



Applicability of Teacher's Competency at Elementary Level: A study on Jalpaiguri District

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Abstract:

Sarva Siksha Abhiyan (SSA) is a holistic and convergent programme targets to improve enrolment, retention and to providing quality base education for 6-14 years old children. The goal of providing quality education is a constitutional and fundamental right now. There are so many factors influencing the quality of education, which are basic infrastructure, curriculum, teaching learning process, teacher, etc. and here teacher plays the most crucial role as he is to generate the dividend with effective utilization of other resources. Now the question is, 'is a teacher having full knowledge of competency and commitment areas of their professional life?' The study intends to find out the applicability of teacher's competency at the elementary level of education. This study also tries to find out the teacher related problems based on a micro study, which has been applied at the Dhupguri block of Jalpaiguri district in West Bengal. It ends with some suitable suggestions for effective utilization of teacher's competency.

Key Words: *Teacher's Competency, Elementary Level of Education, Quality Education.*

Introduction: Education plays an important role in social, economic, cultural and political development of a nation. It is a very potential and powerful instrument of bringing about changes in the society. In this direction schools are those social institutions where the future of society grows up with the help of curriculum, teacher and method of teaching. In our present learner centric education system the role of the teacher cannot be ignored because teachers are the most important moulder of students and facilitate their learning. Gurudev Rabindranath Tagore in Shiksha Vidhi said, "In our social system we need teachers who can initiate change in our life and mobilize our mindset and in our education system we need teachers who can empower us to remove obstacles from our life stream." A competent and well prepared teacher is like an instrument to enhance the quality of education. Quality in and of education has always been a priority area and a more important agenda of various committees and commissions in education. So many efforts have been taken by our government in the past to improve the quality of education. A large number of National and state level programmes were launched. Among them some are centrally sponsored interventions like Operation Blackboard (OB), Minimum Level Learning (MLL), Programme for Mass Orientation of School Teachers (PMOST), Special Orientation Programme for Primary Teachers (SOPT), District Primary Education Programme (DPEP) etc. The aims of these programmes were substantial improvement in access, enrolment, retention and reduced gender disparities at various levels. The scheme of Sarva Siksha Abhiyan (SSA) was launched in the year 2001-02 with the objective of universalisation of

elementary education through a time bound integrated approach, in partnership with states. SSA which promises to change the future of the elementary education with the aim of universal access and retentions in respect of caste, creed, colour and also to provide quality education. After completion of the time duration of SSA programme, it was found that in many cases the students who complete elementary education are not able to achieve the quality of learning. With a view to looking at this issue with other, the Right to Education Act (RTE) 2009 has been introduced. Today, the SSA is the main implementation vehicle for the RTE act. This act has discussed the role of teachers and their duties and quality in the chapter IV, under section 23, 24, 25. The most of the activities under RTE act were considered to be completed within the time frame of 3 years (by 31 March 2013). Only the training of untrained teachers were stipulated within 5 years (by 31 March 2015). So the target time schedule of attaining the desired goal of quality education is over. In this circumstances the issues of teachers' competencies and their effective utilization arise. The present paper aims to assess the applicability of teacher competency at elementary level. Efforts also taken to short out the problems regarding the competency of the teacher at elementary level and provide the suitable suggestions to enhance the competency of the teachers.

Significance of the Study: To realize the complete educational goals and Education for All (EFA), educational research has greatly expanded across the globe. For achieving the educational as well as the social development, proper educational research is very essential, which helps to find out the modern theories and principles of education. Here an attempt has been made to assess the applicability of teacher competency as per NCTE guideline in quality development of elementary education. The paper also highlighted teacher related problems; those are playing as a hindrance to the quality education at elementary level. This study will not only help the educational planners in formulation of new policies and planning, but also help the administrators in proper monitoring and supervision of educational system. It will at the same time motivate the researchers in further research in this field.

Definition of related terminologies: The terminologies related and relevant to this study are explained below:

Elementary Education - In our country, present elementary school education translates up to Class -VIII, which covers the Primary Grade of I to V (i.e. 6-11 year of age) & Upper Primary Grade of VI to VIII (i.e. 11-14 year of age).

