Monitoring the Quality of Secondary Education in the Context of Decentralization in Pakistan

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Abstract

The main purpose of this study was to explore the monitoring mechanism of secondary schools in respect of education quality under devolution and decentralization. A case study method was adopted by selecting three districts one from each province. Data was collected from 56 supervisors/head teachers of District Education Departments through interviews and focus group discussions. The study found that the monitoring mechanism to supervise schools exist at the district level, however, it was not properly organized. According to official norms, the supervisors are required to allocate ten days in every month for the school visits, but they are unable to do so due to other official assignments. The non-existence of standards for the monitoring of schools makes the work of supervisors even more difficult. The supervisors prepare the school visit reports but there is no proper mechanism to analyze these reports. The District Education Management Information Systems (DEMISs) were functional in the sample districts but they were unable to compute the district or school level indicators. The performance of secondary school head teachers and teachers was evaluated on the basis of Secondary School Certificate exam results. The authority and power of District Education Officers (DEOs) have been reduced after devolution due to which they are unable to resolve the school problems. The main reasons for not solving the school problems are the lack of power and authority of district managers for the creation of teaching staff positions, political interference in the administrative affairs of schools and the lack of financial resources.

Introduction

The Government of Pakistan introduced decentralization through a Devolution Plan during 2001 (Zafar, 2003). Effective monitoring is an important part of the mandate of the local officers for ensuring quality education in the post devolution scenario. In the context of devolution and decentralization, this role has become even more important in order to improve the service delivery. At grassroots level, the inspection of schools is carried out to ensure the quality of education and compliance with the national/provincial policy and standards. Moreover, they are also required to

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conduct the annual evaluation of teachers and head-teachers and to devise measures for enhancing their professional growth.

Monitoring can be understood as a process consisting of three stages: the collection of information, the analysis of information, and the implementation of actions to solve the problems or weaknesses identified. There are four main sources of information on the functioning and performance of schools i.e. the supervision and support visits to schools, the school results in the board exams and the students' achievement tests; school's self evaluation reports and indicator system on schools. In the context of decentralization of education, a District Education Officer (DEO) has to play a vital role in monitoring the performance of secondary schools. Therefore, a study was conducted to examine how a DEO monitors the functioning and performance of secondary schools at the district level.

Objectives of the Study

The study aims to:
1. Investigate the organizational and managerial responsibilities of District Education Officers for monitoring the performance of secondary schools.
2. Examine how the Executive District Officer for Education (EDO-E) and the District Education Officer monitor the performance of secondary schools
3. Explore the strategy of supervision and support visit of District Education Officer to monitor the performance of secondary schools.
4. Solicit the opinions of the Heads of Secondary schools about the monitoring of secondary schools conducted by EDO-E and DEOs and to what extent it is helpful in solving the school problems.

Review of Related Literature

Pakistan is a parliamentary democracy with federal government, four provinces, Federally Administered Tribal Areas (FATA), Northern Areas (FANA) and Islamabad Capital Territory (ICT). There is a three tier system of education i.e. federal, provincial and district. The division of responsibilities of the federation and provinces has been defined by the constitution of the country. According to the 1973 constitution, education is a provincial subject, however, the federal government is responsible for policy-formulation, coordinating, overall curriculum development and standards of education. The Education Minister heads the federal Ministry of Education and is assisted by the Secretary Education. All provinces have Departments of Education headed by the Provincial Ministers of Education. The Provincial Departments of Education are responsible for implementation of national education policies and management of

elementary, secondary, technical and higher education in the provinces (Ministry of Education, 2008). The provinces are further divided into districts for the purpose of administration. The districts are further divided into Tehsils (sub districts). The tehsils are further divided into union councils which are the lowest administrative units. According to Saeed (2007) a district government is responsible for supervision and management of school education and the district education department is headed by EDO-E.

In Pakistan, the education system is three-tiered: elementary (grade 1-8), secondary (grade 9-12), and tertiary or higher education, after 12 years' schooling. The elementary education comprises of two distinct stages i.e. Primary (grade 1-5) and middle (grade 6-8) and is offered in primary and middle schools. In primary schools, the children are enrolled at the age of five. The secondary education consists of two stages: the secondary and the higher secondary. The secondary education is of two years duration and comprised of grades 9-10 and is imparted in secondary schools. The higher secondary education comprises of two years duration (grade 11-12) and is offered at both intermediate colleges and higher secondary schools. The higher education in Pakistan starts after the completion of grade 12. The universities, colleges and other such institutions impart higher and professional education (Shami & Hussain, 2006).

