

Citizen's Report Card on Service Delivery in Government Primary Schools of Bangladesh

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Abstract

Citizen's Report Card (CRC) is a tool intended to generate information about beneficiary awareness, access, use and satisfaction with public services. CRC on primary education has been initiated under the auspices of CAMPE, an advocacy and campaign network of education-related NGOs in Bangladesh. The present report of a study on CRC is the third of a series reporting stakeholder assessment of primary education in Bangladesh. The methodology employed is a mixed approach using both qualitative and quantitative measures. For qualitative information, focus group discussion (FGD), key informant interview (KII), observation and validation workshops were conducted. For quantitative data, a survey was conducted on 6,720 guardians from 120 government schools through structured and non-structured interview questions regarding the school services. The result shows that despite the scarcity of electricity, drinking water, library facilities, hygienic and adequate washrooms, a high percentage of respondents expressed satisfaction about school facilities. Similarly, despite criticism in various research and evaluation on teachers' attendance and the teaching-learning process, a high percentage of guardians expressed satisfaction on teaching quality (59%), teacher's punctuality (99%), and good conduct (98%). Guardians similarly have a highly positive view (99%) regarding paper and printing quality of the government provided textbooks. On the other hand, parents said that they had to pay admission fees (17%), and exam fees

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(98%) varying from Tk. 5 to Tk. 580; and the annual sports festival fee (23%) from Tk. 5 to Tk. 100, though the government primary schools are supposed to be free. The apparent contradiction between perception and empirical evidence was a finding which merits further probe and policy steps. The study offers recommendations in this respect.

Keywords: Community Report Card, Primary School in Bangladesh, Contradiction between Perceptions and Empirical Evidence.

1. Introduction

Despite huge efforts and investments in primary education, it remains one of the most urgent challenges in Bangladesh. The key issues for primary education are retention, attendance and quality of teaching and learning as well as enrolment of disadvantaged population groups. (World Bank, 2016). The Annual Primary School Census conducted by schools under the auspices of the Directorate of Primary Education relies on administrative information from school registers to show student attendance rate, which was 86.3 % in 2013 (DPE, 2014). An assessment of student achievement in primary education shows that only 25% of grade five students master Bangla and 33% master mathematics competencies at a basic level (World Bank, 2016). Asadullah and Chaudhury (2013) found a full five-year primary education programme in government primary schools taught less than 10% of students how to solve a simple mathematics problem. High repetition rate in grades and low achievement imply that students fail to achieve adequate learning outcomes at grade level and are not ready to go on to the next grade.

Since the government started nationalizing primary schools in 1973, community's withdrawal from the management of primary schools began. Nationalization of primary education produced an unintended apathy of communities regarding the quality and management of primary education in the country. Recognising this change in attitude, the government began to make an effort to involve the community in the process of managing primary schools. School Managing Committees (SMC) and Parent-Teacher Associations (PTA) were established and holding mothers' meetings were encouraged. Some financial and administrative powers were transferred to the hands of the School Managing Committee. The main purpose of community involvement in primary schools is to enhance school's social accountability. One model of social accountability, which is used in many developing countries, is the Citizens' Report Card. This reporting tool is regarded as a simple, viable and credible approach to provide systematic feedback to the public about various quantitative and qualitative aspects of the performance of public services.

CAMPE (Campaign for Popular Education) started a pilot project in 2013, which was continued in subsequent years, to conduct citizens' report card (CRC) on primary education. The 2016 CRC involved 120 schools (both government primary school and newly nationalized primary school – GPS and NNPS). Institute of Social Business (ISB), a private research organization, was selected by CAMPE to conduct the 2016 study.

2. Objectives of CRC

The main objective of the Citizens' Report Card on Primary Education, 2016 is to assess the level of satisfaction of the service recipients and collect feedback from different stakeholders on government provisions available in the primary schools. The specific objectives of the study of CRC are to:

- Collect feedback from the community on services provided by the Government in primary education;
- Draw a picture about the quality and accessibility of services; and
- Assess community level satisfaction about government provision in the primary schools.

3. The CRC Approach

CRC elicits information about beneficiary awareness of, access to, use of, and satisfaction with public services. CRC identifies the key constraints that citizens, especially the poor and the underserved populations, face in accessing public services, their appraisal of the quality and adequacy of public services, and the quality of interactions they have with the providers of the services.

