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Neighbouring Government Primary Schools in their Death Bed: A Case Analysis of Government Primary Schools in Bong Busty, Kalimpong District

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Abstract:

Education is one of the basic human rights and throughout ages the state has taken the responsibility to educate all its citizens. It also acts as an instrument for economic mobility in the society. Primary education being the preliminary stage is of utmost important in shaping a child into noble and educated citizen. However, at present time, the responsibility of providing education is shared between both public-private players. As the needs of the society changes, systems too need to be adjusted and expanded to meet the needs of the growing population with limited economic resources the government schools are continuously overburdened and are struggling to meet the expectations and needs of the society which compromises the objective of the education. This paper presents concise report on the government's primary education system in a village of Bong Busty located in Kalimpong district of West Bengal. Summarily, it attempts to contextualize the macro level problem faced by Government Primary education system across the country, to identify the loopholes in the existing educational structure so that measures can be taken by administrators and policy makers to overcome the state of crisis in government aided primary schools.

Keywords – (Primary Education, Inequality, Crisis)

Introduction:

A man with an ability to think is a curious being; and this curiosity or the desire to know something new involves a process of continuous learning. The ability to learn new things and capacity to adapt to different situation has been a guide to mankind from hunting gathering society to modern civilised society. According to Ballentine and Hammack (2012), education starts with the birth of a child and continues to sustain through observation, imitation socialization etc, and only ends with death. However, this learning process is often confused with the schooling system. Though education is often viewed as bringing positive change and progress in the society, however, there are different theoretical stand points which provides its contradicting nature. The functionalist theorist John Dewey is of the opinion that education and learning are social and interactive process while school as a social institution plays an important role in bringing reform in the society (Talebi, 2015). Louis Althusser (1971) views the educational system to be an instrument that continuously supplies labour force for generating profits. It also establishes capitalist hegemony with the application of dominant ideology by reproducing capitalist values, behaviour, and attitudes that are required for the division of labour among the masses. Therefore, the widening gap between rich and poor has brought socio- economic gap in the educational system (Leathwood and Archer, 2004, p. 5). Francis Scott Key Fitzgerald states that “irrespective of the academic ability students from poor families have relatively little chances of achieving success compared to middle and upper-class children due to their socio-economic conditions” (Satapathy, 2019).

Despite inequality in the structure, the Government sponsored education system act as an important mechanism for creating social consensus and equal opportunities for all. However, as discussed earlier, school is a strong force that legitimizes capitalism and the idea of equal opportunities in a capitalist system is itself a myth. In a world dominated by capitalism and capitalistic values, crisis in education is a notion which states those educational crises are derivative of economic crisis. Thus, the rise of capitalism has resulted in a crisis in the educational system and also reproduces inequality in the society (Paz, 2016).

Status of Primary Schools:

The primary level education is often regarded as the foundation of the learning process and also determines a success and future of a child. According to the report of UNESCO (2008), Primary education is recognized as the basic human right and plays a vital role in the development of an individual and the society (UNICEF Library: 2020). The quality of Primary

education provided at the school is instrumental in determining the future of an individual which directly dictates the progress of any society (Etor, Ekanem, Mbon, 2013).

Article 26 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR, 1948) states that everyone has the right to education. It shall be compulsory and free at least in the elementary stages (Sarkar and Salam, 2011, 9). Furthermore, the Second United Nations Millennium Development Goal's aimed at providing primary education to all children across the world by 2015 (UNDP, 2011). Though some countries like the USA and Finland have the best education system in the world; the condition of education system in developing and under developed countries still needs to make infrastructure and funding. Under-developed and developing countries allocates almost half of their annual budget for defence and debt payment, which severely compromises improvements in sectors like education. A survey and test conducted among the students studying in the second grade in many Sub-Saharan African countries found out that three-quarters of the students could not count beyond 80 and 40 per cent of the student were not able to add even single digits. In addition, 50 to 80 per cent of the students could not answer from the passage they read and many students were not able to read a single word (World Bank, 2018).

