



ASSESSING THE NEED TO INVEST ON MINIMUM BASIC FACILITIES IN GOVERNMENT PRIMARY SCHOOLS TO ENSURE QUALITY EDUCATION

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Abstract

Over the last one decade good private schools, have emphasised on providing adequate physical facilities to students so that they can get an environment similar to which they are use to at their homes. Well designed building, attractive painting, tile floorings, fully air-conditioned classrooms, comfortable seating facilities, well maintained playgrounds, outdoor–indoor games facilities with expert trainers, filtered and cooled drinking water, clean and hygienic toilets, modern teaching methods are the few focus points educational institutes are stressing upon now a days. Although these physical facilities are not directly connected to quality of education but it is true that these amenities can be helpful in creating an environment which usually attracts the students especially at primary and pre primary level. These facilities can successfully bring the child at school door with smile on their face leading to increase in enrolment and also be helpful in reducing the problem of drop outs. In this research paper author has visited the 100 government primary schools randomly selected from ten educational blocks of Lucknow District and discussed the issue of scarcity of physical facilities in their school with the head teachers/in charge teachers with the help of interview schedule method. With the help of percentage technique investigator has analysed the data obtained and came to conclusion that immediate steps are need of the hour to improve basic physical facilities in government primary schools to ensure quality education to all.

Keywords: *Physical facilities, Enrolment, Quality Education, Dropouts*



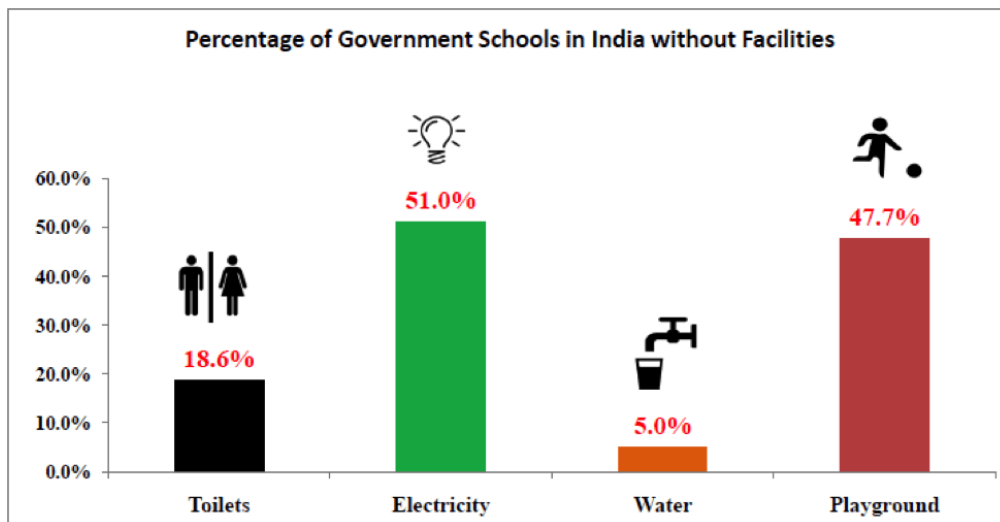
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Introduction

It is commonly seen that private educational institutes spend too much on maintaining physical facilities in school campus, on the other hand government primary schools are lagging behind in arranging even the basic minimum facilities in campus and result is continuously degrading enrolment. It is very hard for parents to accept that their children of age group 6 years to 11 years (primary level) are compelled to sit on *Chatai* or *Tat-patti* and sometimes on bare floor all twelve months, even in the months from December to February when floor is as cold as ice.

In India, condition of government-run schools is pathetic to the extent that most of the schools are situated in places which are not conducive for education and the whole atmosphere is unhygienic. In most of the schools, the classes are held in tents, in the open space and in the corridors. The conditions of these tents are also very pathetic and are forcefully made to stand by bricks and stones. Many students attend classes at the risk of their lives. Wherever there are permanent structures, classrooms are very dirty and there is no proper lighting and fans. The students sit on *tat patti* as there is no arrangement for desks in these schools. Some students even sit without *tat patti*. In many schools the window panes hang in the air with a very weak support and there are no glasses to protect students from cold or hot weather conditions. There are lots of garbage and dust inside and around the classrooms/corridors of the schools and students often asked to sweep their classrooms and corridors themselves. (Neetu Banga, 2010)