The CRC feedback can be used for an overall assessment of the performance of public education service based on citizens' satisfaction in a rights-based framework (e.g., availability, accessibility, acceptability, affordability and adaptability of services), which emphasizes the responsiveness and transparency of the service provide. It helps to track the changes over a period of time in a participatory way which builds trust and ownership among the stakeholders. The satisfaction survey helps move the beneficiaries from 'apathy and coping' to 'voicing'. It can throw spotlight on specific successes, hidden costs and waste and corruption that may prevail in the system. It thus can facilitate advocacy and mobilization of public support in favour of an efficient education system through collective action.

At present Bangladesh's primary education development activities are implemented through an umbrella programme known as the Primary Education Development Programme (PEDP). The programme is running in its third phase (PEDP III). Bangladesh's primary education financing is predominantly sourced from the Bangladesh Government revenue budget and international support through loan or grant. Bangladesh's expenditure on education is comparatively low (e.g. an average of 2.18 % of the gross domestic product (GDP) during 2014-2015). In addition to paying teachers' salary and school administrative expenditure, Bangladesh government centrally publishes textbooks and teaching learning materials and distributes these to all pre-primary and primary school students across the country free of cost. The government also pays a modest monthly stipend to about 40% of the children attending primary school

It is evident from research that feedback from service recipients and the use of social accountability tools are crucial to improving quality of education. CAMPE's Citizen's Report

Card initiative since 2013 is an effort to strengthen social accountability in primary education, using specific indicators on the performance of primary education in the selected locations.

4. Methodology

The study employed a mixed approach using both qualitative and quantitative instruments. For the quantitative part, household survey was employed for data collection. The qualitative information was collected through focus group discussions (FGD), key informant interviews (KII), and observations of classroom teaching and validation workshops. Necessary tools were developed to determine the recipients' satisfaction in the form of a Likert type five-point scale. All the instruments used in this study had been pretested and finalized in discussions with different stakeholders in primary education including government agencies.

A total of 6,720 households were surveyed from the selected clusters in 20 districts out of the total of 64 districts of Bangladesh. The study took into account geographical diversity (20 districts selected from eight divisions), types of schools by treatment and controlled groups i.e., Community Education Watch Group (CEWG, 31 schools) and non-CEWG schools respectively; and variation in types of schools, such as, Government Primary School (GPS, 83 schools) and Newly Nationalized Primary Schools (NNPS, 37 schools), urban-rural setting, and gender (male and female). Community Education Watch Group (CEWG) schools are CAMPE organized treatment schools where a representative group of local community people is engaged to provide school supervision and management support. Six primary schools were purposively selected from each targeted district and 56 randomly selected guardians from each school were identified for interviews. The interview of a guardian was taken in presence of the respective students so that he/she could add to or endorse the fact provided by the guardian.

5. Results

Physical Facilities of the Schools

The study reveals a number of significant findings regarding classroom and physical facilities in the schools, which were collected by speaking with a sample of parents and visiting sample schools. The survey findings are presented in Table 1.

Table 1. Availability of various physical facilities in school

| Type of Facilities | Availability in percent | |
|-----------------------|-------------------------|-------|
| | Yes | No |
| Adequate classrooms | 44.20 | 55.80 |
| Supply of electricity | 80.80 | 19.20 |
| Electric bulb | 87.50 | 12.50 |
| Electric fan | 96.70 | 3.30 |

| Type of Facilities | Availability in percent | |
|--|-------------------------|-----------------|
| | Yes | No |
| Classroom decoration | 91.67 | 8.33 |
| Pre-primary classroom | 96.70 | 3.30 |
| Safe drinking water | 97.50 | 2.50 |
| Water supply is perceived as safe | 83.30 | 16.70 |
| Washroom facility | 97.50 | 2.50 |
| Having satisfactory toilets | 94.00 | 6.00 |
| Separate toilets for girls | 71.67 | 28.33 |
| Separate toilets for teachers | 77.50 | 22.50 |
| Gardens in school | 35.0 | 65.0 |
| Boundary wall for school premise | 19.2 | 80.8 |
| Availability of play opportunity and materials along with their use | | |
| | Available | Use by students |
| Playground | 75.0 | 100 |
| Football | 41.7 | 53.8 |
| Cricket gadgets | 24.0 | 21.6 |
| Carom board | 14.1 | 11.6 |
| Other materials | 20.1 | 12.6 |
| ICT provision in school | | |
| | Available | --- |
| Provision of multimedia in classroom | 11.7 | -- |
| Have laptop or desktop computer | 30.0 | -- |

N= 120 schools; 56 parents were consulted in each school.

