked decrease in the share of scheduled caste children from 24.55 to 17.7 per cent at primary stage, and of scheduled tribes from 24.5 to 24.2 per cent during this period. The participation of disabled children made little progress; it remained almost the same, that is, 0.5 per cent during 2003-04 to 2006-07 except during 2004-05 when it was 0.6 per cent, indicating that the development efforts have not yielded significant result for bringing out-of-school children of disadvantaged groups to the mainstream schooling. The transition rate from primary to upper primary, as indicated in the Table,

Table 2 : Trends of Outcome Indicators of Elementary Education in Madhya Pradesh based on Base Line Data

Indicators	2003-04	2004-05	2005-06	2006-07
Number of children aged 6-14 years not enrolled in school or alternative system (In lakh)	7.74 lakh	4.28 lakh	4.72 lakh	2.82 lakh
Number of children enrolled in school (6-14)	117.05 lakh (elementary)	141.78 lakh (elementary)	155.27 lakh (elementary)	164.33 lakh (elementary)
	91.51 lakh in primary	103.51 lakh in primary	112.74 lakh in primary	119.52 lakh in primary
	25.54 in upper primary	38.27 in upper primary	42.53 in upper primary	44.81 in upper primary
Share of girls enrolled in primary stage (%)	46.60	47.00%	47.30	47.50
Share of SC children at primary stage (%)	24.55	17.90	17.80	17.70
Share of ST children at primary stage (%)	24.50	24.20	24.20	24.20
Share of disabled at primary stage(%)	0.50	0.60	0.50	0.50
Transition rate from primary to upper primary (%)	86.54	90.62	92.47	93.70

Source : State Report of 5th Joint Review Mission of Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan, Rajya Shiksha Kendra, Bhopal, Madhya Pradesh, January, 2007.

however, increased moderately from 86.54 per cent in 2003-04 to 93.70 per cent in 2006-07. The progress of elementary education in Madhya Pradesh, despite the efforts made by RGSM through *Shiksha Kendras* at different levels under the management of Panchayati Raj Institutions has rather been inadequate and not satisfactory for achieving the elusive goal of universalisation of elementary education primarily due to lack of coordination

between PRIs and PTAs, among many other considerations that still need urgent attention to get the desired success.

Major Issues

Lack of Infrastructure : Availability of adequate infrastructural facilities in schools determines the quality of education among others to attract non-enrolled children to school and also to reduce dropout of children

to quite an extent. Table 3 indicates the infrastructural gaps in the State schools in 2006-07. As many as 244 primary and 5032 upper primary schools were without their own school buildings; 2377 primary and 948 upper primary schools had buildings in dilapidated conditions; besides lack of 16776 and 7739 required classrooms in primary and upper primary schools, respectively and inadequate facilities like drinking water, toilets for boys and girls in thousands of primary and upper primary schools etc. which need to be addressed as major concerns to bring more and more children to school. It reflects that the efforts of PTA and PRIs backed up with the strength of RGSM for providing financial, academic and administrative support for the development programmes for primary and upper primary education have not yet reached their targets.

Low Educational Indicators of Access, Enrolment and Quality: Table 4 indicates that the basic educational indicators of access, enrolment and quality have been low in 2005-06 with a net enrolment ratio of 90.80 per cent at primary stage and 78.40 per cent at upper primary stage. This is perhaps due to a large number of non-enrolled and out-of-school children in the age group of 6-11 (3.34 lakhs) and in the age group of 11-14 (1.38 lakh). Out of a total of 155.27 lakh children enrolled at primary and upper primary stages (112.74 lakh at primary and 42.53 lakh at upper primary) including children enrolled in all types of bridge courses and *shiksha ghars*, more than 30 lakh (about 20 per cent) dropout from the system which appeared to be a hard task to bring them back to formal schooling or alternative schooling system. The dropout rate as indicated in Table 4, remains 19.9 per cent at primary stage and 19.10 per cent at upper primary stage due to the many reasons (mentioned by the approved Annual Work Plan and Budget, 2007-08) such as of the total out-of-school children 19.1 per cent drop out due