Quality Education - The term quality generally refers to the high degree of goodness, worth or excellence in an 'object' or system. There is no simple definition of quality of education. Philosophers and great thinkers regarded quality education as that which helps children to become conscious and productive citizen so that they are able to face future challenges in life. The functional meaning of the term 'Quality Education' is the development around the cognitive, affective and psycho-motor domains of a child's behavior.

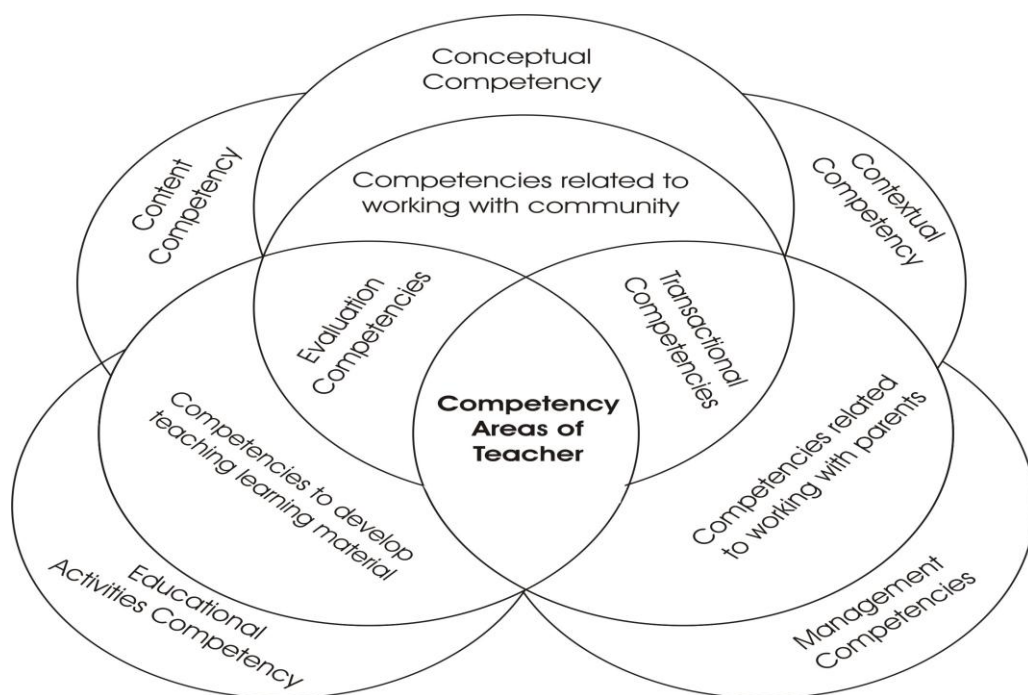
Teacher competencies -The term competency refers to "a combination of attributes underlying some aspect of successful professional performance." (Gonczi et al., 1990). Competency is concerned with the application of professional knowledge, skills, within the workplace by teachers. Teacher competency has a positive effect on quality of education. The National Council of Teacher Education(NCTE) has identified ten competencies for making teacher professionally competent. These are as follows:

1. Contextual Competency- In this context teacher should have the abilities to understand various contexts, such as historical background, socioeconomic condition, cultural, linguistic and religious condition of the family and the community.

2. **Conceptual Competency-** In conceptual competency teacher should have a clear thought and deep understanding of educational theories, and knowledge of various educational trends, teaching methods and techniques.
3. **Content Competency-** In Content Competency teacher should have full mastery knowledge on that content which they teach in the classroom.
4. **Transactional competencies-** In this context teacher should have full knowledge on how to organize teaching learning process more joyfully and activity centric.
5. **Educational Activities Competency-** Here teacher should have clear thoughts on cognitive and non-cognitive areas. Because both areas are equally important to develop the quality of elementary education.
6. **Competencies to Develop Teaching-Learning Material -** Teacher should have the ability to develop teaching aids technically for making teaching learning process more interesting.
7. **Evaluation Competencies-** In this context teacher should be able to carry out continuous evaluation. An important objective of continuous evaluation is to diagnose the problems that children face in comprehending what is taught. So teacher needs the ability to undertake action research.
8. **Management Competencies-** In this type competency teacher should have two-type management skill such as within the classroom and outside classroom management skill.
9. **Competencies Related to working with Parents -** The role of parents is equally important for the overall development of their children. To achieve the quality of education teacher should have the ability to work with parents.
10. **Competencies Related to Working with Community -** No school can function in isolation to improve school situation, therefore in this context, the teacher should have the ability to work with the community and to use the resources of the community.