Table 1 shows that less than half of the schools had sufficient classrooms. Availability of necessary classroom is basic for any school. Though the schools have electricity, it is not available for all classes. Some classrooms do not have electric light and fan which are essential in the hot and humid climate most of the year.

Government recently introduced the pre-primary class in every government primary school and it is found that nearly all schools have a well decorated classroom for pre-primary students. Almost all schools have provision for safe drinking water, but in nearly 83% cases water is considered safe while purity of water is suspect in others.

Except for a few, all schools have washroom facility but about 6% of the parents are not satisfied with the provision. However, 94% parents think that the toilet facility in school is satisfactory. The survey result indicates that nearly 72% schools have separate toilets for girls while in about 28% schools do not have any separate toilet for girls. Large majority of the schools (77%) reserved one toilet for teachers. Not having wash facility and separate toilet for girls is a significant barrier to girls' education.

One interesting finding obtained from the survey is that nearly 80% schools are not protected by boundary wall but at least 75% schools have playground and are widely used. In other words, children in school play on the school ground, but are not always in a protected and safe environment. In order to make the school attractive place for children some schools (35%) created garden in the school premises, which also helps children develop an aesthetic sense and appreciate plants and flowers.

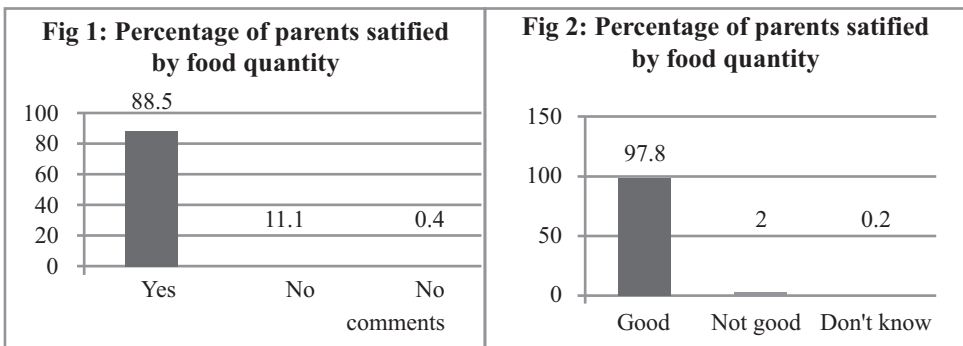
The survey however, demonstrates that majority of the schools suffer from lack of play materials. Less than half of the schools have footballs, cricket gadgets and indoor play materials. The survey also tried to find the trend among the students who really use those play materials. It was found that other than football, only a few students used play materials. This finding suggests that schools do not encourage their students enough to engage in play activities and use play materials.

The government is eager to introduce ICT in the primary school. However, it was found that only 11.7% school so far could create the opportunity of multimedia classroom in the primary school. Other than multimedia, only 30% schools were given laptop or desktop mostly for the use of teachers. This figure is too low against the desire of the government to make the school more digitally supportive.

In addition to household survey of guardians, FGD and KII were employed to collect information about services from diverse groups of stakeholders. Almost half (48%) of the respondents are either satisfied or very satisfied with the physical facilities of the schools. The highest percentage (35.8%) of the respondents is moderately satisfied. The rest of the respondents were either very unsatisfied or unsatisfied. If we consider the community's satisfaction as an indicator of infra-structural quality, then it can be mentioned that the situation is not up to the standard and it requires improvement.

School Feeding

School feeding, snack or a meal in school, is in existence in about 100 upazilas out of about 493 in the country. Study shows that most of the students where the feeding provisions are in operation in our sample schools received food on a regular basis. In the school feeding programme, 99.7% students get Biscuits as a snack from the schools. Most of the parents and guardian of the students receiving this service showed satisfaction regarding both the quality and quantity of the meal. (Figure 1 and 2).



Around 89% parents and guardians of the students found the quantity of food provided under school feeding programme sufficient for their children. Similarly, regarding the quality of the food, 98% parents and guardians considered the food was good for the students. The finding of this aspect shows the success of mid-day meal programme, where it exists.