to working as labour in agriculture and allied fields, 15.9 per cent due to sibling care, 15.1 per cent due to cattle grazing and 13.3 per cent on account of weak financial condition and 13.2 per cent due to migration. Rest of the children do not attend school because of handicaps or prolonged illness, school environment not conducive, lack of educational facilities and reluctance of the parents to educate their children. The problem gets further complicated by shortfalls in attendance rate of 73.40 per cent at primary stage and 73.50 per cent at upper primary stage as a deterrent to achieving universal access to elementary education, with as many as 27 children out of 100 enrolled in school remaining absent from each primary and upper primary school. Besides there were 25688 disabled children out of school in the age group of 6-11. The failure rate of about 22 per cent children at primary level and 39 per cent at upper primary level makes the problem even more complex as they are not able to cross the primary and upper primary classes, the pass percentage at primary being 78.40 per cent and at upper primary level 61.10 per cent. The existence of 32325 single teacher primary schools which lead to low quality of education imparted to children, so also, over-crowded classes in primary and upper primary schools too determine the quality of education imparted by them. There were 30582 primary and 4518 upper primary schools with pupil-teacher ratio of more than 50 which often have an adverse impact upon the classroom delivery in general and education quality in particular.

Out-of-School Children (Dropouts and Never-Enrolled): Table 5 indicates district-wise out-of-school children in the State. More than 82 per cent of children belong to the disadvantaged groups of society who are out of the education system. Of the total out-of-school children, 50 per cent were girls. Similarly, of the total SC and ST out-of-school

Table 3 : Gaps in Infrastructure in 2006-07

Type of school	Schools without own building	No. of schools in dilapidated condition	Required additional classroom	No. of schools without drinking water facility	No. of schools without toilet facility	No. of schools without girls toilet facility	No. of schools without Kitchen Sheds for mid-day meal
Primary Schools	244	2377	16776	14150	37265	62859	27484
Upper Primary Schools	5032	948	7739	8682	13825		NA
Total	5276	3325	24515	22832	51090	62859	27484

Source : Annual Work Plans and Budget for 2007-08, Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan—Rajya Shiksha Kendra, Bhopal, Madhya Pradesh.

Table 4 : Educational Indicators in Madhya Pradesh

S.No.	Basic Indicators (Primary)	Status (2005-06)
1.	Total Enrolment (I-V) (In Lakh)	112.74
2.	Gross Enrolment Ratio	103.61
3.	Net Enrolment Ratio	90.80
4.	Out of School Children (In Lakh)	3.34
5.	Dropout Rate	19.9%
6.	Attendance Rate	73.40%
7.	Achievement level (pass%)	78.40%
8.	No. of Single Teacher Schools	32325
9.	No. of Schools with PTR more than 50	30582
10.	No. of Disabled Children to be enrolled	25688
Basic Indicators (Upper Primary)		
1.	Total Enrolment (VI-VIII) (In Lakh)	42.53
2.	Gross Enrolment Ratio	90.24
3.	Net Enrolment Ratio	78.50
4.	Dropout Rate	19.10
5.	Out of School Children (In Lakh)	1.38
6.	Attendance Rate	73.52
7.	Achievement level (pass%)	61.10
8.	No of Schools with PTR more than 50	4518

Source : Report on Appraisal of Annual Work Plans and Budget for 2006-07, Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan—Appraisal Note for Project Approval Board (MHRD, Government of India).

children, 48.63 and 51.74 per cent were SC and ST girls. Again, out of the total out-of-school disabled children 42.10 per cent were girls. It suggests that the management efforts made for universalisation of elementary education under SSA seem to have overlooked these groups as alternative strategies too have not been effective to bring all out-of-school children to school. This may probably be so because the responsibility of managing school education in rural areas was taken from Village Education Committees and given to PTAs. The new name of VEC, that is, Education Committee of the Gram Sabha, has been assigned the job of supervision of school and monitoring of the progress of PTA by the Madhya Pradesh *Jan Shiksha Adhiniam*, 2002. It seems there is no interface between PRIs and the development programmes at school level. All these adversely affect the quality of school education, possibly because of the lack of clear direction and coordination of educational administration at different levels.