Literacy and primary school enrolment rates in Pakistan have improved but they are still low as compared to other countries of the region. The literacy rate for population of 10 years and above was 55 percent during 2006-07 with wide disparity by gender and location. The gross primary enrolment rate was 91percent whereas net primary enrolment rate was 56 percent during 2006-07. The government share of the primary enrolment was 69 percent. The gross enrolment rate for middle level (lower secondary) education was 51 percent whereas the net enrolment rate was 18 percent in 2006-07. The net enrolment rate for secondary level of education was 10 percent in contrast to the gross enrolment rate of 48 percent in 2006-07 (Federal Bureau of Statistics, 2007). Education sector development in Pakistan has been hampered by a number of problems, including inadequate physical infrastructure and facilities and under-investment in quality education resulting in poor supply of services. Lack of proper and regular supervision and monitoring has also negatively affected the quality of education. Lack of clarity in roles and responsibilities as well as incomplete fiscal devolution at the district levels are also viewed as serious challenges (Kazmi, 2005).

In order to improve the service delivery at grass-root level, the Government of Pakistan introduced decentralization through the Devolution Plan during 2001. The main responsibilities of provincial governments under devolution included formulation of provincial education policies in light of

national education policy, coordination with federal and district governments, capacity building of teachers and managers, assuring equity, access and quality of education (Shami & Hussain, 2006). In all provinces education up to higher secondary level has been devolved to the district level (Ministry of Education 2001). For efficient and effective implementation of the devolution plan, a new district education administrative structure, headed by the Executive District Officer (Education) (EDO-E), was created. EDO-E is responsible for all aspects of education including implementation of the government policies, monitoring and supervision of schools, coordination of the entire sub-sector of education, formulation of the district annual plan and its implementation, and collection and compilation of education data (Shah, 2003). EDO-E is assisted by the District Education Officers (DEOs) (Elementary & Secondary). The secondary schools are supervised and monitored by DEOs (Secondary) (Saeed, 2007).

The secondary education plays dual role in the education system. On the one hand it produces middle level work force for the economy and on the other, it provides a path to higher education. Due to this role, the secondary education has significant importance for the development of the country. The quality of higher education hinges on the quality of secondary education…secondary education is a stage, where a student enters adolescence which is the most crucial stage of life (National Education Policy, 1998-2010).

Proponents of decentralization in education argue that it improves transparency, administrative efficiency, financial management, quality, accessibility of services and setting of priorities compatible with local needs. Some commentators consider that the decentralization process in the long run increases inequality between regions in terms of financing and quality of education because the central governments would be freed of the responsibility of local level administrations and communities without providing adequate resources to the poorest or most disadvantaged regions (UNESCO, 2005). The involvement of local communities in the management and monitoring of schools to improve the quality of education is a prime objective of devolution. Zafar (2003) has found that the role of school management committees is confined to provision of books to needy students, monitoring and supervision of repairs/construction and their contribution towards quality related inputs to the school was very limited.

According to Winkler (2005) the quality of schooling can improve only if processes and behaviors change within the school itself however, devolution can strengthen parental demand for greater quality and by monitoring teacher attendance, budget preparation and implementation. He argued that decentralization's impact on school quality depends on capacity, information, ministry of education support, and local tradition and culture, especially as they concern community initiative and participation. Mitchell

(2008) argued that decentralization may lead to a deterioration of education services as local governments are less technically able to administrate public services, and lack the information or tools to plan, budget, procure supplies, or monitor and evaluate the impact of their efforts. Winkler & Hatfield (2002) have pointed out that Pakistan needs to carefully monitor both the process and the outcomes of education devolution in order to identify and understand best practice. However, they have indicated that presently there is no institutionalized mechanism at any level of the government to carry out this type of monitoring.

Methodology

This study was conducted by the Academy of Educational Planning and Management (AEPAM) in collaboration with the International Institute for Educational Planning (IIEP), UNESCO. The in-depth qualitative case study approach was visualized as a consultative effort of the Academy of Educational Planning and Management and IIEP, UNESCO. The methodology adopted for this study was discussed and finalized in a joint meeting held in Jakarta, Indonesia.

Selection of Sample Districts

Three districts, one from each province, were selected on the basis of population, geographic location and rural urban nature. The selected districts included: Rawalpindi from the Punjab province, Abbottabad from NWFP province and Quetta from the Balochistan province. Selection of the districts was also based on the higher literacy rate within the province and urban population. Quetta and Rawalpindi are the urbanized districts but Abbottabad is not. However, Abbottabad has the highest literacy rate in the province.

Sample Size

Considering the requirements of the study, concerned EDO-E, DEOs, and the Deputy District Education Officers (DDEOs) (supervisors) from each sample district were included in the sample. Moreover, 10 to 12 heads of the primary, middle and secondary schools from each district were also randomly selected for interview and group discussion. Moreover, head of the district EMIS was also interviewed for getting his/her opinion about the method of data collection, analysis and utilization of data at districts level. Information was collected from 56 supervisors and head teachers of the District Education Departments of the sample districts through interviews and focus group discussions.