The constitution of India (1950) adopted a provision of "Universalization of primary education" up to the age group of 6-14 years (Bajpai and Goyal, 2004, 3). A significant improvement could be seen in enrolment and establishment of schools however, it is compromised by several factors such as accessibility, prejudice against girl's education, early marriage, poverty, inequality of educational opportunities, infrastructure and dropout problems (Thakur, 2018, 2-3). The Government of India passed the Right to Free and Compulsory Education Act in 2010 and stressed on providing basic education to all child between the age group of 6 to 14 years (Dongre, Kapur and Tewary, 2014, 2). Despite of all kinds of efforts, India still ranks 92 in the educational sector which is behind other developing countries like Philippines (76), Malaysia (51), and Sri Lanka (59) (India Today: 2015). The report on Quality of Education Index clearly depicts Kerela on the top among 25 states setting benchmark for other states in terms of quality of primary education. The state of Maharashtra and Himachal Pradesh occupy 2nd and 3rd place respectively. However, states like Bihar (25), Uttar Pradesh (24), Assam (23), Orissa (22) Jharkhand (21) and Tamil Nadu (20) appears to be the worst performers (Mehra. A., et. all., 2012).

Crisis in Government Primary Education System:

Primary education is the universally accepted foundation for all level of education and determines the success or failure of the educational infrastructure and government policies. Many problems exist in primary level educational system viz. funding, inadequate facilities, lack of motivation among teacher's, inconsistencies in government policies and inadequate supervision by government officials, poor performance of students, adoption of malpractices in an examination, etc. All of these factors manifest in the fate of primary education system rendering it with succumbed reputation and for producing below-average students who face significant challenges in higher education (Etor, Mbon and Ekanem, 2013). In addition, dropouts and poverty also add on to the challenges of primary education. The government sector is the largest provider of education in India and only about 10 per cent of the primary schools are under private sectors. Thakur (2018) has listed various reasons that determine the failure of primary education to inequality, high degree of absenteeism both on the part of students and teachers, ignorance by the education inspection committee and lack of basic facilities in primary schools. The study stresses on immediate attention and resolution by the stakeholders to tackle accessibility problems, prejudice against girls' education, early marriage, poverty, inequality of educational opportunities, infrastructure and dropout problems. The Pratrichi report (2002) prepared under the guidance of Nobel Prize Awardee Amartya Sen discusses the close connection between universalization of primary education and economic growth/development. Bajpai and Goyal (2004) state that education plays an important role in improving the socio-economic condition of any country.

The major reason for poor quality of primary education in government funding settings is the low income of total population and more expenditure on resources. Therefore, the inability of state sponsored school to deliver quality education has led to the mushrooming of privately managed unregulated pre-primary and primary schools as pointed out by Nambissan (2003) and Tooley and Dixon (2005) which was much better in terms of affordability and quality. Adhikari (2019) explains why parents regardless of their socio-economic background do not want to send their wards to a government school. The major factors for the declining number of students are the quality of education and discipline among the students in private school which are better than government-sponsored schools. The research also shows that parents are conscious of the performance of government school and do not want to risk their children's future. The state of crisis in government primary schools clearly indicates the dwindling future

of those students studying in these schools. Thus, in order to bring better improvement in education system more emphasis should be laid on foundational stage.

Research Methodology:

The present study is conducted in a small village of Bong Busty located in Kalimpong district, West Bengal, India. The research employs mixed method to investigate the key components responsible for gradual downfall of primary education system. The sampling method used in the field is purposive sampling to identifying key respondents. The study has taken the sample size of 53 respondents which includes teachers, students, parents, members of school managing committee and local villagers to take into account the wide spectrum of testament, observations and experiential suggestions. The primary sources of data are collected through fieldwork which includes methods like direct observation of field setting, interview methods like a face-to-face interview, and focus group interview. A revisit to the field was carried on December 2023 only for a week to test the validity of the primary data collected in December 2020. This strategy to collect data intermittently over a 3 years span guarantees its reliability as well provides better understanding on the status of government intervention to implement corrective measures. The secondary sources of data are collected from various journal, articles, books, census and reports.