The Dying Cadre : Along with the transfer of management of school education to PRIs, it was decided by the State government that if a teacher retired from the regular post, the post will be abolished and it will be kept in the Dying Cadre. Since 1996 in place of recruitment of teachers in regular scales, the State started recruitment of *Shiksha Karmis* for three years, at a very low pay scale, almost about one-fifth of what regular teachers got, as shown in Table 6. Teachers appointed in the *Shiksha Karmi* category were initially proposed to be regularised after three years. But after a two-year period, the appointment of *Shiksha Karmis* was stopped, and, in their place, teachers in primary, upper primary and secondary schools were recruited on contract basis. The PRIs maintain that this practice has been introduced in the State to make them more accountable and their further promotion will be made on the basis of their performance. The pay of contract teachers is fixed on a

consolidated basis. This has resulted in a lot of confusion, as teachers working on regular pay scales belong to the Education Department, and once a regular teacher retires, the post is abolished from the Education Department, and is kept in Dying Cadre. The resulting vacancy is filled only on contract basis by the Panchayati Raj bodies, *Shiksha Karmis*, contract teachers (*Sanvidya Shala Shiksha*) and *Gurujis* belonging to the Panchayati Raj Institutions.

However, on 19.12.2005 the State government constituted a Committee to clear the problem of differences between the pay scale of *shiksha karmis* and the contract teachers. The new pay scale and the designation of teachers are presented in Table 7. At present, the State has started to give *shiksha karmis* the new regular pay scale and the designation but new teachers are still recruited on contract basis. As per order of the Madhya Pradesh Government, every person selected through direct recruitment for the post of contract teachers shall be appointed for a period of three years for any school. At the end of the year, the appointing authority will assess his or her performance. After three years he or she may be appointed again for the next three years on contract basis by the panchayat on the basis of his work, conduct and performance. Such persons on appointment will be entitled to receive an increase of 15 per cent per annum of the contract amount. If the work of contract teacher is not satisfactory, his services will be terminated by the panchayat. The rules governing recruitment of contract teachers further state that recruitment will be school-based and no applicant shall apply for two posts in different schools at a time.

Quality Issues : The major challenge for educational planners and administrators is not universal enrolment and retention only but also to ensure better quality of education. In Madhya Pradesh, access to school and lack of

Table 5 : Out-of-School Children 2005-06 (6-14 years age group)

S.No.	District	Total	SC	ST	Disabled
(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)
1	Sheopur	4987	748	1825	380
2	Morena	2385	601	23	84
3	Bhind	490	144	0	353
4	Gwalior	21497	5424	2181	230
5	Shivpuri	12341	2445	2537	574
6	Guna	12666	2148	2864	179
7	Ashoknagar	4378	911	590	115
8	Datia	2010	450	207	137
9	Dewas	4251	794	1631	293
10	Ratlam	9755	1654	4226	216
11	Shajapur	14484	4414	592	197
12	Mandsaur	5968	1301	435	439
13	Neemuch	1662	217	335	276
14	Ujjain	7068	2339	435	4406
15	Indore	25559	6908	5879	472
16	Dhar	11017	334	9249	853
17	Jhabua	38954	1352	36309	1096
18	Khargone	11009	851	7180	811
19	Barwani	36719	2056	30955	547
20	Khandwa	15552	771	11400	651
21	Burhanpur	5008	308	2783	253
22	Bhopal	4014	1038	288	167
23	Sehore	2056	469	670	412
24	Raisen	1471	61	30	290
25	Rajgarh	5266	1285	327	220
26	Vidisha	11653	2707	939	403
27	Betul	6562	489	5143	339

(Contd.)

Table 5 : (Contd.)

(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)
28	Hoshangabad	17544	3237	4287	784
29	Harda	3995	692	2191	134
30	Sagar	18698	4501	3040	808
31	Damoh	5852	1361	1252	423
32	Panna	13767	3515	3478	457
33	Chhatarpur	13642	4493	1957	319
34	Tikamgarh	13532	3608	912	1106
35	Jabalpur	18995	4576	4195	864
36	Katni	2841	1073	1701	358
37	Narsinghpur	2148	395	494	201
38	Chhindwara	3993	730	1642	637
39	Seoni	1406	113	524	452
40	Mandla	4466	53	3465	379
41	Dindori	1525	43	1101	105
42	Balaghat	917	181	306	401
43	Rewa	14336	3936	3186	905
44	Shahdol	2062	248	1206	604
45	Anuppur	1370	146	803	291
46	Umaria	5915	535	3674	74
47	Sidhi	38557	5764	19695	1137
48	Satna	7899	1909	2847	856
	Total	472242	83328	190989	25688
	Total Number and Percentage of Girls	238804 (50.10%)	40523 (48.63%)	98817 (51.74%)	10860 (42.10)