Instruments

The following interview schedules were used for conducting interviews and group discussions:

a) Interview schedule for EDO-E and DEO (Secondary) (Interview structure at Annex-I).
b) Interview schedule for the Supervisors (Interview structure at Annex-II).
c) Interview schedule for group discussion with the head of primary, middle (lower secondary) and secondary school (Interview structure at Annex-III).
d) Interview schedule for the District EMIS cell (Interview structure at Annex-IV)

Collection, Analysis and Interpretation of Data

The research team visited the sample districts to conduct interviews from all the respondents as per interview schedules. Focus group discussion was also held with the supervisors and the head teachers to obtain detailed information about various ways and means of monitoring and supervising the performance of the secondary school in the districts. Relevant documents about the sample districts and the devolution plan were also reviewed. Data collected through interviews and focus group discussions was analyzed in keeping with the objectives of the study.

Overview of Provincial Variations

Organization and management of the District Education Department (DEP)

The main function of the District Education Department in all sample districts are the district level planning within the frame work of the provincial guidelines and policies, quality and standards of education, planning, implementation and monitoring of development projects, strengthening of EMIS, budget preparation and its distribution, utilization of funds and their audit, monitoring and supervision of all schools, posting and transfer of teachers, up-gradation, repair, maintenance and provision of basic facilities to schools, promotion of the community participation, award of scholarships to the students, conducting grade 8th standard examinations, organization and promotion of education.

Main responsibilities of the Executive District Officers (Education) (EDO-E)

Planning, budgeting, coordination, implementation of the government plans/policies, monitoring and supervision of all the schools, transfer, posting and recruitment of teaching and non teaching staff up-to basic pay scale 10.

Main responsibilities of the District Education Officer (DEO)/ District Officer (DO) (Secondary)

Overall supervision of the secondary schools, monitoring and performance evaluation of the head teachers of secondary schools, planning and budgeting, conducting official inquiries against the teachers and head teachers of secondary schools, and coordination.

Structure of the District Education Department

The management structure of district education departments across the provinces is different. In all sample districts, the education department is headed by an Executive District Officer (Education). He is assisted by the District Education Officers (elementary & secondary), but in case of Abbottabad district, there is no position of a DEO (secondary) therefore, the monitoring of secondary schools is carried by both male and female District Officers (DOs) for education. In case of Rawalpindi and Quetta, the monitoring of all secondary schools (both boys and girls) is done by a DEO (secondary). DEOs are assisted by the Deputy District Education Officers (DDEOs) and the Assistant Education Officers (AEOs). DEOs (Elementary) in two districts are responsible for the management of elementary schools. DDEO (Elementary) is responsible to monitor the schools at the Tehsil level and AEOs monitor schools at the Markaz/ Circle level. DDEO (Elementary) mainly visits the middle schools. The Markaz/ Circle is the lowest administrative level created for the monitoring of schools. DDEO (male) supervises the primary and middle schools for boys and DDEO (female) supervises the primary and middle schools for girls. In Quetta district, the monitoring of primary schools is also done by the Learning Coordinators (LCs) at circle level. Actually a Learning Coordinators is a senior teacher selected among the primary school teachers to provide academic guidance to the primary teachers.

Table 1

Management Structure of the Education Department across Districts

Category of Officers	Rawalpindi	Abbottabad	Quetta
Executive District Officer(Education)	EDO-Education	EDO-Education	EDO-Education
District Education Officer (supervise schools at District level)	DEO (Secondary) DEO-Elementary (Male) DEO- Elementary (Female)	District Officer (Male) (School & Literacy) District Officer (Female) (School & Literacy)	DEO (Secondary) DEO- Elementary (M) DEO-Elementary (F) DEO (Audits & Planning)
Deputy District Education Officers (supervise schools at Tehsil level)	DDEO-Elementary (M) DDEO-Elementary (F) DDEO (Administration) DDEO (Development) DDEO Head Quarter	Deputy DO (Male) (S&L) Deputy DO (Female) (S&L)	DDEO-Elementary (M) DDEO-Elementary (F) DDEO (Establishment) DDEO (Development)
Assistant Education Officers (supervise schools at Circle /Markaz)	AEO-E (Male) AEO-E (Female) AEO (Administration) AEO (Development) AEO (Sports) AEO (Head Quarter)	ADO Establishment, (Primary & Secondary) (M) ADO Establishment, (Primary & Secondary) (F) ADO (Planning), ADO (Sports)	ADEO (Male) ADEO (Female) ADEO (Development) ADEO (Establishment)

Internal Management

EDO-Es in all the districts conduct monthly meetings with the supervisors. These meetings are held in the beginning of every month. In these meetings the schedule of the school visits, the actions taken in light of the monitoring reports on various issues, the posting and transfer of teachers are discussed. EDO-Es in three districts use both informal and formal mode of communication with the supervisors and head of the secondary schools. It was observed that there was no independent monitoring cell in any district education office to monitor the secondary schools.