As per unstarred Question Number 329, Ministry of Human Resource Development, Answered on 25-02-2015 in the Lok Sabha, the situation in Government schools is worse than that in private schools. A half of them have no electricity and almost a half of them have no playground apart from lack of toilets and drinking water. (Dubbudu, 2015)



Source: <https://factly.in>

Multiple studies have shown that lack of toilets is one of the prime reasons for the dropout of children, especially the girl child from the school system. Other than lack of toilets, the school system also suffers from lack of other facilities like access to drinking water, electricity, play ground etc. (Dubbudu, 2015)

Poor sanitation, water scarcity, inferior water quality and inappropriate hygiene behaviour are disastrous for infants and young children and are a major cause of mortality for children under five. Those conditions are also detrimental to the health of school-aged

children, who spend long hours in schools. The physical environment and cleanliness of a school facility can significantly affect the health and well-being of children. Disease spreads quickly in cramped spaces with limited ventilation, where hand-washing facilities or soap are not available, and where toilets are in disrepair. Too often, schools are places where children become ill. (WASH, 2012)

A survey report of NGO 'ASER' suggest that in Uttar Pradesh 64% schools do not have boundary wall, 15% school lack proper drinking water facility, 4.2% school do not have toilets, in 40.9% schools toilets are there but not being used, 12.3% schools do not have separate toilet facility for girls, in 18.6 % schools toilet for girls remains locked. It was found that in 20% schools the condition of toilet is not in the position to be used.

Supreme court of India and various High Courts have issued directions to Central Government and State Governments from time to time for maintaining basic minimum facilities in schools, especially for girls but governments have continuously lingered on this issue on the name of lack of budget. Recently in a PIL case Chief justice of Allahabad High Court have asked the Government of Uttar Pradesh that even after 69 years of independence, students of government primary schools sit on mat or tat-patti, why government does not arrange table and chairs for them?

Objectives

- 1) To find out the availability of minimum basic facilities at government primary schools.
- 2) To discuss the need of investment on necessary basic facilities in government primary schools.
- 3) To explore the suggestive measure for improving basic physical facilities in government primary school.

Research Methodology

The present study is descriptive in nature. Survey method has been used in this study.

Sample

Random sampling technique has been used. First of all, investigator has obtained a list of government primary schools of Lucknow district from office of Basic Siksha Adhikari. 100 schools were selected from ten educational blocks – Bakshi ka Talab, Mall, Malihabad, Sarojnagar, Kakori, Chinhat, Gosaiganj, Mohanlalganj, Nagar Kshetra-1 and Nagar

Kshetra-2 (10 schools from each block). Investigator personally visited the schools and interviewed the Head teachers/In charge teachers.

Tool for data collection

Self prepared structured interview schedule was used to collect data from Head teacher/in charge teachers of government primary schools.

Statistical Technique

Percentage technique is used to analyse the data qualitatively.

Data Analysis and Findings:

Interview Schedule -

- 1) When was your school building constructed?

5 years before or earlier	Between 5 to 10 years	Between 10 to 15 years	More than 15 years or before
12%	28%	36%	24%

- 2) Do you find your school building maintained enough?

Yes	No
33%	67%

- 3) If not, what are the reasons?

Sr. No.	Reasons	Percentage (Approximate)
1.	Unavailability of funds for regular maintenance	36%
2.	Corruption involved during construction	27%
3.	Period of construction	22%
4.	Negligence of higher authorities	15%

- 4) When boundary wall of this school was constructed?

5 years before or earlier	Between 5 to 10 years	Between 10 to 15 years	More than 15 years or before
4%	26%	41%	29%

- 5) Do you find your boundary wall appropriate and strong enough for safety and security of students?

Yes	No
53%	47%

6) If not, what are the reasons for damage to boundary wall?

Sr. No.	Reasons	Percentage
1.	Unavailability of funds for regular maintenance	42%
2.	Corruption involved during construction	36%
3.	Period of construction	11%
4.	Deliberate damaging by unsocial elements	11%

7) Do you have proper drinking water facility in school campus?