School Governance

School governance is one of the most important activities for ensuring quality of education. It includes teachers' responsibilities, performance of the teachers and students in class, participation of the key stakeholders including teachers, students and parents in the school business, maintaining good relationship between teachers and students, monitoring by the education officials and SMC, and accountability of the teachers and school management in the overall management of the institution. During household survey and FGDs and KIIs, comments on these issues were recorded from different types of respondents who gave their opinion on the basis of their experiences and perceptions.

Teachers' Punctuality in Schools

Teachers' punctuality is very basic for well-functioning schools because it has an impact on student attendance and learning. In the household interviews almost all of the respondents (98.7%) in the presence of their children said that teachers came to school regularly. Also the same picture was found both in rural (98.5%) and urban (98.9%) areas, GPS (98.6%) and NNPS (98.8%) schools and CEWG (98.7%) and Non-CEWG (98.7%) schools as well.

Parents also reported that teachers come to school on time (within 9.15) and leave on time (after 4.30 pm), 97.6% and 95.9% respectively. However, around 0.8% and 2.0% respondents respectively were not aware of teachers' punctuality in school. A bit different picture was found in the FGD findings. The participants of FGD informed that local teachers do not follow the school timing in strict sense.

Along with punctuality regarding school attendance, teachers' punctuality on attending the classrooms was also regarded as high. Almost 95% of the respondents stated that the teachers come in the classroom on time. Teachers' punctuality in school and classroom is highly significant for quality of education. The rate of satisfaction about this matter indicates improvement in the governance of schools. But this finding needs to be confirmed through further research.

School Learning Environment

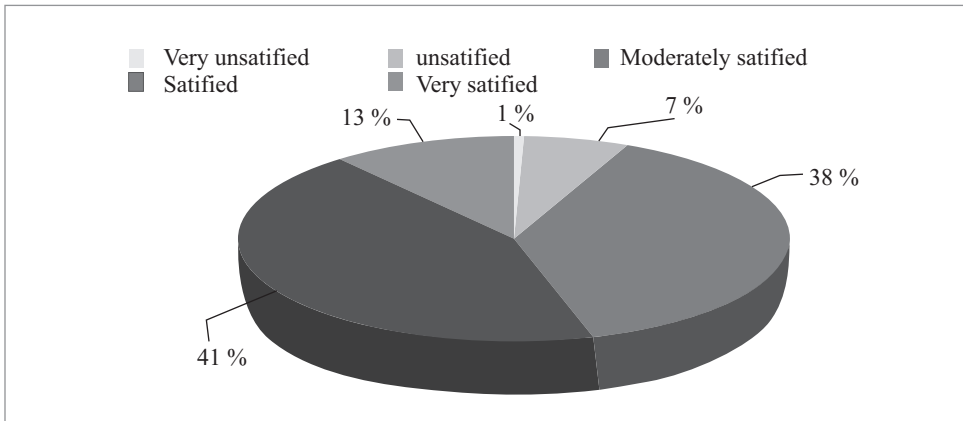
School is considered to be a sacred place where future citizens learn from their mentors. A student not only acquires knowledge and skill but also learns morality and social responsibility befitting a good human being. All such qualities can be inculcated in an enabling learning environment. Therefore, community's satisfaction was ascertained about the learning environment in school. The findings depict that almost 54% of the respondents are either satisfied or very satisfied about the teaching-learning environment that exists in school. This degree of satisfaction demands further attention so that this aspect can be improved.

Teachers were found to be well-behaved and cordial with the parents of their students. The study shows that almost 98% of the respondents never experienced any unexpected behavior from the teachers. Almost similar findings are derived from the urban and rural area samples.

However, amongst those behaving inappropriately were reported to display hot temper (40.3%), rude behavior (23.3%), unequal treatment (8.8%) and ethnic discrimination (5.7%).

How far the parents are satisfied with the teaching learning environment of the school was also probed through parental interviews. After analyzing the interview data it was found that more than half of the parents were satisfied with the teaching-learning environment in school. More than one third of the respondents expressed themselves to be moderately satisfied in this respect. A few of the respondents, nearly 8%, were not satisfied at all with the current situation. The responses are shown in Figure 3.