Resources

After introduction of the Devolution in the country, the funds were provided by the provinces to the districts. Additionally, the districts were required to generate their own funds. The federal government also provides funds to the district through the provincial governments. The funds are distributed by the district government to various line departments. Accordingly, the district government provides funds to the Education Department. The funds provided by the district government are mostly recurring expenses. It was observed that more than 95% funds are allocated for the salaries of the teaching and non teaching staff, whereas, less than 5% is allocated for the non-salary items. The construction work of the education department is carried out by the District Civil Works Department. The development proposals submitted by the Education Department are reviewed by the District Development Committee (DDC). DDC is chaired by the District Nazim and EDO-E is a member of that committee. The District Coordination Officer (DCO) presents the proposals submitted by various line departments of district before DDC. The powers of DDC to approve the schemes at the district level vary across the provinces and this limit ranges from Rs. 10 million to 50 million. If the cost of a scheme is more then it is referred to the provincial government.

The District Government Rawalpindi allocated an amount of Rupees (Rs.) 786 million for the secondary education during 2007-08 as a recurring budget (non-development). Out of the total allocation, an amount of Rs.26 million was allocated as the non salary budget which represents 3% of the recurring budget. The District Government Abbottabad allocated an amount of Rs.386 million as a recurring budget for the secondary education during 2007-08 out of which an amount of Rs. 3 million is allocated as the non-salary budget which represents about 1% of the running budget. The district government Quetta allocated an amount of Rs. 413 million in 2007-08 as a recurring budget out of which an amount of Rs. 7 million allocated as a non salary budget which represents about 2% of the recurring budget.

EDO-E Rawalpindi stated that an amount of Rs. 60,000 was provided annually to each secondary school for minor repairs and consumables. The DEO Abbottabad stated that an amount of Rs. 5000/- was allocated annually per class-room for minor repair for each secondary school and Rs.2500/- per class-room annually for consumables for each secondary school. In Quetta, most of the head-teachers indicated that they have not received any amount from the education department for minor repairs of schools and for purchase of consumables.

Human Resource

Table 2
Staff of the District Education Department across the districts

Category of Officers	Rawalpindi	Abbottabad	Quetta
Executive District Officer (Education)	1	1	1
District Education Officer (DEO) (Secondary/ Elementary)	3	2	4
Deputy District Education Officers (DDEO)	15	2	4
Assistant Education Officers (AEO)	54	27	11

Most of EDO-Es and DEOs are master degree holders. They are also professionally qualified having bachelors and masters degrees in education. Most of them started their career as a teacher. Some of them got management training of short duration from the Academy of Educational Planning and Management (AEPAM) and from other provincial training institutions. There is no separate cadre of the education managers at the district level and the teachers are posted as supervisors on the basis of their seniority.

Supervision and Support Visits to School

It was observed that there were two types of school visits. One was a planned one and the other was a surprise visit. Usually the schools are identified for the planned visits. However, there are no criteria for identification of schools for the planned visits. For the planned visits, the head of institutions is usually informed in advance. This is a detailed visit of a school in which the supervisors examine the teachers and students attendance, classrooms instructional work, teachers study work plan, cleanliness of school, library books issued to the students, physical facilities in school, school's accounts record, construction work, and meetings with the teachers. During the surprised visits, the head of the school is not informed in advance. One of the DEOs pointed out that "even my driver does not know which school I am going to visit". The main purpose of a surprise visit is to check the teachers' absenteeism and the students' attendance. The supervisors usually check the attendance register and verify the presence of teachers. They also check the class-wise attendance of the students. Sometimes the surprised visits are conducted on the

recommendations of a District Nazim, DCO, and other public representatives.

In addition to planned/surprised visits, it was observed that the supervisors of Quetta district also conduct an annual inspection of schools through a committee which comprises of a head of the secondary school, three subject specialists and a supervisor. The committee spends three to four days in a school and thoroughly examines all aspects including the academic work of the school. However, an annual school inspection of the secondary schools is not conducted in Rawalpindi and Abbottabad districts due to other official assignments of the supervisors. One of the supervisors said that "most of our office time has been wasted in irrelevant and useless meetings with the public representatives and with other district officers".

According to the official norms, the supervisors are required to allocate ten days for the school visits every month. In reality, they are unable to do so due to load of office work and limited transport facility and the fact that because the schools are scattered. In some cases the schools are inaccessible through roads particularly in the hilly areas.

Table 3
Comparative statement of the planned versus actual visits conducted by supervisors across the districts

Category of Officers	Rawalpindi		Abbottabad		Quetta	
	Monthly Planned Visit	Actual	Monthly Planned Visit	Actual	Monthly Planned Visit	Actual
DEO Secondary)	30	20-25	10	5-6	20	15
DDEO	15-20	10-15	15	10	10	10
AEO	20	10	15	10	30	15-20

It was observed that most of the supervisors were unable to visit all the schools as per schedule particularly in case of the female supervisors due to lack of transport. A supervisor stated that "most often vehicles are not available. Even if vehicles are available these are very old and need repair and maintenance for which the funds are not available". They stated that the leftover schools are given preference for visit during the next academic year.