Field Description:

Kalimpong is one of the hilly towns located at the foothills of the Himalayas in the Indian state of West Bengal. Kalimpong was one of the subdivisions of Darjeeling district and later it was bifurcated as a separate district on 14th February 2017. The district is categorized into four administrative units known as Blocks, which are further sub-divided into Gram Panchayat Units. Block I, II and III comprises of 18-, 13- and 11-Gram Panchayat Units respectively while Kalimpong Municipality comprises of 23 wards (Lepcha, 2019)

Problems in Primary Education in Darjeeling Hills including Kalimpong District:

The history of education in Kalimpong can be traced to the arrival of Christian Missionaries and establishment of some of the prominent schools in the hills. In the post-Independence era, significant improvement was made in the field of expansion of government primary schools, however it was not sufficient to meet the growing need of the expanding population in the town giving rise to various problems. The geographic factors like difficult terrain makes accessibility to educational institutions difficult in hilly regions; followed by the quality of education in

primary schools due to imbalance in children and teacher ratio, degrading performance of the children because the learning process is based on a superficial level (rote learning) and bookish facts. It is due to inadequate qualification students in the hills often fail to secure high salaried jobs. To make the matter worse the introduction of “no dropouts/detention” policy in the hills has significantly jeopardized the quality of education system. Despite being one of the best educational hubs in the hills, Kalimpong lacks proper establishment of universities (private/govt), this has led to migration of massive student population to the plains for availing higher education.

Backdrop of the Village:

Bong Busty is a village located towards the south of Kalimpong town at a distance of three kilometres. Bong Busty was one of the first places to receive an education with the advent of the Christian missionaries from the Church of Scotland. The village has six primary schools i.e. Bom school, Lower Gairi Goan School, Saraswati Rudra Junior Basic school, Ganesh Primary School, Deorali Primary School, Kamshi Primary School. It also has Ganesh high secondary school and three higher secondary institutions namely Sai Institute also known as Kamal Jyoti situated in Upper Bong Busty, Jubilee Higher secondary school in B.L Dikshit Road and Kumudini School in H.L Dikshit road. However, the field area has four primary schools and a secondary school. There are many private primary schools like Mt. Aben Bethel School, Bright Life Academy, Orchid primary school etc. The students of the village have to go to the town to receive higher education because of the unavailability of higher educational institutions in the village.

Status of the Government Primary Schools in Bong Busty: Field Analysis

With shifting focus on the modern economy, the Indian government in different regime has prioritized higher institutions of learning over the primary and secondary level of education. Very limited attention and resources are allocated in Primary level of education and there is a disparity on the kind of education provided by the government in urban and rural areas, thereby promoting inequality in the existing structure. Various research papers have reported crisis in Primary education in India which includes high dropout rates, private schools, international comparison of learning, neglect of primary education, quality education, poor performance, ineffective teachers and teaching environment (Dewan, 1991). In addition, crisis lies in funding, infrastructural facilities and maintenance and need of social structure (Randhawa, 2019). The study will take into account the information and narration provided by the villagers, teachers

and students to analyse the findings by carrying out fieldwork in these schools it was also possible this identification the areas that needed immediate attention.

Fig. 1. Distribution of Respondent based on their perception on status of Government Primary School of Bong Busty