Figure 3: Level of Satisfaction on the Teaching-Learning Environment based on FGD and KII



Though the rate of dissatisfaction among the respondents is not large yet considering the importance of the issue, this should be taken into consideration for further action. The data from the FGD and KII found that bad infrastructure of the schools, insufficient facilities of classrooms, toilets, water points, teachers' unexpected behavior (for example, using slang languages, bad manner with guardians), conventional way of teaching, punishing students, etc. were the main causes of dissatisfaction in this regard.

Distribution and Management of Text Books

All the respondents know about the provision of free textbooks from the government to their children, as it is widely publicized and in practice for some years. Thus all the students have received the free books from the schools in 2016. Almost all of them received the books in the month of January, 2016.

The books are supposed to be distributed to the students free of charge but some (4% of the respondents) mentioned that they had to pay for the books. The rate of payment varied in urban and rural areas. In the urban area, only 0.3% respondents paid some unauthorized

money for getting books. On the other side, 6.4% of the rural students paid some amount for the books. A significant difference in the rate of payment for books was found between GPS (2.5%) and NNPS (7.3%). When the amount was analyzed it was found that on an average Tk. 18.00 was paid for getting the books, though the amount varied from Tk. 5 to Tk. 200. The explanation given was that the money was charged as carrying cost (84.23%) and in 3.46% cases it was taken as the cost of new books.

Requirement to Buy Additional Books

Besides obtaining free textbooks, whether parents had to buy any additional books from the market was determined. It was found that in almost 69% cases parents had to buy additional books from market. Data from FGD shows that in most cases teachers suggested that parents buy guide books from the market. Parents also were tempted to buy guide books expecting their children to have better result in the examination. Some parents bought grammar books (2.1%) and story books (1.4%) from the market in addition to school textbooks.

In order to buy additional books parents had to spend Tk. 331.17 on an average ranging between Tk. 20 to 2000 only. Other than the expenditure for the additional books, the respondents said that they had to spend on an average Tk. 149.57 for buying pen, paper, note book, pencil, geometry box, eraser, sharpener, etc.

Book Distribution and Printing Quality of the Books

Free books distribution has become an occasion in the schools everywhere both in urban and rural areas. Students and their parents/guardians wait for the day of books distribution. These books bring smile on the faces of the students. Nearly 87% of them were either satisfied or very satisfied with the distribution of books. In addition, 13% of them are also moderately satisfied. Very negligible numbers of respondents were either unsatisfied or very unsatisfied. Similar to book distribution and printing quality, respondents showed a high level of satisfaction on illustrations on the covers of books as well as overall setup of the books (99%).

Payment of Different Fees

About 16.7% of the total respondents stated that they had to pay on an average Tk. 37.58 for getting admission in class one. But as per government circular, admission in GPS or NNPS is completely free. Thus the amount claimed during admission in grade one is unauthorized but parents did not know this. However, the study indicates that not all schools were involved in receiving such amount. Only around 20% of rural schools received Tk. 37.41 from the parents and 11% of urban schools received Tk. 35.68 on average for admission of a child in class one. In the GPS Schools, 15.3% respondents paid Tk. 36.35, whereas in the NNPS schools 20.6% paid Tk. 39.97. It was found that, 14.8% students in the CEWG schools paid an average of Tk. 24.72, whereas 17.2% students in the Non-CEWG paid Tk. 40.34.

Further, about 2.9% of the total respondents informed that they had to pay on an average Tk. 53.34 as readmission fee for the new class or in the same class for grade repetition. Other than admission fee, 97.6% of the total respondents opined that they had to pay annual exam fee which varied from Tk. 5 to Tk. 580. It is necessary to determine the reasons behind charging extra money from the students though there is clear instruction from the government not to charge any money from student.

Fee for Annual Sports. Holding annual sports in the school is another occasion when cost is incurred by students. In this regard about 23% of the respondents mentioned that they had to pay for the annual sports festival ranging from Tk. 5 to Tk. 100 which amounts to Tk. 31 on average. Though the amount is small, still the question remains why school charge parents for such event despite government instruction to the contrary.

In comparing CEWG and Non-CEWG Schools on unauthorized payment for annual sports, the findings show that 17.7% students of CEWG schools and 24.6% of non-CEWG school were forced to pay the amount of Tk. 32.67 and 30.98 respectively.

Fee for Religious Festival. Primary schools usually organize different religious festivals such as milad (an Islamic celebration) and Saraswati Puja (Hindu worship of Goddess of Learning). For arranging such religious occasions, the school authority in many cases use their own funds, but some respondents (7.4%) said that they had to pay on average Tk. 20.36 for the religious festivals.