Yes	No
73%	27%

8) Do you have separate toilet facility for boys, girls and teachers?

Yes	No
81%	19%

9) Whether toilets are being cleaned regularly?

Yes	No
12%	88%

10) What are the arrangements for cleaning the toilets?

Government 'Safai Karmi'	Private sweeper on self expenses	Students
14%	86%	-

11) How many teaching staff is posted at school?

2 or less than 2	Between 3 to 5	5 or above
13%	46%	41%

12) How many students are enrolled in school?

Less than 50	Between 50 to 100	Between 100 to 150	More than 150
6%	22%	42%	30%

13) What is teacher student ratio in school?

Equal to or Less than 30:1 years	More than 30:1
59%	41%

14) Do you have maintained playground in school?

Yes	No
19%	81%

15) Which type of games played by students in school?

Games which require special equipments	Games which do not require special equipments/ traditional games
15%	85%

16) Do you have games teacher in school?

Yes	No
-	100%

17) Whether teacher uses teaching learning material during teaching?

Yes	No
63%	33%

18) Which type of teaching learning materials are being used in school?

Purchased from market	Prepared by students and teachers	Obtained from natural resources
22%	49%	29%

19) Whether supportive staffs e.g. peon, security guard and sweeper etc. are posted in school?

Yes	No
-	100%

20) If not, then who performs the job of supporting staff?

<i>Safai Karmi</i> posted by government	Private arrangements	<i>Rasoiya</i> (posted by government MDM)	Students	Did not answered
6%	14%	27%	13%	40%

21) Do you find that such types of scare arrangements are enough to attract the parents to enrol their wards in your school?

Yes	No
27%	73%

22) Do you find that parents of your students are satisfied with the available physical facilities in school?

Yes	No
31%	69%

23) To whom you find responsible for scarcity of physical resources in school?

Sr. No.	Responsible factors for scarcity of physical resources	Percentage
1.	Government Policies	51%
2.	Negligence of higher authorities	13%
3.	Unavailability of enough funds	11%
4.	Corruption	10%
5.	Society	9%
6.	School Administration (Teachers)	6%

24) What are your suggestions to improve the quality of basic physical facilities at school to improve quality of education?

Sr. No.	Suggestions for improvement	Percentage
1.	Construction of schools by expert agencies.	51%
2.	Availability of enough funds.	77%
3.	Check on corruption.	83%
4.	Regular monitoring of teacher student ratio as per RTI.	68%

5.	Availability of enough supportive staff.	93%
6.	Recruitment of games teachers.	54%
7.	Regular training of teachers for making and using TLM.	46%
8.	Drinking water and toilet facility must be priority.	97%
9.	Not engaging the teachers in activities other than teaching.	85%

Discussion:

Analysis of data obtained from interview of head teachers/in charge teachers of government primary schools reveal that, only 33% of them find that building of their school is strong and safe for students. Investigator finds that reason for low maintenance of school is that very limited number of schools have been constructed in last five or ten year. Most of the school buildings have been constructed fifteen years back or more..

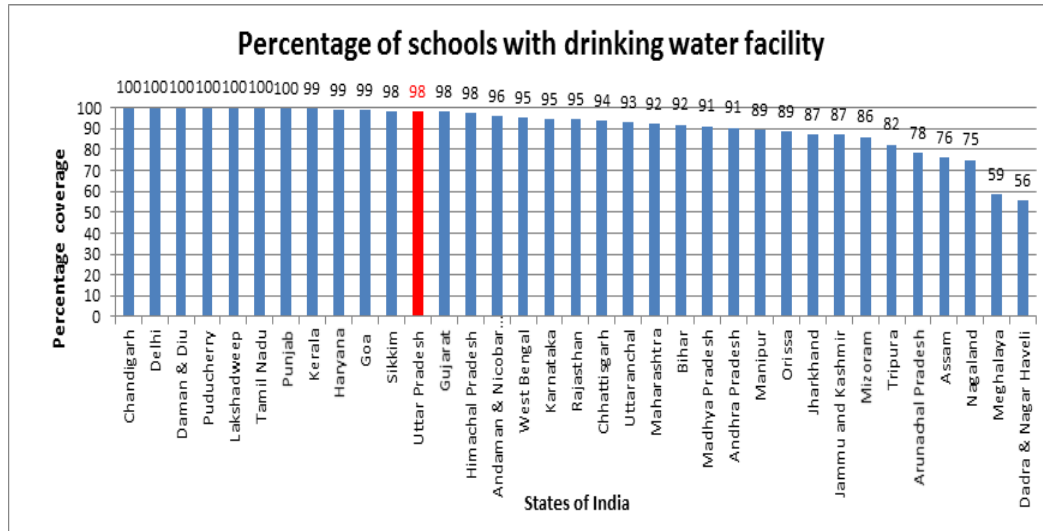
The condition of government primary schools in the city is dismal. Hundreds of schools are still awaiting renovation of buildings and other facilities. The infrastructure of primary schools is so ailing that students are forced to sit on the ground as the roof of classrooms can fall anytime. (TOI, 2012)