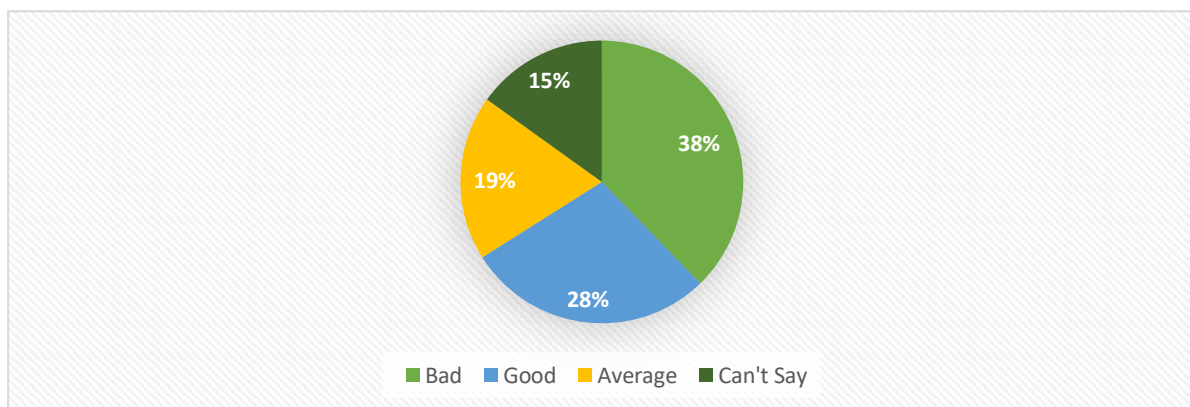


Figure 1 indicates the status of school as per the perception of respondents from the field. It is clear from the presented data that majority of the respondents are of the view that the status of Primary school in the village is in a deplorable condition and needs immediate attention. Literatures on problems faced by Primary education are highlighted by (Vanitha, 2016), (Nath, 2014) states that government primary schools in India face several challenges like the quality of education and teachers, suitable environment, infrastructure, drinking water and sanitation

facilities, playground, limited funding for maintenance etc. which are responsible for determining the present condition and fate of government sponsored primary schools.

Physical facilities:

According to UNICEF Framework (2000) for certain factors like background of learners, learning environment, contents of learning, quality of processes and methods used in learning, and subsequent outcomes decides the progress of education (Khan, 2013). Physical facilities like school building, classroom library, laboratories, sanitary and drinking water facilities, proper playground, learning materials play an important role in determining the status of the school and contributes to the learning process of a child.

Infrastructure:

Infrastructure facilities are essential for creating a suitable learning environment in educational institutions. The infrastructure facilities reflect the status of the school and areas which needs immediate improvement. Here, schools are referred as 1, 2, 3, and 4 to maintain anonymity.

Table 1. Infrastructure of Government Primary School of Bong Busty

Schools	Infrastructure of School (2020)	Infrastructure of School (2023)	No. of Classroom	Drinking water Facilities	Toilet Facilities
School 1	Pucca	Pucca	4	Yes	Yes
School 2	Semi-Pucca	Pucca	5	Yes	Yes
School 3	Semi-pucca	Semi-pucca	6	No	Yes
School 4	Semi-pucca	Semi-Pucca	3	No	Yes

Source: Field work December 2020, Revisited in December 2023

Table 1 presents the infrastructure of government Primary schools in Bong Busty. From the above table (data of 2020), it is evident that, out of four sample size primary schools in the village three have semi- pucca infrastructure (school building) and remaining one has pucca structure which is still in dilapidated condition. Data of December 2023 also shows more or less the similar status with two schools having pucca and others with semi-pucca infrastructure. The semi-pucca school buildings are made of mud and bamboo having cemented flooring with tinned roof and Pucca school buildings is made up of cemented walls and tinned roof. These school buildings were constructed 20-40 years ago with little or poor revamp till date. The principal of one of the schools mentioned that if one wants to make any changes in school infrastructure, it is very much essential to have good hold of political powers to get the required funds, which clearly indicates why schools still have semi-pucca infrastructure in the 21st century.

Principal 3 of School 3 recalling his teacher's training days stated that school building should be constructed in L shape from where headmaster can monitor all the classes from his office, however, in almost all the cases this method has not been applied in the construction of school's buildings. The infrastructure of the primary school should have painted walls with pictures of plants and animals, proper playgrounds and sports kits. The school environment should be designed in such a way that it attracts both parents and children to get admitted at any cost. However, at present, government primary schools are not painted for years and some are in a fragile and dilapidated condition due to shortage of funding. Thus, infrastructures can be regarded as an important factor in determining the condition of schools and the present condition of government schools show that the infrastructure is one of the de-motivating factors in students' enrolment in government primary school.