Fee for National Day Celebration. The School authorities (both the school management and the SMC) are instructed to observe national days with students i.e. national mourning day, Independence Day, international mother language day, victory day, etc., by the government circulars/orders. Though all these days are not celebrated in all schools in the same frequency and in the same manner, those school authorities who observe these days are mostly use school funds.. But 2% of the respondents informed that they had to pay on an average Tk. 14.97 for the celebration of those national days.

Fee for Cultural Programmes. Like the religious festivals, school authorities usually organize cultural events as extra-curricular activities for the social, cultural and creative mental upbringing of the students. In these cultural programmes, students as well as teachers do perform either individually or in group. Parents of the students and community people are invited to the events. These cultural events are organized mostly by the school funds or by the funding support from SMC or by the teachers. In some cases (Nearly 2%), the respondents are told to provide an amount for organizing such cultural programmes for purchasing awards for the winners. These 2% of the students paid on an average of Tk. 24.69 which were not authorized.

The data indicate that though primary school has provision of free education, in many schools, students and their guardians had to share cost on number occasions. In some cases, students were forced to pay. On the other side, the schools argued in favor of such subscription or unauthorized payment. Several schools claimed that schools need to organize cultural, sports and extracurricular activities, where schools have limited funding of its own to support this activities. Further, schools are to organize programmes on several national days and in most of the cases, schools are not being allocated fund for this purpose but to ask students to contribute. These findings have been validated and cross-checked with participants including UEO and AUEOs in validation workshops.

6. Discussion

CRC is an approach to establish citizen's involvement in the primary education system. This study of CRC, therefore, involved a representative group of schools like, GPS, NNPS, rural, urban and CEW schools, though they were not strictly representative of the primary

education system. Yet the selection of a cohort of various categories of schools in the study was considered useful to gain an understanding of the efficacy of the system.

Physical facilities provisions

A vital aspect of quality education is the provision of physical facilities like availability of classroom, washrooms, safe drinking water, light and ventilation, teaching learning materials, play materials and playground. The study revealed many important features as reported earlier. In general, the situation was worse in the rural and NNPS schools.

One of the important aspects of physical facility is having safe drinking water in school. It was found that nearly 100 percent have this provision, but nearly half of the students do not have it in their classroom.

Nearly 100 percent of schools have hygienic sanitary toilet, but it is not always segregated for boys, girls and teachers. Often at least one or two is kept reserved for teachers and the remaining are used by students. The student-toilet ratio remains low in many schools. Keeping the toilets clean and up to the hygienic standard was generally a concern.

Play materials and playground are important for any quality education system. Most schools have playgrounds particularly in rural areas, but all suffer from insufficient play materials for students. Mostly schools possess outdoor play equipment like football and cricket materials, but students often do not get the opportunity to use them. Availability of these materials to girls is even scarcer.

Provision of ICT was found only in a few schools surveyed. These consisted of either a computer or a laptop and in a few cases a multimedia projector. Having the electronic equipment did not mean that these were used by teachers regularly in classes. It was found that teachers generally were not yet well prepared to use these electronic tools in class. ICT support is more evident in the urban schools than the rural ones. But in neither there were support services for trouble-shooting.

Physical facilities also should include garden and boundary walls around the school building. The study shows that teachers are not very much concerned about these two aspects. The actual number of school gardens and boundary walls demonstrate that these provisions are less valued by the school authority. Schools in all categories mentioned that they had sufficient numbers of teaching learning materials but classroom observation confirmed that their use in classroom was not very encouraging. The picture was more or less similar in all categories of schools.

Quality of service

In order to support quality education, schools are expected to provide certain inputs, one of which is a snack or school meal during school hours. Only in a few schools, students received biscuits during the school hours through the school feeding programme. The majority of the concerned parents expressed their satisfaction about the food and its quality, where this service existed. Schools in which children are mostly from poor families benefited more through this food and nutrition assistance.

There are several indicators which collectively contribute to the quality of education. Important among these are: teachers punctuality, students' attendance, teacher student ratio, and dropout rate. Almost all students reported that their teachers are punctual in coming to class.

There are several participatory mechanisms in the system (e.g. SMC, PTA, mothers' meetings etc.), but how these contribute to empowering the community remains a question mark. In this backdrop, the role of the Citizens' Report Card to strengthen the participatory processes has to be considered.