These competencies are presented in the following figure.

Figure-1: Competencies of the Teachers.



Objectives of the study:

For this study the following objectives have been considered-

- To assess the applicability of teacher competency at elementary level.
- To find out problems regarding the competency of the teacher at elementary level.
- To provide the suitable suggestions to enhance the competency of the teacher.

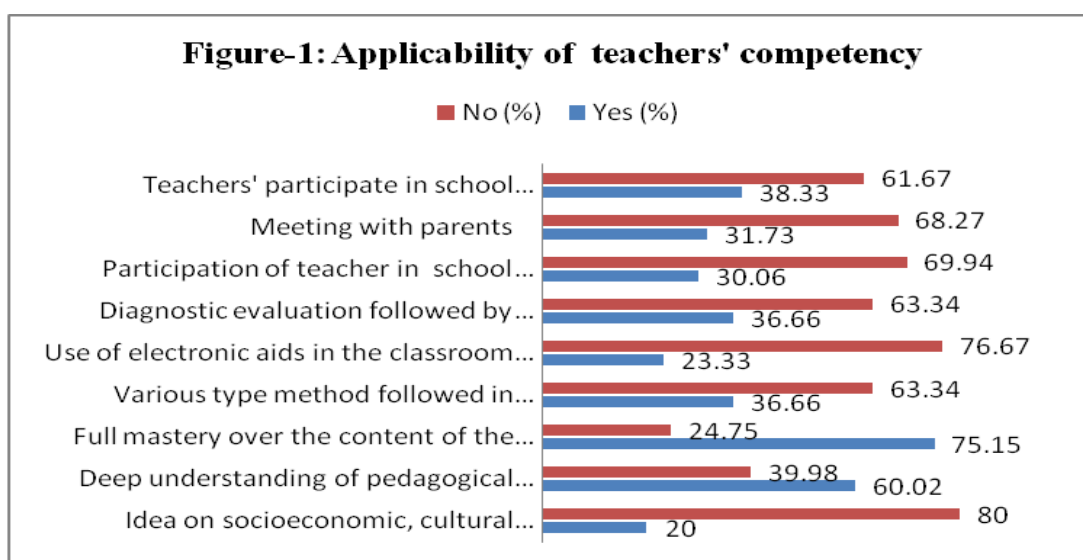
Methodologies: Here Survey Method was employed. For this study 204 Asst.Teachers and 11 Headmasters/Headmistress have been selected at random from 16 elementary schools of Jalpaiguri district in West Bengal. A self developed Questionnaire for teachers and an Interview Schedule for Headmaster-Headmistress were used to collect data. The collected data were analyzed through percentage calculation.

Tabulation of collected data: The data collected from the respondents on their competencies and their applicability are presented in the following table.

Table -1: Competencies and applicability of teachers

Sl.No.	Competency area of teachers as per NCTE guideline	Yes (%)	No (%)
1.	Idea on socioeconomic, cultural condition of the students	20	80
2	Deep understanding of pedagogical method & technique	60.02	39.98
3	Full mastery over the content of the subject	75.15	24.75
4	Various type method followed in classroom teaching	36.66	63.34
5	Use of electronic aids in the classroom teaching	23.33	76.67
6	Diagnostic evaluation followed by classroom	36.66	63.34
7	Participation of teacher in school management	30.06	69.94
8	Meeting with parents	31.73	68.27
9	Teachers' participate in school surrounding community programmes	38.33	61.67

The data tabulated in the above table are represented in the following figure of Bar diagram.



Findings : After analyzing the data of Table-1 and representation of Figure -1 ,we can generate the following interpretations:

1. It is found that only 20% teacher possess requisite knowledge on socioeconomic and cultural condition of the students. Rest 80% teachers are having lack of such

knowledge which signifies that they are not aware about the socio-economic and cultural condition of their learners.