Drinking Water Facilities:

Children usually spend around 6-7 hours in school which makes drinking water a basic necessity for the students at all levels in an education hub. The Business Standard news provides us with information that drinking water facilities are provided as a basic necessity in government Schools however, the ground reality seems completely different. The field data shows that two government primary schools have access to drinking water facilities while others don't due to the existing scarcity of water in the village. Those schools having water supply are tap water which is collected in cemented tanks which are not cleaned for years.

These water tanks are not properly treated or filtered before consumption posing health problems which exposes them to a variety of health risks. The water carried by children from their houses is not sufficient, especially in summer days. Therefore, the basic facilities in government primary schools are lacking and needs urgent attention and immediate government intervention.

Classroom Facilities:

Classroom plays an important role in the teaching-learning environment. Each student is allocated a particular class according to his learning ability. The field data shows that in almost all the cases there is not enough required number of classes. Now the question arises how are they accommodating all the students? Firstly, there is limited enrolment number of students in all the government primary schools. School 1 has four classrooms with five students. There are three students in class four and two in three which makes it clear that only two classroom is utilized for learning purpose. The school uses other room as a staff room and one is left unused. In contrary, School 3 has in total 3 classrooms and has in total 13 students. One classroom is used a staff room and two other classrooms are divided by a blackboard or kutchha wall to make different classrooms. Similarly, the other two schools face the same problems. Therefore, the above-mentioned situations clearly show the condition of the classroom and the difficulties they face in teaching and learning process. The classroom also does not have the required furniture and are in volatile condition. The furniture provided by the government is not distributed equally among all due to existing politics in the primary education system. Teachers who have close connection with political parties and leaders in the local bodies can gain benefits in terms of funding and facilities to bring the necessary improvement. However, in most cases teachers are simple people without any kind of political affiliation therefore could not influence the local political bodies whose result could be seen in its present condition. Several stake holders claim that the education system too cannot escape from politics however; many villagers told that “teachers having the power to influence political bodies have brought positive impact in the condition of schools and politics in education with a noble goal is not always bad for society”. However, at the same time, it has brought unequal distribution of resources among government primary schools in the village.

Other Facilities:

Table 2. Availability of Basic Facilities in Government Primary Schools of Bong Busty

Schools	Playground	Sports-Kits	Free Text Books	Library Facilities	Free Uniform	Computer/ Internet
School 1	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No
School 2	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No
School 3	No	No	Yes	No	Yes	No
School 4	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No

Source: Field work January- February 2020, Revisited December 2023

Table 2. indicates the other basic facilities required by government primary schools like playground, sports kits, library facilities, free texts books and free uniform. Games are often regarded as an essential part of the learning process and help in the overall development of the child. Therefore, playground and sports kit become a basic necessity in teaching and learning process especially among primary level of education. The data from the fields show that out of four sample size government primary schools three school has play ground while one does not have any playing space. Due to limited funding, sports kits are not available for students in government primary schools. However, in the past, few NGO's made significant contribution in almost all the primary schools with its activities like donation of sports kits, books for libraries, furniture, computers, construction of boundary walls in the school area and others. The resources by NGO's are donated to each school on an alternative basis, therefore the condition of kits and resources available in the government primary schools at present are in a very bad condition or no more in use. Other basic facilities required in the learning process are free texts books and uniforms which are provided by the government. Library facilities and computer facilities are non-existent; however, at times, books are donated to school library. In a nutshell, it can be concluded that government primary schools do not have the required basic facilities and continuously adjusting to meet the needs of the students. At times they try to improve with monetary and resource assistance from the external organization and many times fail to do so. Even at the present day, the requirement of the school and students remains unfulfilled.

Quality of teaching and Students outcome in Government Primary Schools:

To provide Education for all, the Indian Government launched the programme of Sarva Siksha Abhiyan in 2001. The programme also aimed to achieve universal Primary education which was the goal of Second Millenium Development Goal (MDG2). Fenstermacher and Richardson (2005) states that quality teaching can be understood as teaching that motivates and produces learning; in other words, it can also be defined a process of teaching which results in successful learning. This section emphasizes on the relationship between the quality of teaching and student outcomes in government primary schools.