Total Disadvantaged group out-of-school children =girls+SC+ST+Disabled=398004 (82.37%)

Source : State Report of 5th Joint Review Mission of Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan, Rajya Shiksha Kendra, Madhya Pradesh, January, 2007.

infrastructure – school buildings, playgrounds, over-crowded classroom, dilapidated conditions of school buildings, vacant posts and absenteeism of teachers, lack of pre-service and in-service training of teachers, non-availability of textbooks in time, ineffective and incomplete delivery of classroom instructions and syllabuses – all have led to low-enrolment, low retention and low achievement of children and ultimately low quality of education in schools. Lack of proper professional qualifications of primary and upper primary school teachers have an adverse effect on quality of teachers. In Madhya Pradesh professional qualifications are not necessary at any stage of school education, particularly for elementary education. The State has, however, started a 60-day diploma course for providing training to untrained teachers in primary and upper primary schools. This course is known as ‘Operation Quality’. Assistant Teachers, *Shiksha Karmis* and contract teachers (*Sanvidya Shala Shikshak*) have been registered for this training, though the State has not yet made the professional qualifications essential for recruitment of teachers in primary, upper primary and secondary schools.

Interface Between PRIs and PTAs : The Madhya Pradesh *Jan Shiksha Adhiniyam*, 2002, has given all the administrative and financial powers to PTAs for managing and conducting development programmes for primary and upper primary schools, apparently sidelining the role of PRIs for school management. It has been found that Education Committee of the Gram Sabha is responsible to monitor and supervise the activities conducted by the PTA. Gram Sabha does not have representation in the PTA. There is also provision in the *Adhiniyam* that Village Education Plan (*Jan Shiksha Yojana*) prepared by the PTA will be submitted to Education Committee of the local body and the Committee with its recommendations submit it to the Gram Sabha

for consideration and approval. Thereafter, the Plan will be sent to the *Jan Shiksha Kendra*. The plan will be called as *Jan Shiksha Yojna*. There is no involvement of PRIs in the educational activities of PTA. The appraisal report of the Annual Work Plan and Budget 2006-07 indicates the involvement of PTA members, *anganwadi* workers, and other literacy volunteers in preparation of *Jan Shiksha Yojan* but not of the members of the Gram Sabha or the Education Committee. There is no mention about the number of training programmes conducted for PRIs at different levels for their involvement in educational activities. Structural reforms in Madhya Pradesh indicate diversification of administrative structures and decentralisation of authority, participatory management and convergence of different departments and resources. The formation of *Zilla Shiksha Kendras* in Madhya Pradesh suffers from lack of coordination since all the constituents of *Zilla Shiksha Kendra* have their own offices at distant places. Administrative and Financial Powers for educational management were devolved to PRIs at district and block levels but, in practice, PRIs cannot exercise these powers due to their lack of awareness. Presidents of *Zilla Panchayats* have a Rule Book, but they are not able to interpret the rules. Educational plans prepared by PTA are not presented in the Gram Sabha. Therefore, most of the members of Gram Panchayats are unaware about the plans and the planning processes, which constitute a serious lacuna in the process of effective schooling.

Conclusions

Changes in the policy and approach of educational development in Madhya Pradesh have taken place several times in the past with every change in the government. These changes come from top to bottom, resulting in a clear lack of interface between the development administration and the PRIs since

Table 6 : Different Categories of Teachers with Different Pay Scales on the Same Posts

(2002)

Regular Teachers		Shiksha Karmi		Contract Teachers	
Category	Pay Scale	Category	Pay Scale	Category	Pay Scale
Guruji in EGS Centres					₹ 1000/-p.m (Consolidated)
Lower Division Teacher in Primary and Upper Primary Schools	₹ 4000-6000	Class-III	₹ 800-1200	Class-III	₹ 2500/-p.m (Consolidated)
Upper Division Teacher (High, and Higher Secondary Schools)	₹ 5000-8000/	Class-II	₹ 1000-1800	Class-II	₹ 3500/- p.m (Consolidated)
Lecturer (Hr. Sec. School)	₹ 5500-9000/	Class-I	₹ 1200-2040	Class-I	₹4500/ (Consolidated)

Source : Directorate of Public Instruction, Bhopal, Madhya Pradesh (2002).