36% head teachers of school revealed that unavailability of funds for regular maintenance is the main reason for ruining school buildings. 27% respondents told that corruption involved during construction of buildings and classrooms is another reason for early damages to school buildings. In spite of having no expertise, teachers are compelled to construct schools, so that higher authorities can easily get their share through corrupt practices. They disclosed that hardly 60 to 70% money allotted for constructing school building is utilized. 22% heads of school revealed that period lapsed after construction of building is another major issue. Most of them with damaged buildings have passed 15 or more years after construction; major repairing or reconstruction is badly needed. 15% teachers find that negligence of higher authorities especially at block level, also contributes to disappointing maintenance of schools, as only those head teachers/in charge teachers are able to get repairing funds for their schools those have better relations with officers.

Apart from this 53% head teachers accept that boundary wall of their school is strong and safe while 47% of head teachers find that boundary wall of their school is unsatisfactory. Teachers told that due to low height of boundary, absence of gate and damaged boundary allow the cows, buffalos and dogs to enter in school campus which may harm the students.

As per unstarred Question Number 329, Ministry of Human Resource Development, Answered on 25-02-2015 in the Lok Sabha, a total 58,221 schools across the country do not have access to drinking water. Of this are 5% of all the government schools & 1% of all private schools. A total of 4% schools in the country fall into this category. Situation is worst

in seven states Meghalaya, Nagaland, Arunachal Pradesh, Assam, Tripura, Jammu & Kashmir, Manipur, Andhra Pradesh (including Telangana), Jharkhand, and Bihar where one out of every 10 schools is without drinking water. There are 14 states where the percentage of schools without drinking water facility is less than 1%. (Dubbudu, 2015)

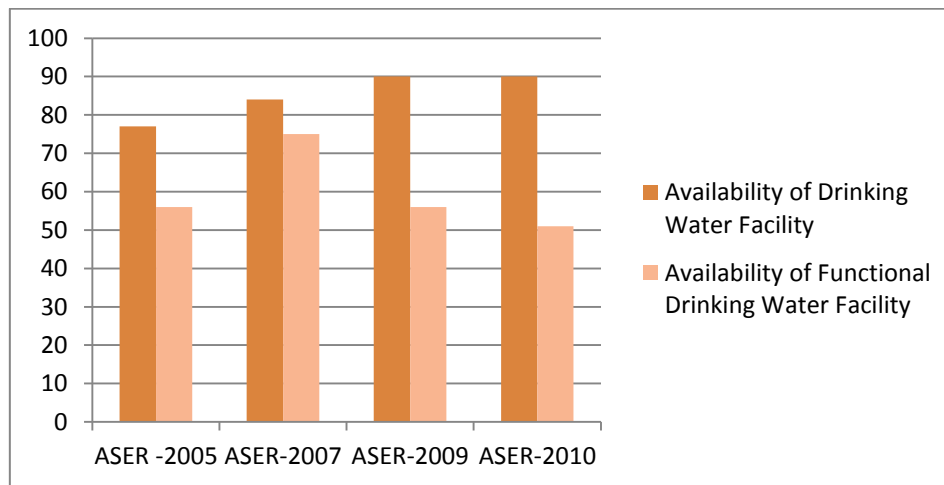


Source: www.indiawaterportal.org

Even U-DISE data 2012-2013, suggest that average 98 to 99% schools in Uttar Pradesh have drinking water facility and during visit to government primary schools investigator found the same. Every school has hand pump installed in school, not a single school was found without hand pump, but the quality of water available to students for drinking and cooking Mid Day Meal (MDM) was found questionable. Investigator found that 56% schools have clean drinking water facility within the school campus; most of the schools have hand pump facility for drinking water. In some of the schools submersible pumps and plastic tanks were also installed about 4 to 5 years ago but most of them are not in working position due to lack of servicing and maintenance. It was found that in number of schools either does not have drinking water facility but the water delivered by hand pump is contaminated (Foul smell, colour or taste).