Principle 4 of School 4 mentions that “every three days of working hour we are called for documentation by officers in charge. He says that a teacher's job is to teach which will determine learning outcome and future of the students, whereas, here, teachers are expected to do other administrative activities apart from teaching”. In addition to, teacher absenteeism and negligence, other reason for degrading quality is overburdening teachers with un-official duties. The implementation of no-detention policy by the Government of India which aimed to decrease dropout level in all the government schools is one of the reasons for declining child’s performance. The findings from the field show that the failure of no-detention policy which harms the learning process of the child. The child is expected to be promoted to the next class without learning even the basics which will have a cascading impact in determining the future of the child and that of the society. The teachers are of the view that if a student fails in a particular class, he will have the opportunity to learn more and have a better understanding about his lessons. At present, with the implementation of policy they need to promote a child even if he doesn't know anything or even is admitted at the end of the session. This will harm child learning ability and lowers a child's performance or outcomes. As we have already discussed that children in Government primary schools mainly come from poor families with illiterate parents who are not able to help them in their studies which is much required in the initial learning process. Therefore, poverty and illiterate parents do not provide favourable environment in learning process and plays an important role in determining child’s performance and achievement.

Level of Satisfaction among Parents on Teaching Style:

Students of government school mainly come from a lower stratum of socio-economic background; therefore, the measurement of the level of satisfaction among parents on teaching style can be divided into two levels– In some cases, these students are the first-generation recipients of education where parents have little or no awareness on the quality of education.

They are satisfied with whatever is available from the government. On the other hand, a study conducted by Adhikari (2019) states that in some places of West Bengal irrespective of socio-economic background parents do not want to send their wards to a government school because parents have become more conscious of the performance of government school and do not want to risk their child's future. The same situation can be seen in the field which reflects a state of confusion among parents regarding the status of primary schools.

The field testaments reflect stake holders' awareness on functioning and performance of government school. Parents often made claim that government teachers should make more on efforts in teaching- learning process and also adopt new initiatives to improve the present condition of government. Many are sceptical about quality of education being provided by government primary schools. A common phrase highlighted by parents was that "if the condition of education system was good then why these teachers would send their wards to private schools in the towns". The findings show that parents who are satisfied are not conscious about the present condition and functioning of the school while those who are aware are not satisfied with the present teaching styles.

Active Participation of Parents:

Active participation of parents in teaching and learning process and over all development of the child has become a necessity. A private school teacher stated that "parent's participation is essential to create a healthy and productive learning environment for the child". However, the findings from the field shows that parents' participation in academic activities of the child is almost absent except few participating as members of the School Managing Committee.

Now the question arises, why there is no participation of parents. As mentioned earlier, the students of the government primary school come from low socio-economic background where their parents are mostly daily wage labourers who are struggling to meet their basic needs. Due to poverty, they are not able to give attention to their child's education which might be fruitful for their future. Principle 1 and Principle 2 mentioned that majority of the parents are not aware about the progress of their child's education but they make an effort to make them conscious by organizing parents-teachers meeting time to time in the school. Interaction with both the parties show that the parents are partially satisfied with the teaching style and performance of their wards while teachers mentioned that parent's participation in government primary schools are almost negligible.

School Inspection:

Pratrichi Report (2002) and Nath (2014) states that School inspection has been a major challenge in the state of West Bengal. School inspection critically examines the areas that require attention and accordingly advises the governing bodies to fortify the educational ecosystem for improvement. At present school inspection has become a major challenge in most of the states and therefore it is difficult to bring change or adopt new techniques without proper supervision. As per information obtained from the field, the microlevel challenges of school inspection are not different from the macro-level challenges faced by the whole country. Except school 3 rest of the school's complained that the school inspector or any member of the school inspection department had not visited till date. In contrast, the members Education Department often make claims of monthly visit to schools on an alternative basis. Therefore, looking at the above situation it is evident that selective school inspection is carried out based on the feasibility and accessibility.

