

Implementation of Continuous and Comprehensive Evaluation in Himachal Pradesh: Its Impeding Factors

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ABSTRACT

The present study was undertaken to study the factors impeding the implementation of Continuous and Comprehensive Evaluation in Himachal Pradesh. The views of state level functionaries, district level functionaries, block level functionaries, elementary school heads, teachers, students and parents were taken. Various groups connected with the education system had come up with various impeding factors.

Keywords: Continuous and comprehensive Evaluation, Impeding factors.

INTRODUCTION

Evaluation is the process of finding out the extent to which the desired changes in behaviour (cognitive and affective) have taken place in the student. It differs from the concept of measurement in the sense that evaluation is more comprehensive. Measurement consists of rules for assigning numbers to attributes or characteristics of behaviour whereas the evaluation aims at providing detailed and comprehensive meaning and interpretation to the behavioural attributes of a learner. It expresses quantitative as well as qualitative description of learners' performance. Prior to beginning of instruction, the assessment of the learners' present achievement should serve the basis for selecting and formulating instructional objectives and then for planning appropriate learning experiences. During the instruction of the 'course unit', periodic assessment of learners' achievement provides feedback to the learners and also to parents, and helps the teacher to alter or modify the teaching-learning plan. At the end of the instruction of the 'course unit', evaluation provides learners and parents with information about learners' achievement of the objectives in terms of testable observable behaviour. The evaluation also helps the teacher to know how effective the instruction has been in helping learners to master the 'instructional objectives'.

Effective evaluation of students' achievement with respect to accepted and planned objectives of instruction is considered an indispensable aspect of good teaching. Teachers use various evaluation procedures, viz., tests (oral and written), practical assignments, observation, interview

etc. for assessing and monitoring the progress of the students' achievement in scholastic and co-scholastic areas. These evaluation procedures and techniques have become an integral part of the instructional process and thus influence students in many ways. One of the functions that evaluation serves is to enable students to determine how well they are learning and achieving. When students are aware of the learning progress, their performances will be superior to what it would have been without such knowledge. The terms *assessment* and *evaluation* are often used interchangeably, which causes some confusion in their meaning. *Assessment* is a preliminary phase in the evaluation process. In this phase, various strategies are used to gather information about student progress. *Evaluation* is the weighing of assessment information as per a set standard in order to make a judgment or evaluation about the performance of the student. This may then lead to other decisions and actions by the teacher, student or parent.

Owolavi (2000) conducted a pilot study of the challenges and prospects of continuous assessment implementation in Nigeria. The findings recommended that teachers should be given relevant training on modern evaluation techniques and schools should provide enabling environment for continuous assessment to work.

Thorndike (2005) describes the grading process as unpleasant, time consuming and anxiety provoking.

Roorda (2008) suggested that a potential misalignment between assessment and grading practices in reporting secondary student academic achievement has negatively impacted students since grades may not truly reflect actual achievement. The results of this study led to the conclusion that professional development was an effective means to influence change in grading practices.

OBJECTIVE OF THE STUDY: To study the factors impeding the implementation of Continuous and Comprehensive Evaluation in Himachal Pradesh.

METHOD AND PROCEDURE: The study was conducted through the descriptive survey method of research.

SAMPLE: Three districts namely: Hamirpur, Chamba and Kinnaur were selected out of the twelve districts of Himachal Pradesh. The districts were selected on the basis of literacy rate i.e. highest (89.01%) and lowest (73.19%) and tribal considerations. Out of the selected three districts, nine educational blocks were selected in all i.e. three educational blocks were selected from each of the above mentioned districts. Since the minimum strength of educational blocks in Kinnaur district is three, so out of the two remaining districts also, three educational blocks from each district were selected randomly. State level functionaries, district level functionaries, block level functionaries, elementary school heads, teachers, students and parents were interviewed for

knowing the impeding factors in the implementation of towards Continuous and Comprehensive Evaluation in Himachal Pradesh.

TOOL USED: Interview Schedule for State level functionaries, District level functionaries, Block level functionaries, Parents. Questionnaire for the Heads and Teachers of the Elementary Schools. Focus Group Discussion Schedule for the Elementary School Students.

DATA COLLECTION: The data were collected by administering the above mentioned tool on the State level functionaries, district level functionaries, block level functionaries, elementary school heads, teachers, students and parents

ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION OF DATA:

Various groups connected with the education system had come up with the following views:

State Level Functionaries

According to Mission Director, State Project Director and Research and Evaluation Coordinator, the factors impeding the implementation of the system are:

- Non-acceptance of the scheme by heads, teachers and parents.
- In some of the primary schools, proper teacher pupil ratio is not maintained: thus difficult to maintain the records of the different grades scored by the students.
- Untimely monitoring and improper feedback by district and block level functionaries affects the performance of the teachers.

District and Block Level Functionaries

According to District Project Officers, Research and Evaluation Coordinators and Block Resource Centre Coordinators, the various factors impeding this system are:

- Heads and teachers are not mentally prepared to accept Continuous and Comprehensive Evaluation: they just fill the registers as a formality and do not evaluate the students as is required under the present system.
- Teachers are not interested in training programmes: no concept clarity about what Continuous and Comprehensive Evaluation exactly is and how it is fruitful for the development of the child.

- Material such as training modules and material connected with Continuous and Comprehensive Evaluation should be made available at the time of training itself.
- Absenteeism of teachers from the school leads to non-seriousness among the students.
- No proper pupil teacher ratio in some of the primary schools which obstructs the smooth functioning of the evaluating system.
- Material is not accurate as well as appropriate hence the feedback is poor.
- Policy of age appropriate class criteria adopted by the government is faulty.
- Students have no fear of examination: academically strong students also becoming disinterested in studies.
- Parents are not ready to accept Continuous and Comprehensive Evaluation as they are attuned to the marking system.