During personal interview 73% Head teachers accepted that they have proper drinking water facility in school, while according to 27% of them the drinking water facility in their school is unsatisfactory. It was found that either drinking water facility in these schools was dysfunctional or the water delivered by hand pump is not appropriate for drinking purpose. Investigator was speechless when she found more than 150 students standing at a single hand pump quarrelling for their chance of cleaning their MDM plates and drinking water during Lunch time.

After data analysis a great difference was found in findings regarding availability of drinking water facility and availability of functional drinking water facility. Similar data were reported in ASER (Annual Status of Education Report) 2010.

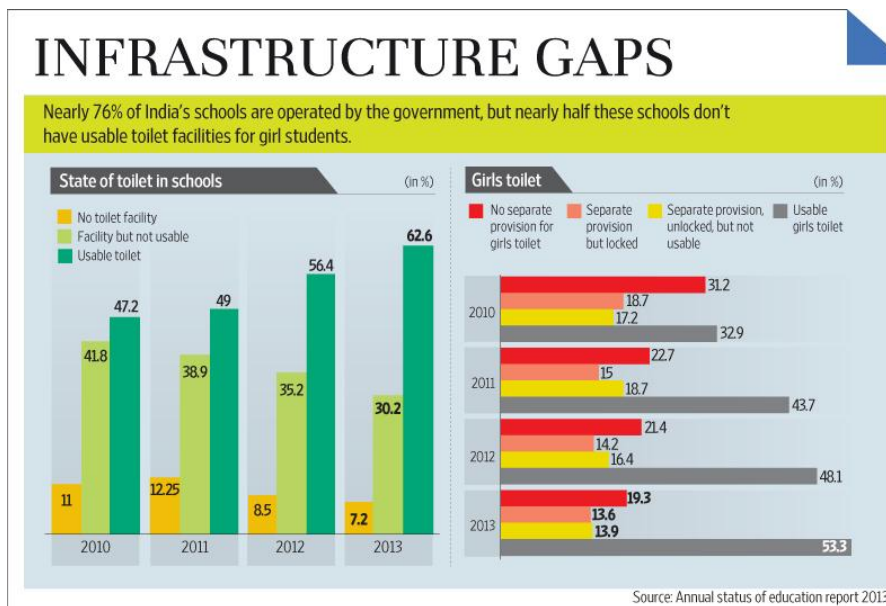


Source: ASER Report (2005-2010)

According to the Unified District Information System data for Education (U-DISE) for the year 2013-14, there are a total of 257,680 schools without a toilet. This comes to a total of 18% schools in the country without a toilet. Chandigarh & Delhi are the only UT & State with a toilet in every school. There are 9 such states where the percentage of schools without a toilet is less than 5%. States like Puducherry, Karnataka, Gujarat, Kerala, Maharashtra and Uttar Pradesh are part of this list. (Dubbudu, 2015)

During interview head teachers/in charge teachers of the schools revealed almost similar results, 81% of them accepted that they have separate toilets but 19% answered negatively, in these schools it was found that either boys and girls goes to same toilet (especially in urban areas) or girls and ladies teachers have separate/common toilets for them while boys and male teachers has to go out for toilets i.e. field, road or other open spaces (in rural areas). They told that they have 3 to 4 toilets out of them only one or two are in usable condition. So they can't allow everybody, ultimately accepting the social norms girls are given preference. ASER report – 2013 also indicated towards non functionality of toilets.

During interview another interesting fact come to the notice that in most of the schools whether with separate toilet facility or not, only urination facility is available. Nobody is allowed to excrete solid waste in school toilets and the reason behind is the lack of arrangements for proper cleaning of toilets. For solid waste excretion students are suggested to go home or in open spaces. Teachers also complained that once the student goes out of school for urination or excretion, they usually come back after 2 to 3 hours and sometimes even do not come back.