Table 7 : New Pay Scales of Different Category of Teachers in Madhya Pradesh

S.No.	Category	Terms	Primary	Upper Primary
1.	Regular Teachers Appointed by Education and Tribal Department before 1995	Eligible for all government allowances and increments	Assistant Teachers (₹3500-5500) app.	Upper grade (₹4500-6000) app.
2.	Shiksha Karmi Appointed by Janpad Panchayat	Renewal after 3 years (can be made regular teacher)	III grade fixed @ ₹ 2500 per month	II grade Fixed @ ₹ 3500 per month
3.	Contract Teachers (Sanvidha Shikshak) Appointed by Janpad Panchayat	3 years renewable contract	III grade fixed @ ₹ 2500 per month	II grade fixed @ ₹ 3500
4.	Guruji Appointed by Community		Fixed @ ₹ 2500 per month	

Source : Report on Appraisal of Annual Work Plans and Budget for 2006-07, Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan—Appraisal Note for Project Approval Board (MHRD, Government of India) and the Annual Report of the Department of Education, 2007-08, Government of Madhya Pradesh.

decisions regarding administration, finance and academic issues are taken by the RGSM and conveyed to the *Shiksha Kendras* at different levels. PRIs' role is limited to recruitment, transfer and decision-making at the district and block levels and not at school level where PTA manages and plans all the activities of school creating a gap in functioning of PRIs. Another major issue relates to making all these structures and functions as one unified plan of action. The employees on *Shiksha Kendras* are either on deputation or on contract basis and the three constituents of *Shiksha Kendras* are associated with each other in a temporary arrangement; they are not amalgamated. This creates insecurity in the employees regarding their cadre and the service conditions. This again shows the lack of interface between the constituents of *Shiksha Kendras*.

Education Committee of Gram Sabha can give punishment to teachers if the working of a teacher is unsatisfactory. This situation seems to be unrealistic. Education Committee and Gram Sabha have no involvement in other activities but are responsible simply for monitoring and supervision. It has been found that Education Committee members hardly visit the school and similar is the case with the members of Gram Sabha, they do not have the capacity to involve in the activities of school management. It seems only a formality to get any proposal approved from the Education Committee and Gram Sabha. Their role is peripheral in which they are neither interested nor motivated to involve in the development programmes since all the powers in the *Adhinyam* have been given to PTA. Power of checking of financial documents at all the three levels—village, Janpad and district—should be devolved to PRIs. Transfer of teachers should not be done without the permission of the Gram Panchayat. PRIs should be treated as special invitees in PTAs. Gram Panchayat should have the powers of rewards

and punishment of teachers. Teacher management in the State is one of the important issues that should be addressed on priority basis. The policy interventions seem to be haphazard. For instance, the pay scales of teachers are not uniform. They have been fixed separately for regular teachers and the contract teachers. It is necessary to bring teachers in regular pay scale, may be on the basis of their annual appraisal, to have parity in the present three categories of teachers in the same school on different pay scales for the similar work. The present capacity building programmes available for Village Education Committees and other members of the local bodies are also quite inadequate and ineffective. Therefore, there is a need to prepare and implement capacity building plans. Involvement of Panchayati Raj Institutions should be an integral part of planning and implementation mechanism right from the habitation level to the district level. Functions like planning, curriculum and syllabus formulation, preparation of textual and non-textual materials, training of teachers, recruitment, selection and transfers of teachers are all important for building their capacities. This is only possible when the powers are devolved in true sense and the capacity building programmes are conducted for PRIs and accountability is fixed at various levels. There is a serious need to assess the policies adopted so far for the present phase of structural reforms. An urgent task would be involvement of all the stakeholders in educational planning and management. This is necessary to understand the interface of these administrative structures in managing various activities of elementary education in the State.

Under the Right to Education Act, local authority as defined by the Act will comprise municipal bodies in urban areas and panchayats in rural area and also a body having administrative control over schools in the area

such as Block Education Officer/Area Education Officer as the case may be in the States. School Management Committee which is a necessary pre-condition for primary and upper primary schools also has the participation of Gram Panchayat. It is, therefore, necessary that panchayats at village, block and district levels should be strengthened and involved in planning and management of elementary education.

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