Extra co-curricular activities:

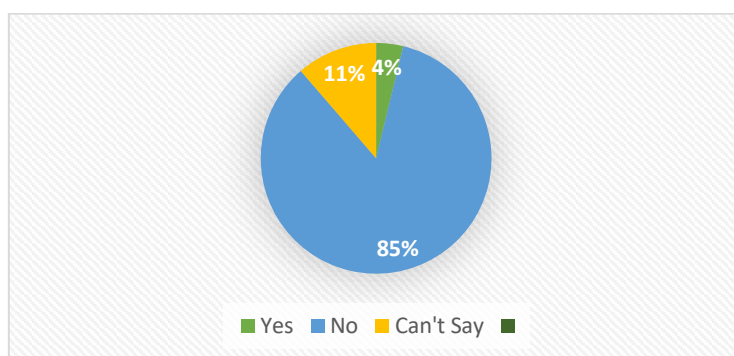
Apart from syllabus-based curriculum, every school tries to include extra-curricular activities to help children develop new skills and area of interests. Co-curricular activities include poetry recitation, music, dancing, drawing, sports, games etc. The Indian Education Commission has given importance to extra-curricular activities in schools for the holistic development of the child. Secondary Education Commission states that School is not merely a place of formal learning but is primarily interested in training pupil which can be popularly termed as 'Gracious Art of Living'. As per the findings, almost all the government primary schools in the village gives priority to extra-curricular activities by organizing essay and drawing, sports competition during occasion of environment day and annual sports day. They also organise inter-school primary school sports meet with participation of all government primary schools of Bong Unit. The school is not able to organize programmes frequently because of lack of funding and there is no support from parents in terms of financial matters of school due to their own economic condition. The government primary school organize excursion trip at the end of the year to some nearby places with the remaining funds. Therefore, it is observed that teachers in government primary school give priority to extra-curricular activities in spite of huge lacuna in funding sectors which is essential in the overall development of the child.

Future of Government Primary Education System in Bong Busty:

The structure of the society and social relationship depends on an economic base which is responsible for economic inequality and creation different classes of social groups. The

differentiation among the social groups creates a hierarchy in all aspects of life including the educational institutions which have brought a crisis in government Primary school/Education system in Bong Busty.

Fig. 2: Views of Respondents on future of Government Primary Schools in Bong Busty:



Source: Fieldwork, January-February, 2020.

Figure 2 indicates the views of the respondents on the future of government primary schools in Bong busty. Out of 53 respondents, 85 per cent of the respondents are of the view that government primary schools in Bong busty do not have any future while 11 per cent are not sure about it. Only 4 per cent of the respondents are of the view and hopeful that government schools in the village will exist in future. Therefore, the majority of the respondents are of the view that there is no future of government primary schools in the village. If government school are to survive in future, major changes have to be made both by local bodies and government.

Suggestions for improving the condition of Government Primary School

Based on the findings of the study, the following measures can be taken into consideration for improving Government Primary Education system/ schools–

1. **Failure on level of policy implementation and channelization of resources:** The policies implemented by the Government for Primary Education system should be properly planned and channelization of resources should be strictly monitored. Converting government primary schools into model schools can provide quality education and infrastructural facilities which would benefit the local population and fulfil the goal of universal education.
2. Adequate funding must be provided to meet the basic needs of the educational institutions and for its maintenance.
3. School inspection should be carried out regularly.

4. Adjustment should be made in a curriculum as per the need of the present society.
5. **Active participation of the community:** Lack of awareness among the community members has an impact on the present condition of the government schools. Various programme and workshops should be carried out in the field to create awareness about education and encourage participation of people for the effective functioning of schools in future.
6. **Geographical Terrian should be considered in regard to Policy formulation and implementation:** Uniform application of policies cannot be made as need of every society varies from one another. It is already seen that the needs and problems of hilly towns are different from other region, therefore, qualitative rather than quantitative measures need to be immediately addressed. The State Government has adopted the District Primary Education Programme (DPEP) where the responsibilities of issues related to Primary education comes under the purview of local bodies who has the authority to make necessary amendment according to societal needs. However, in reality, only funding and issues related to recruitment of teachers are handled by local bodies. Thus, the strict implementation of DPEP should be made in the grass root level for the welfare of students in particular and community in general. If all the factors are taken into consideration, significant improvement can be made in the field of Government Primary Education