The study collected factual information on different services (e.g. number of classrooms) in the school and asked the service receiver (e.g. parents) how they perceived service quality. The study found contrasting data on major items between empirical observation in schools and community's expression of satisfaction. While adequate physical facilities such as availability of classroom, for example, were not found in half of the school, community expressed overwhelmingly their satisfaction (94%) in this regard. Similar findings were evident on other items such as sports materials, ICT and use of teaching learning materials. Schools were found with a variety and wide range of teaching aids, but classroom observation found only 35% of the teachers used teaching material in the classroom and most of the teachers conducted class through lectures. Nonetheless, Community response shows that 95% of respondents were satisfied with the teaching methods.

The perceived high satisfaction of the community about school services despite observed deficiencies in provisions may have several reasons. Many parents and guardians of government primary school students are with limited education and from low socio-economic background. They might have limited expectations regarding the services. The community may have limited chances to compare and contrast the availability of services and the quality required for effective primary education. Their knowledge, understanding and judgment about what is acceptable and what is required to ensure quality in teaching-learning also may be limited. However, there could be other reasons such as lack of participation and opportunity to raise their voices regarding the school education condition and process and build an understanding and consensus about quality in public education. Furthermore, there may be a cultural aspect of a sense of social obligation about not making negative comments about schools and teachers in their community.

7. Conclusion

Despite expressions of positive perception by parents, the study discerned a few areas of concern. For example, about 98% respondents said that teachers come to school on time, but 28% mentioned moderate or high satisfaction about teachers' attendance at school and classroom. Another area of concern was children with special needs. Around 25% respondents expressed different levels of dissatisfaction about the facilities for the physically challenged students. It is not unexpected as the provision of inclusive education has been introduced recently in the schools. The finding also indicates that parents, guardians and community have begun to accept the idea that children with disability should be in school and school needs to organize facilities to receive these children.

The long-standing practice of centralized education management is clearly a barrier to proactive community participation and contributing to better management of primary education. A culture of non-participation and abdication of ownership has developed over the years. Community stakeholders often appeared lacking awareness and were reluctant to take interest in their neighborhood school. This study, however, shows possibilities for

involving the community and making them take greater interest in the school affairs and its quality of services.

8. Recommendations

A few salient recommendations emerge from this study, which are especially pertinent for citizen participation in primary education. The following four particularly stand out as relevant.

1. Dealing with contradiction between perception and reality. The contrast and contradiction between the overall positive perception about primary education provision and expression of satisfaction about it, on the one hand, and the empirical evidence of deficiencies in the provision and the quality of services, on the other, raise a basic issue about understanding and concept of quality among the key stakeholders, especially, parents, managing committee members, and community leaders. CAMPE as an advocacy forum of education NGOS needs to consider how a better understanding about quality with equity in primary education can be developed and a broad consensus built on the key elements of quality outputs and inputs in primary education.
2. Better understanding of teacher's role and performance. The survey indicates that parents and other community people are largely satisfied with the teachers' regularity and punctuality as well as teaching practices and methods and teachers' personal conduct. Does it represent a cultural phenomenon of respect towards teacher and a gesture of courtesy and politeness towards teacher or a genuine appreciation of teachers' performance and practices? Teachers' behavior and conduct are central to quality improvement and student achievement and there is ample evidence about problems and weaknesses in this respect, all of which are not necessarily the teachers' faults. There is a need for dialogue and advocacy about teachers' performance standards and assessment of their performance, about which necessary steps should be considered by stakeholders in primary education including CAMPE and teachers' organisations.
3. Orienting and motivating school managing committees. Orientation and motivational training programmes for the SMC members on their roles and responsibilities should be organized. There is need for an effective mechanism of regular interaction between local government authority, SMC, parents' representatives and teachers and head teachers.
4. Perils of the high stake 5th grade exam. The focus on a high-stake public examination at the end of the fifth grade and the preoccupation with it of teachers, parents, students and education authorities clearly distracts students from actual learning of and achieving the foundational competencies in primary education. It subjects all concerned to anxiety, stress and counter-productive teaching-learning practices and school activities. This came up indirectly in the study but it clearly is a concern that has to be addressed at the policy level and schools, teachers and parents helped and guided to cope with the situation. Again CAMPE, teachers' organisations and civil society stakeholders need to continue the discourse and advocacy on this question.

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