It was observed that AEOs are responsible to supervise the middle/primary schools from 30 to 180 at the Markaz/ Circle level.

Table-4
Districts comparison for supervision of schools by AEOs

The No. of schools supervised by AEO	Rawalpindi	Abbottabad	Quetta
	80-180	60-160	30-70

EDOs do not conduct the planned schools visits however, they conduct the surprise visits of the primary, middle (lower secondary) and secondary schools.

Table-5
Surprise monthly visits of schools conducted by EDO-E across the districts

Category of Officers	Rawalpindi	Abbottabad	Quetta
	Monthly Surprised Visit	Monthly Surprised Visits	Monthly Surprised Visits
EDO-E	15-20	10-13	5-6

School Visit Reports

It was observed that DEOs and other supervisors prepare the school visit reports. The issues/problems identified during the school visit which come under their purview are resolved immediately. Unresolved issues are referred to the concerned line departments at the district level. Currently the authority to create or abolish teachers' posts has not been devolved to the district. Therefore, the district is not in position to meet the schools' demands for additional teachers. For improvement of the schools infrastructure, the education department submits proposals to the district government. A major chunk of the district budget is allocated for the payment of salaries, therefore, a meager amount is left for the development work. Due to lack of funds, the quality of infrastructure in most of the schools is very poor. Most of the schools lack adequate furniture, teaching learning materials, and other basic facilities.

Parallel System of Monitoring of District Education Department

The Government of the Punjab has introduced the Education Sector Reforms and the main focus of these reforms is to increase access to education, minimize the wastage of education system, reduce the gender disparity and improve the quality of education. In order to monitor the reforms, the Government of Punjab has set up a parallel system of monitoring of education at the district level. They have created a separate monitoring cell in each district headed by a junior civil servant called a District Monitoring Officer (DMO). Usually a DMO works directly under DCO in close liaison with the Program Monitoring and Implementation Unit (PMIU) of the provincial education department however, they are not working under administrative control of EDO-E. PMIU is working under the administrative control of a Secretary Education. Most of the field staff

recruited in the District Monitoring Office is retired army/air force personnel and recruited on contract basis. They have been provided motorcycles for schools visits. The field staff is called the Monitoring and Evaluation Assistants (MEAs).

Each MEA is required to visit at least three schools per day (two primary/middle and one secondary school). Information from these schools is collected on a prescribed proforma. The data collected by MEAs is entered and processed on daily basis and a report is generated on monthly basis. Both the hard and soft copies of the monthly report are sent to PMIU for consolidation at the Provincial level. The district wise reports are reviewed by the Provincial Education Authority. Copy of the monthly report is also sent to EDO-E for taking necessary actions on the identified issues. To follow up on the report, a monthly meeting is also held with EDO-E and attended by other relevant officers of the District Education Department. In these meetings the decisions taken in the previous meetings are reviewed. The issues identified during the monthly visits of MEAs requiring immediate action by the District Education Department are also discussed.

It was observed that the monitoring done by DMO is more effective in respect of decreasing the teacher absenteeism, increasing students enrolment, decreasing students' dropout, efficient distribution of the free text books to the students, girls stipend distribution and monitoring of the construction work. However, they were not in a position to resolve the schools problems because the administrative authority rests with the EDO-E. They are also unable to provide the academic and pedagogical guidance to the teachers because they are not education supervisors. Strong resentment was shown by the supervisors and the head-teachers about the district monitoring office. Some of them stated that it is humiliating for them that monitoring of schools is done by the retired army personnel. They suggested that instead of establishing a parallel system of monitoring, the existing monitoring system of the District Education Department should be strengthened.

Community Participation in School Monitoring

Citizen Community Board (CCB) and School Management Committees (SMCs) were proposed under the Devolution Plan. The basic idea behind creation of CCB was that the local community should be able to assess their needs, set their priorities and implement development projects. About 20% funds are earmarked for the registered CCBs in the annual development programs at each tier of the local government. The registered CCB can submit project proposal to EDO-E for community development. The members of CCB are required to arrange 20% of the total cost of the project and the remaining 80% is provided by the district government. It was

observed that in most of the tehsils the CCBs have not been formulated and registered although a lot of funds were earmarked for this purpose.