Only 12% of head teachers of the school accepted that toilets in their schools are being cleaned daily, while others accept that either toilet are cleaned weekly or when they call the sweeper at their own expense. It was horrible to accept that 100 or more individuals (including students and teachers) using toilets (even if only for urination) on an average thrice in a day are not being cleaned on daily basis.

Out of 100 schools visited 14% respondents responded that toilets are cleaned by Government *Safaikarmi* once or twice in week, while other accepted that either *Safaikarmi* does not comes to school or comes after 7 to 10 days and denies to clean the toilets. Most of the time *Safaikarmi* comes to school after school is closed or about to close and sweeps playground, when they are asked to come in time they make excuses that they have the responsibility of cleaning whole Gram Panchayat (usually having 3 to 5 villages and population of 2000 to 3000), they cannot come to school every day. 86% respondents accepted that they have made private arrangement of sweeper for cleaning the toilets and the expenses of Rs. 200 to Rs. 500 per month is jointly beard by teachers.

Coming to the Student teacher ratio, a study conducted by the Premji Foundation sought to establish a correlation between PTRs (Pupil - Teacher Ratio) and the learning outcomes of children. A survey held at 1,880 government schools in Karnataka revealed that schools with a PTR between 10 and 20 had the best learning levels. Performance dropped sharply as the PTR increased, particularly when the number of children was more than 30. (Kanchan Shrivastava, 2015)

Right to Education act (RTE) mandates an optimal student teacher ratio of 30:1 for all Indian Schools. According to 2009-10 survey by District Information System on Education

(DISE), the current average student teacher ratio for primary schools in India is 32. In fact this number has been improving over the years starting with 47 in 1995 to 40 in 2000 and 34 in 2008. However, the average hides the reality. Maximum number of primary schools has the teacher-student ratio of 50:1. Only a single teacher is playing different roles in several schools. (TOI, 2012)

Data obtained from interview finds that 59% schools, most of them situated in urban areas, near urban areas and road side schools have better students teacher ratio (less than or equivalent to 30:1) but the status of schools situated in interior and rural areas was found disappointing where teacher students was found higher up to 50:1 or even more (especially where one or two teachers are posted).

It was found very disappointing that even the teachers posted in school are not engaged in teaching. In most of the schools one teacher is permanently engaged in BLO (Booth Level Officer) duty for Election Commission of India. Where, they have to make voter cards and other related works on priority basis. Teachers also revealed that teachers who deny doing BLO duty are threatened by higher departmental officers for suspension, deduction in salary, freezing the increments etc. Apart from this one or two teachers are always engaged in Bal gadna, Jan gadna, Samajvadi Pension Yojna, Pulse Polio duty, maintaining National Pariwar Register etc. Continuous engagement of teachers in such type of non teaching activities ultimately degrades the quality of education and educational outcome of students.

During interview 15% teachers accepted that their students play standard games which require sports equipments, i.e. Football, Volleyball, Cricket Bat-Ball, Skipping ropes, Badminton Racket, Carom board, Chess etc., while 85% head teachers accepted that student of their schools plays the traditional games like Kabaddi, Kho-Kho, Barf-Pani, Hide & Seek etc. It was even much disappointing that some of the schools with sports equipments hardly allow the students to play with them. They are preserved in head teacher's room in well packed condition.

In a society that is facing serious health issues, the importance of physical education (PE) in our Public primary schools is often neglected. (Christina, 2011)

In most city government schools, students do not engage in games or physical training due to unavailability of playgrounds and lack of adequate space. Even the government primary schools (GPS) do not have playgrounds on their campus. They send the students to play in neighbouring municipal parks or adjoining grounds. The school heads said they were

helpless and that the education department should arrange for playgrounds near the schools. (Mufti, 2015)

Chances of students of playing standard games are easily reflected in data that only 19% teachers accept that they have well maintained playground in school. During her visit to schools, investigator's finding resembles the above study, she found that a number of schools (most of them situated in urban areas) even do not have open space big enough where student can perform prayer, national anthem and P.T. During personal visit to schools, investigator found that during lunch or in games period students plays themselves. One of the teachers was just standing there, just observing them. It was very disappointing to find that no single government primary schools has games teacher to guide the students.