2. Nearly 60% teachers have deep understanding of pedagogical method & technique which are very essential to transact the curriculum to the learner. At the same time it is a matter of regret that nearly 40% teachers are performing their duty without sound knowledge and understanding of pedagogical method and technique. So a large number of teachers have lack of understanding of pedagogical method and technique.
3. If we consider mastery over the content of the subject then it is found that 75.15% teachers possess full mastery over the content of the subject taught in allotted as well stop-gap or provisional classes. On the other hand 24.75% teachers do not have mastery over the content of the subject taught in stop-gap or provisional classes.
4. It is found that 36.66% teachers use various methods in classroom teaching. Where as 63.34% teachers are reluctant in using various method in classroom teaching. Rather they follow very traditional lecture method of teaching.
5. Only 23.33% teachers use electronic aids in the classroom teaching. On the hand rest 76.67% teachers depend solely on blackboard and chalk as teaching aid in their classroom. According to the study the main reason behind this problem is unavailability of smart-classroom and modern audio-visual aids. Though in some schools there is computer laboratory but all the teachers do not have sound knowledge to use this in teaching-learning process.
6. In classroom 36.66% teachers diagnose their learners through diagnostic evaluation but rest 63.34% teachers do not use this evaluation in their classroom. Instead they prefer to use the terminal and final examination.
7. So far participation in school management is concerned, it is found that 30.06% teachers provide positive response. But majority of the teachers, 69.94% respond negatively, i.e. they do not participate in school management.
8. Only 31.73% teachers meet parents of their learners. Rest 68.27% teachers do not meet parents, signifies that there is less association and cooperation between the two stakeholders, i.e. teacher and parents.
9. It is found that 61.67% teachers are less interested to participate in school surroundings community programme. Only 38.33% teachers opined that they are interested and usually participate in school surrounding community programme.

After conducting the field survey the following observations have been generated regarding the problems of teacher's competency:

1. Lots of teachers don't have in depth knowledge regarding the theoretical and practical application of different pedagogical techniques.
2. It has been found that most of the teachers have no full mastery over the content of the stop gap/ provisional classes.
3. Unavailability and lack of knowledge in handling the aids are the most important reasons behind the non-use of electronic aids in the classroom.
4. A major portion of the teachers has no idea about the proper use of diagnostic evaluation.
5. Teachers are becoming less interested to arrange the parents- teachers meeting due to the poor attendance and miss behavior on the part of the parents in the meeting.

Suggestions: To drive out the identified problems and move forward to the desired goal of quality education the following suggestions should be taken into consideration.

- Systematic training should be arranged for both pre-service and in service and in-service teachers. Which is broadly full in three categories:

- i) Content up-gradation
- ii) Refinement of teaching skills and
- iii) Reshaping of attitudes.

- To develop quality education teacher should find out the hard spots and gaps in curriculums which require explanation and elaboration. Because in a classroom setting, teaching competency depends greatly on her/his knowledge and mastery of different subjects.

- Government may take initiatives to provide sufficient electronic aids and arrange proper training for teachers regarding the uses of latest interactive teaching aids for making classroom effective and interesting.

- Parents- teacher meeting should be organized in a serious way because the role of parents is equally important in the development and education of their children. Teacher should also be motivated to keep close contact with the parents as parental contact plays an important role for quality education and overall development of the learners.

- Government should take initiatives for various training programmes relating to applications of various pedagogical technique, evaluation system and specially classroom management.

- Active participation of the teachers in the school management like participation in school managing committee, supervision of different school programme, and others.

- The teacher needs to seek co-operation and support from the members of the community. Because no school can function in isolation and, therefore, the teacher should work towards bringing school and the community as close as possible and interrelated.

- It is necessary to maintain proper student teacher ratio for enhancing the quality of teaching at elementary level.

Conclusion: One of the promising goals of SSA is to provide quality education which can never be achieved without the effective participation of competent teachers. So there is an urgent need to develop the competencies of teachers so that quality of classroom teaching as well as the achievement of the learners be improved. Here only pre-service and in-service training programmes are not sufficient, but a proper monitoring and supervision also required. So with sound planning proper implementation followed by continuous monitoring and supervision are required to achieve the desired goal of quality education for all.

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