Conclusion:

Aristotle stated that man is a social animal (Rao: 2016). To live in constant harmony with fellow beings, an individual starts adopting and imitating the shared conditions of a society. Thus, the very process of learning starts while trying to imitate the accepted behaviour and norms of a society. The division of education system is a modern phenomenon. J. P. Naik (2004), an eminent educationist of India has said that progress in Primary education indicates the social and economic development of the whole country (Thakur: 2018) and it is the primary education which determines the success or failure of the whole education system. India follows a mixed model where the role of providing education to its citizen is shared between the state and private players. Before the advent of Liberalisation and Privatisation, the government primary schools took the responsibility of providing education to all and quality of education was found to be satisfactory. In the simple-rural set-up, community played an important role in school management but the shift of responsibility of schools' management from community to state has weakened the community solidarity and promoted individualistic values whose impact is

visible from the present status of government primary schools. It was only after the 1990's small private primary schools started mushrooming in the village. This kind of education promotes capitalistic values like competition and economic benefits which promises to provide a better life skills, style and good future for all. The hope and aspiration of having better life has led to the expansion of a greater number of private schools. At the same time, it has also widened the economic gap between the rich and poor forming an unequal society. The new model of educational institutions is designed/established to meet the needs of the changing society.

The findings from the field shows that the majority of the respondents are of the view that the status of primary government schools is poor which is reflected with admission of students only from poor social-economic backgrounds i.e. BPL, marginalized sections of the society and domestic helpers in the government primary schools. Cases from the field found the desire of economically poorer sections to study in schools with better conditions and helplessness on the part of parents regarding the child's future. It also highlights the state of hopelessness on the part of parents and students due to their poor socio-economic condition forcing them to compromise and make adjustment as per their affordability. Similar to the findings of Patrichi Report, there is a close relationship between education and economic conditions in the field. The economically stable group including the middle-class view English medium education provided by private schools to be efficient providing wide range of opportunities for their children as compared to the education provided by the government. This has led to the commoditization of education where the private institutions use different strategies to sell their goods (in this case it is education). Therefore, the government education system, especially in the Primary level, is not able to meet the need and demand of changing society as well as provide the same facilities as the private institutions. The students in the government belong to marginalized section and deprived from getting quality education which has a direct impact on dreams and aspiration of these children.

At present day, the government education system in the village is facing various challenges and unable to compete with the alternative institutions with only limited resources. Thus, this inequality has further degraded the condition of government-sponsored education system in the village. The findings show that the majority of the respondents view that the condition of government primary school is not satisfactory due to various underlying problems like poor infrastructure, lack of quality education and basic facilities, inadequate funding, poor sanitation facilities, curriculum design not up to the need and expectation of society, poor teaching and

students' outcomes, no-detention policy, lack of safety measures and incentives for students etc. Other challenges faced by the government primary schools is its close distance to town and good connectivity which provides accessibility to better education institutions. Too much interference of NGO's is seen as majority of the students are house helps in the village schools and lack of community participation in school management is widely evident. The internalisation of the capitalistic value of equating good education (English medium with competition) with good income and economic mobility is another factor for degrading conditions of government primary schools in the village. Decreasing number of students enrolment due to mushrooming of greater number of private schools ranging from expensive to affordable prices provides more choices to the parents for the education of their child. Lastly, the shift in the structure has also weakened the traditional collective values giving rise to individual value in the society. To resolve the problem existing in the education system, it is essential to have an understanding about the needs and demands of the society and plan and policies should be implemented accordingly.

The present condition of government primary education system is not free from crisis due to economic inequality and changing needs of society. At the same time, the education provided by the government primary school is not sufficient as well as efficient enough to meet the needs of the changing social structure and aspirations of the people. It has been rightly pointed out by Casavecchia (2017), *"If society changes, the education system should also change and adjust to the changing environment"*. However, there is still possibility of improvement if the vicious cycle of interrelated problems is addressed by adopting new plans and policies that fits as per the need of the society.

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