Under the provision of Local Government Ordinance, each school should have School Education Committee/Parent Teacher Association. The composition of School Management Committees (SMCs) varies from province to province. According to DEO Abbottabad, the Parent Teacher Council consists (PTC) of Union Council Nazim as Chair Person, four parents, one notable of the area and a head teacher who functions as secretary of the committee. PTC meets every month and it discusses the school problems and prioritizes these problems. Funds are provided out of PTC funs to cater for these problems. PTC funds are maintained in a joint account of the school which is operated by the chairman PTC and Head teacher of the school in order to avoid embezzlement of the funds. The SMCs/PTAs are the approving authority for the PTA's funds in case of the primary and middle schools. The SMCs/PTAs receive a meager amount of funds from the district government which is meant for the minor repair of schools and for purchase of supplies/consumables. SMCs are responsible to monitor the teachers' attendance in order to minimize teachers' absenteeism, to help the schools in reducing the drop-out of students from a school, school's minor repair and monitoring of the construction work and purchase of the consumable items.

In the secondary schools, a Head-Teacher operates the school's budget. Usually these funds are different from PTA's funds (these are student's funds). The secondary schools have committees consisting of teachers who assist the Head-Teacher in purchases and minor repairs. The role of SMC is advisory in a secondary school as compared to the primary and middle schools. It was observed that SMC/PTA has been formulated for each school. It was indicated by most of the officials that SMCs are not playing their due roles as envisaged. The main reasons identified include the lack of training, the rigid financial rules, lack of cooperation and discouragement by the local education managers and illiterate parents being members of the committee.

Views of the Head Teachers Regarding the Supervision and Support Visit to Schools

According to most of the Head Teachers, the monitoring visits conducted by supervisors are not effective because they do not have the power and authority to resolve their problems. Even if they have power and authority, they usually do not exercise the given authority particularly in case of posting and transfer of teachers due to political pressure.

They stated that there is a lot of political interference in the administrative affairs of education particularly in posting and transfer of teachers. They indicated that the supervisors are over burdened with the

administrative work therefore, they are unable to pay proper attention to monitoring of schools. Most of the principals stated that the supervisors conduct the surprise visits of schools, however, the visit depends upon the location of school. If the school is located on the main roadside, the visits are frequent, otherwise the visits are rare. In Rawalpindi district, most of head teachers stated that during last year no annual planned visits were conducted by any supervisor. In Quetta District, some of the head teachers stated that annual inspections of schools were conducted.

In all three districts, the head-teachers reported that during the surprise visit of school, usually EDO-E/ DEO examines the teacher and student attendance, school environment/ cleanliness, school record, admission and withdrawal registers, schools fund and physical facilities. During these visits, the school problems are discussed and brought into the notice of the supervisors. The supervisors usually offer advice during the school visits. The supervisors during their visits also meet with the teachers to identify their problems. However, they stated that the supervisors did not usually check the academic activities of the schools because they do not have time.

Most of the head teachers stated that they had not received the monitoring report of their schools from the visiting supervisors. Some of the head teachers have shown their reservations about the writing of field visit reports by the supervisors. They indicated that they have not received the school visit reports. Therefore, they are not sure whether the report has been written by the supervisors or otherwise.

School Results on Exams and Achievement Tests

The secondary school examinations are conducted by the Board of Intermediate and Secondary Education (BISE). The Board conducts grade 9th, 10th, 11th and 12th examinations. The exam for the grade 9th and 10th is called Secondary School Certificate (SSC) and the Board awards Secondary School Certificate to successful candidates. A Higher Secondary School Certificate (HSSC) is awarded by the Board for qualifying grade 11th and 12th examinations.

The Board supplies the gazette of the result of SSC exam to EDO-E and DEO (Secondary). The board also sends gazette of the student results to concerned high schools. After getting the results from the board, the gazettes are analyzed in DEO (secondary) office. The school wise information of each student is analyzed and the schools are categorized by percentage of qualifying students. In Rawalpindi district, a supervisor indicated that "if 70% of the students of a school qualify the secondary school exam, an appreciation letter is issued to the school and if 48% to 69% students of a school qualify the secondary exam, a satisfactory letter is issued to that

school and displeasure letter is issued to those schools where 25% to 48% students qualify the Secondary School Exam". It was observed in the Rawalpindi district that necessary disciplinary action is taken against those schools where only 25 percent students qualify the secondary school exam. A supervisor from Abbottabad district stated that "if the pass percentage of the students in SSC exam of school is 30 or below, a disciplinary action is taken against the principal of that school and if 30 percent students do not qualify a subject then a disciplinary action is taken against that subject teacher". It was observed in Abbottabad that a letter of appreciation is sent to the principal of the secondary school where majority of the students qualify the SSC exam. In these districts the performance of the secondary school head teachers is evaluated on the basis of SSC exam results.

In Quetta district, the Education Department gets the gazette of the SSC exam result from the Board, but no analysis of the result is carried out in EDO-E /DEO (secondary) office. Therefore, they do not evaluate the performance of teachers and head teachers of the secondary schools on the basis of SSC exams result. It was observed that there were no criteria to evaluate the performance of secondary schools in Quetta district.