63% respondents respond that in their school TLM is used during teaching. It is obvious the question to arise that when most of the school does not have TLM then which type of TLM is used by them but when investigator asked them to show their TLM bank, they failed to show that. 29% head teacher accept that they use natural objects as TLM, 49% respondent accept that they try to use temporary type of TLM i.e. Charts, Models, Flash cards prepared by students and teachers, they are temporary in nature, not strong enough to be preserved. Remaining said that in their schools teacher uses market made TLM purchased at own expenses. Head teacher told that earlier every teacher used to get Rs. 500 per annum especially for purchasing/making TLM, but since 2011-12 not a single teacher or school has received a single penny from department on the name of TLM. It seems that Teachers have answered this question deliberately in positive manner to justify their teaching methods.

The infrastructure of primary schools is so ailing that students are forced to sit on the ground. (TOI, 2012) During visit to school, investigator finds that none of the government primary school have seats for students. Students are bound to sit on Plastic *Chatai* or *Tat-Patti*. According to head teachers they do not have any fund in this regard, these *chatai* or *Tat-Patti* is being purchased from Rs 5000 – (allotted to them per annum for school maintenance and management). It is not possible for them to purchase wooden or plastic seats for students n such a small amount.

It was very interesting to know that none of government primary schools have supportive staff i.e. Peon, Security guard, Sweeper etc. posted in school. When head teachers were asked in this context the 40% of them did not answered the question while according to others *Safaikarmi* (6%), *Rasoiya* (27%), private arrangement (14%), students (13%) performs the duty of supportive staff.

When head teachers were asked that whether they think that facilities available are enough to attract the parents? 73% of respondent answered negative with smile on their face, while 27% of them believe that these facilities are enough because students coming to these schools belongs to the extreme low income group. They are use to live in conditions even vulnerable than this. Apart from this 31% head teachers find that the parents of the students enrolled in school are satisfied with the facilities available in school, while 69% accept that parents are not satisfied with the facilities.

According to them, government Policies (51%), Negligence of higher authorities, (13%) Unavailability of enough funds (11%), corruption (10%), society (9%), and school administration (6%) contributes to the vulnerable status of physical facilities in government primary schools.

Suggestion:

During interview heads of the school suggested that –

- 1) School must be get constructed by expert agencies (government or non government) rather than getting it constructed by teachers. Engaging expert agencies will reduce chances of corruption, ultimately raising the quality of construction.
- 2) More funds must be made available to government primary schools so that various repairing, maintenance and other expenses can be beard.
- 3) Corruption must be checked at various level, i.e. construction of building, allotment of fund for repairing the building etc. It will be helpful in improving quality of construction work.
- 4) Regular monitoring of student teacher ratio is needed. If necessary more teachers must be recruited. Apart from this teachers posted in school must not be engaged in works other than teaching. Good primary education must be the priority of State Governments and District Administration.
- 5) Every school must have necessary supportive staff like sweeper, peon, *Chaukidar* etc. In case permanent recruitment is not possible then these services can be hired from private agencies on temporary basis.
- 6) Every school must have expert games teacher to motivate and guide the students as per their interest. Enough funds must be made available to school for purchasing adequate sports equipments as per enrolment.
- 7) Teachers must be trained regularly to construct and use TLM as per the need. Every school must have separate fund for purchasing TLM. It will certainly helpful in improving quality of education

- 8) Availability of functional drinking water and toilet facility (separate for boys, girls and teachers) must be the priority. The inhuman behaviour of going out for urination and excretion must be checked immediately. Availability of permanent sweeper will be helpful in daily cleaning of toilets.

Conclusion:

From above discussion we can come to conclusion that government primary schools in Uttar Pradesh are lagging behind in availability of physical facilities for students as well as teachers. Unavailability of funds for regular maintenance and school administration, government policies, negligence of higher authorities and growing corruption are few main reasons adding to the problem. Central and state governments must invest in primary education on priority basis to provide basic physical facilities within campus. In one line immediate steps are required to improve the basic physical facilities in school campus before it's too late.

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