PROBLEMS ENCOUNTERED IN THE ALTERNATIVE SCHOOLS OF KUMAOON DIVISION, UTTARAKHAND

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Abstract: Alternative schools are considered to be one of the key institutions for addressing the needs of students who cannot meet regular schools. In this regard a careful study with respect to the problems is a prerequisite for the suitable design and implementation of government’s developmental programmes. The purpose of the study is to provide such information through survey and description of absolute problems of the students and the functioning staff. The findings of the study revealed that most of the alternative schools lack adequate infrastructure, lack of adequate/ timely funding, teachers related to this system are not rendering any special training and lack of social acceptability, dissatisfaction with payment among functionaries, lack of teachers in time of need and alternative schooling is more expensive due to use of cassettes, leaflets etc., than the fees and transport facilities of the formal education system.

Keywords: Alternative school, Infrastructure, Formal education, Problems, Funding.

Introduction: There has been a proportionate educational research and experimentation to provide best of the education to the children throughout the world in second half of the twentieth century. Many new policies and practices are being practiced to overcome the present problems. But still there are many questions that are remaining unanswered and thus giving new approaches to the educational research [¹]. As per the educational history of America it shows lot of reformation in the educational sector due to high accountability. So many practices are followed so that the children will reach their educational potential [²]. In spite of these many reforms some students are not reaching the academic goals desired by parents, educators, and the public. Through the past few decades, some educators and policymakers have contended that, if an alternate educational option is provided for students at risk of school failure, they will be able to succeed. As per the views of alternative schools are a “cutting-edge” educational reform, even though they have been in the educational arena for decades [³]. In his words, A mid all the current talk of school restructuring, alternatives are the clearest example we have of what a restructured school might look like. They represent our most definitive departure from the programmatic, organizational and behavioral regularities that inhibit school reform [⁴]. The U.S. Department of Education defines an alternative education school as “a public elementary/ secondary school that addresses the needs of students which typically cannot be met in a regular school and provides nontraditional education which is not categorized solely as regular education, special education, vocational education, gifted and talented or magnet school programs” [⁵].

Meeting the needs of students disenfranchised from the traditional education system is becoming more and more important as we are faced with a growing population of students for whom the status quo is not successful. Alternative schools are one of the possible solutions that many states and local school districts are implementing to address the issue of students who are not meeting desired educational outcomes and standards in traditional education settings. However, the way in which the definition is operationalized within states and communities is still unclear. Even with the lack of clarity in definition, alternative schools are growing at a rapid rate. Yet there are many...
problems being faced by the respondents in alternative schools. The present study is designed
to identify the problems that are being faced by
the students, staff and other associated members
of the alternative schools.

**Methodology**

The Kumaon division of Uttarakhand
was purposively selected for the study as the
literacy rate of the division is 71.21% (Statistical
Handbook, Kumaon Division) which is lower
than total literacy rate (79.80%) of the state. The
respondents were randomly selected from 12
selected alternative schools. The selected
respondents include 60 Students, 60 Parents and
36 Community members thus making a total of
204 respondents. The data was collected using a
well-structured and pre tested interview
schedule. The data was analyzed by using
appropriate statistical tools.

**Results and Discussion**

In any social science research study, an
absolute understanding of the respondents clearly
shows the actual impact of the particular study.
Problems are one of the most important factors
that play a crucial role in determining the
effectiveness of the system. In this regard, the
problems that were being faced by the selected
respondents were clearly depicted below.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>S.N.</th>
<th>Problems</th>
<th>Response</th>
<th>%</th>
<th>Rank</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Teachers related to this system are not rendering any special trainings</td>
<td>75</td>
<td>69.44</td>
<td>IV</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Alternative schooling is more expensive due to use of cassettes, leaflets etc., than the fees and transport facilities of the formal education system</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>29.63</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Alternative schooling encourages educated unemployment among youth</td>
<td>69</td>
<td>63.89</td>
<td>V</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>High officials in the organization take least interest in general programmes/ issues</td>
<td>83</td>
<td>76.85</td>
<td>III</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Lack of social acceptability</td>
<td>75</td>
<td>69.44</td>
<td>IV</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>In the system, the examinations doesn’t remain materialistic</td>
<td>46</td>
<td>42.59</td>
<td>IX</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Certificates/ degrees obtained in alternative schooling courses are purchasable</td>
<td>55</td>
<td>50.93</td>
<td>VII</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Lack of teachers in time of need, a student finds it difficult to solve a problem</td>
<td>52</td>
<td>48.15</td>
<td>VIII</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>Lack of adequate/timely funding</td>
<td>87</td>
<td>80.56</td>
<td>II</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>Management related issue</td>
<td>69</td>
<td>63.89</td>
<td>V</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>Inadequate infrastructure</td>
<td>94</td>
<td>87.04</td>
<td>I</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>Dissatisfaction with payment among functionaries</td>
<td>61</td>
<td>56.48</td>
<td>VI</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The respondents were further enquired to
know the problems faced in alternative
schooling. The following were the problems
emerged during the investigation and were
presented in Table.

The most severe problem faced was
inadequate infrastructure (87.04%) and was
ranked as I followed by lack of adequate/timely funding (80.56%, ranked II), high officials in the organization take least interest in general programmes/ issues (76.85%, ranked III), teachers related to this system are not rendering any special training and lack of social acceptability (69.44%, ranked IV), management related issue and alternative schooling encourages educated unemployment among youth (63.89%, ranked V), dissatisfaction with payment among functionaries (56.48%, ranked VI), certificates/ degrees obtained in alternative schooling courses are purchasable (50.93%, ranked VII), lack of teachers in time of need, a student finds it difficult to solve a problem (48.15%, ranked VIII), in the system, the examinations doesn’t remain materialistic (42.59%, ranked IX) and alternative schooling is more expensive due to use of cassettes, leaflets etc., than the fees and transport facilities of the formal education system (29.63%) and was ranked X.

For any institute or organization infrastructure plays an important role which
directly depends on the funds. Timely funds will help the alternative schools to have proper space or place and thereby increasing the standards of the place. Even the schools require well trained educational volunteers so that they might guide the students well. The duration period also should be increased to educate the children thereby improving the functioning of the alternative school and mostly the schools should be opened in the other areas of locality where out of school children were available.

**Summary and Conclusion**

The study clearly shows that most of the alternative schools lack adequate infrastructure, lack of adequate/ timely funding, teachers related to this system are not rendering any special training and lack of social acceptability, dissatisfaction with payment among functionaries, lack of teachers in time of need and alternative schooling is more expensive due to use of cassettes, leaflets etc., than the fees and transport facilities of the formal education system.
Alternative schools are one of the important mechanisms that can help the drop out students not only to adapt changing circumstances but also to shape their lives. They create a new environment that definitely bring a fresh air as they can add valuable time during their schooling both by updating their knowledge and application of learnt skills in real life. It’s need of the hour for the government to keep focus on the alternative schools for timely implementation of programmes, providing adequate funds, well trained educational volunteers so as to bring the effectiveness in functioning of the alternative schools there by enhancing the standard of living of the students.

References