School self evaluation through school development/ improvement plans

It was observed in all districts that the head of the secondary schools did not develop school development/ improvement plan, because there was no provision in the budget available with the Education Department for the secondary education for development of such plans. The budget to the secondary schools is released by the District Accounts Office directly to the secondary schools. It was observed that the head of the secondary schools did not prepare school development/ improvement plan.

It was observed that the school priorities are determined by the head teacher of the secondary schools in consultation with the senior teachers. The head teacher submits the school's requirements to EDO-E/ DEO (secondary). EDO-E sends these proposals to the Planning Section for preparation of proposals on the prescribed proforma developed by Planning Commission. The concerned Planning Section within EDO-E office prepares the proposals incorporating the requirements of schools. Then these proposals are submitted to the District Government for review and consideration of the District Assembly for inclusion in the Annual Development Program (ADP) of the district. After approval of the schemes, these schemes are included in the district Annual Development Program. The development work/ construction work of secondary schools is carried out by the Civil Works Department of the District Government.

Under devolution, the role and responsibilities of head teacher remained the same. The Devolution Plan did not empower the Head Teacher with Financial and Administrative Authority for planning, budgeting or for transfer and posting of teaching and non-teaching staff.

Indicator System on Schools

It was observed that the District Education Management Information System (EMIS) cells were functional in three districts however, they lack the capacity to analyze data in order to compute district indicators. They maintain district public school database and provide required information to DCOs, EDO-Es and DEOs. The data required usually pertains to number of teachers, students, number of class-rooms and missing facilities in the schools. It was also observed that the supervisors did not use EMIS data for monitoring of schools. The main reason may be that most of the educational planners/managers do not have the skills and knowledge to analyze and use the existing available EMIS data in planning, management and monitoring of education system. DMO (Rawalpindi) indicated that EMIS data is used during school visits. Particularly, class-wise enrolment is cross-checked through school record and head count of students.

It was observed that school visit reports are not sent to the district EMIS cell. Therefore, these reports are not analyzed by the district EMIS. These reports remain in the files. The reports are also not widely circulated. The supervisors are maintaining the schools information collected through monthly returns or the supervisors maintain important schools' information in their personal diaries. Usually the monthly returns are used for monitoring visits of the schools. So the District EMIS cell is neither helping the district education officials in the monitoring visit of schools nor in analysis of data for computing indicators to monitor the quality of education at the district level.

Main Findings

The monitoring mechanism to supervise schools exists at district level, however, there was no independent monitoring unit within the education department to undertake the monitoring of schools. The monitoring system is not properly organized. According to official norms, the supervisors are required to allocate ten days in each month for the school visits. In reality they are unable to do so because they are over burdened with other official assignments and they cannot give proper attention to the monitoring of schools. The number of the schools has been increased over a period of time whereas the number of supervisors is the same. Some of the supervisors do not have the vehicles to visit schools. Moreover, the schools are scattered and in some cases in-accessible through road. The district

education department has not established standards for the school improvement, provision of facilities and additional teachers, quality of education as well as for the monitoring and supervision of schools. Due to the lack of standard tools, the work of supervisors becomes more difficult. The Education Managers lack the power and authority to resolve the school problems. One of the main reasons for non solutions of the school problems by the Education Managers is the political interference in the administrative affairs of schools especially in posting and transfer of teachers.

The authority and power of DEO/DO (Secondary) has been reduced after the Devolution. He has little involvement in the matters relating to posting and transfer of teachers, site identification for the construction of schools and even provision of facilities to the schools. In two districts, the development schemes pertaining to construction of new schools, additional classrooms and rehabilitation of schools were included in the provincial ADP on behest of Members of Provincial Assembly (MPAs). At district level, EDO-E's role in the identification and inclusion of schemes in the Annual Development Plan was advisory even though he was member of DDC but the District Nazim takes most of the decisions especially for the allocation of funds. A major chunk of a district budget is allocated for the salaries of staff and a meager amount is left with the district government for the developmental activities, therefore, the infrastructure of most of the public schools remains unattended. The creation and abolishment of the teaching and non-teaching staff positions are with the provincial government, therefore, the district government is unable to meet the school's demand for additional teachers, therefore, most of the schools are under staffed.

Usually the supervisors prepare the school visit reports. These are submitted to the concerned officers/section of the District Education Department. The issues identified during the school visits are incorporated in the reports. These issues are discussed in the monthly review meetings. However, there is no proper mechanism to analyze the school visit reports. The copies of the report are sent to the concerned sections within the District Education Office as well as to other concerned departments of the District Government. The copies of the report are also kept in files for record but these are not sent to the District EMIS for analysis. Even in all districts EMISs are functional but they are only confined to conduct Annual School Census and maintain public schools database. They were unable to compute the district or school level indicators due to lack of skills and knowledge. EDO-Es and DEOs/DOs (secondary) neither sends the school visit reports to EMIS nor use EMIS data for monitoring of schools.

The Board of Intermediate and Secondary Education conducts the Secondary School Certificate (SSC) Exam (Grade-9th and 10th). The performance of secondary school head teachers and teachers is evaluated on

the basis of SSC exam results. The Head Teacher receives letter of appreciation if most of the students perform well in SSC exam. Disciplinary action is taken against the head teachers and teachers in case of poor performance of students in SSC Exam.

Under the Devolution, the role and responsibilities of head teachers of secondary schools remained the same. The Devolution Plan did not empower the Head Teachers with the financial and administrative authority for planning, budgeting or for the transfer and posting of teaching and non-teaching staff. The Head Teachers of secondary schools do not prepare a school development/ improvement plan due to lack of funds. However, they prepare proposals to meet the school requirements. The annual budget per secondary school for minor repairs and consumable range from Rs.60,000/- to about Rs. 125,000. In some districts, the district government does not provide funds to secondary schools for minor repairs and consumables. The District Accounts Office directly releases the budget to secondary schools. The budget is mostly for the salary of teaching and non teaching staff and less than five percent has been allocated for the non-salary items. This results in lack of adequate furniture, basic facilities, and adequate repair and maintenance of schools. Most of the Head Teachers are not satisfied with the existing monitoring system of schools. The major reasons for their dissatisfaction include the lack of management power and authority of EDO-E/DEO, not exercising even the given authority particularly in case of posting and transfer of teachers which is predominantly political. The Education Managers are over burdened with the administrative task which is a major hindrance in their paying proper attention to schools monitoring.

Conclusions

The monitoring mechanism to supervise schools exists at the district level however it is not properly organized. The supervisors are unable to give proper attention to the schools monitoring due to other official assignments, increase in the number of schools, non-availability of vehicles, schools scatter-ness and in-accessibility through roads. There are lack of standards for the monitoring and supervision of schools which further complicate the job of the supervisors. The authority and power of DEO (Secondary) in respect of posting and transfer of teachers, school site identification for construction and provision of facilities to schools has been reduced after the Devolution. Similarly the Devolution does not empower the Head Teacher of secondary schools with the financial and administrative authority for planning, budgeting or transfer and posting of teachers due to which they are unable to develop a school improvement plan. The school visit reports are prepared but there is no proper mechanism to analyze these reports. Feedback is not provided to the schools. The district EMISs are

functional but unable to compute the district or school level indicators due to lack of skills and knowledge. The performance of the secondary school head teachers and teachers in Rawalpindi and Abbottabad is evaluated on the basis of Secondary School Certificate examination results, however there are no criteria to evaluate the performance of secondary schools in Quetta district.

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Structure of Interview for EDO-E and DEO

1. Presentation
-         The research study
-         Basic characteristics of the district

2. The district education office
-         Mission of the District Education Department
-         Roles and responsibilities EDO-E and DEO
-         Internal organization
-         Human resources
-         Material and financial resources

3. Supervision and support visits to schools
-         Human resources
-         Planning supervision work
-         The supervision visit
-         Reports
-         Follow-up
-         Problems and initiatives

4. School results on exams and achievement tests
-         Human resources
-         Availability and use of information on exam and test results by school
-         Problems and reforms

5. School development plans and school improvement plans
-         Policy
-         Support & guidance
-         Availability and use
-         Problems and initiatives

6. Indicator system on schools
-         Data from the central/provincial level
-         Data collection at district level
-         Analysis of the data collected at district level
-         Use of the data collected at district level
-         Informal information
-         Problems and initiatives

Annexure II

Structure of Interview for Supervisors

1. Presentation
- The research team and the study

2. Organization and management of District Education Department
- Mission and structure
- Internal management
- Role and responsibilities of supervisors
- Availability of resources

3. Supervision and support visits to schools
- Planning supervision work
- The supervision visit
- Reports
- Follow-up
- Problems and initiatives

4. School results on exams

5. School development/improvement plans

Annexure III

Structure of Interview for Head Teachers

1. Presentation
-        The research team and the study

2. Organization and management of District Education Department

3. Supervision and support visits to schools
-        Profile of supervisors
-        The supervision visit
-        Reports
-        Follow-up
-        Problems and initiatives

4. School results on exams

5. School development/improvement plans
-        Policy and practice
-        Support and guidance
-        Availability and use

6. Indicator system on schools

Annexure IV

Structure of Interview for District EMIS

1. Presentation
-        The research team and the study

2. The EMIS office
- Mission/role of the EMIS office
- Staff of the EMIS office
- Resources for EMIS office
- Data collection at district level
- Data analysis at district level
- Use of the data collected at district level
- Data from the central/provincial level
- Problems and initiatives

3. Characteristics of the District Education Department
- Mission of the District Education Department
- Internal organization of the District Education Department
- Information flows with in District Education Department
- Material resources for monitoring
- Financial resources
- Coordination with EMIS office