Elementary School Heads

After district and block level functionaries, school level heads were interviewed who are directly involved in the implementation of Continuous and Comprehensive Evaluation system. According to them, there are various factors impeding its working as follows:

- Heads did not find the training to be effective in terms of non-availability of registers, practicality, contradictory methods adopted by the various resource persons and hence ineffective.
- Non-acceptance of the scheme by teachers because of extra workload involved in the duties of mid day meal, election etc; inappropriate pupil teacher ratio; no motivational incentives; ineffective training programmes organized for teachers.
- Absenteeism of teachers as well as students from the school.
- Inappropriateness of the material provided.
- Shortage of time as syllabus is lengthy and teachers consume lot of time in completing the formalities connected with this system.
- Improper and untimely monitoring by State, District and Block level functionaries which results in just register checking and provide no feedback.

- There is no fear of examination, no competitive spirit because of grades and no failures and added to this is the inappropriate policy of age-class criteria, all this leads to the lowering of the standard of education.
- Parents are not mentally prepared to accept this scheme because of lack of understanding and no change in their mindset.

Elementary School Teachers

According to the teachers, Continuous and Comprehensive Evaluation is not performing better due to some factors in it such as:

- They are not mentally prepared because of the shortage of time and syllabus not being conducive to Continuous and Comprehensive Evaluation. Teachers feel overburdened. Added to these are ineffective training programmes, communication gap, improper pupil teacher ratio, inappropriate grading procedure and lack of motivation.
- Material provided is not appropriate for Continuous and Comprehensive Evaluation. Checklist register is lengthy and there is a mismatch between it and pupil progress card.
- Monitoring and feedback by various functionaries is inappropriate. They just check registers and give no feedback.
- Students have stopped taking studies seriously as they have no fear of examination. Even academically strong students just take it easy and there is no spirit of competition. Lot of absenteeism on the part of students is there whereas age appropriate class criteria policy is hitting at the standard of education. Hence the stress on quantity is affecting the quality.
- The mentality of parents is focused on the old system of student getting marks and not comfortable with the grading system. Many rural parents are illiterate and they do not understand the evaluation through grades.

Elementary School Students

During discussion with students it was observed that in their view there were certain factors which impeded the proper implementation of this system which are as follows:

- Academically weak students and also those who remain absent are being promoted therefore there is no fear of examination which is undermining the competitive spirit that should be among the students.

- Students have no proper understanding of the grading system hence they cannot assess the proper level of their achievement.
- For them the lack of teaching aids in the classroom and the disinterested attitude of certain teachers makes the teaching ineffective.

Parents

Finally the parents pinpointed the same factors as discussed by others which made the system ineffective. The factors on which they stressed are summed up below:

- There is a lack of orientation programmes regarding this which makes them unable to fully grasp the implications of this system.
- As they don't fully grasp the grading system they are incapable of knowing about the progress of their wards. According to them it impedes the real working of Continuous and Comprehensive Evaluation as they cannot question their wards or inspire them on their talents.
- Parents generally believe that the teachers know that the students are to be promoted in any case, they don't put their heart and soul into their work.

Discussions of Findings

After studying the responses of each group of society which is exposed to Continuous and Comprehensive Evaluation system directly or indirectly, the researcher has observed that various groups have come up with more or less similar impeding factors. The following causes create obstacles in the way of the smooth functioning of the Continuous and Comprehensive Evaluation in Himachal Pradesh:

- Ineffective training programmes especially at block levels both for heads and teachers.
- Inefficient training resource persons
- Inadequate material in understanding the concept of Continuous and Comprehensive Evaluation during training,
- No emphasis on practicals in training programmes.
- Communication gap among the various resource persons leading to contradictions.

- There is a mismatch between the registers provided and the progress card to be filled in. Moreover same kinds of observations have to be credited to the students for different subjects. For example the approach in English teaching is altogether different from the teaching of Mathematics whereas the registers are the same.
- The columns in the registers are difficult to understand and time consuming resulting in teachers' inability to devote sufficient time to the students. As a result they fill up the registers as a formality ignoring the fact whether the students develop their individual talents or not. The teachers do not find time to concentrate on the cultivation of the various facets of a child's personality.
- Disproportionate pupil teacher ratio in the classes hinders a teacher in paying full attention to every child.
- The extra workload on teachers caused by their duties in the mid day meal scheme, SarvaShikshaAbhiyan, census work or other duties not concerned with teaching assigned to them, results in their not able to fully concentrate on their actual job as a teacher.
- Unpreparedness of heads and teachers because of their having worked on the old system for a long period of time hinders the working of the Continuous and Comprehensive Evaluation. They don't develop any motivation for the new system.
- Many parents having been attuned to the old system do not understand the full advantage of the grading system in the Continuous and Comprehensive Evaluation. Illiteracy in some of the parents particularly in the rural areas causes a further complication in its implementation.
- Another limitation crops up because of the untimely monitoring and improper feedback by various functionaries.
- Students have started neglecting studies as they have no fear of examination. Even academically weak students are being promoted along with the academically strong students which does not develop the spirit of competition among them. Absenteeism has increased among some of the students knowing very well that they would get promoted somehow.
- In the absence of the full understanding of the grading system the students still hanker after their position in the class. This causes a little bit of disaffection among them.

- Students unworthy of getting a promotion are affecting the quality of education. The stress on the authorities of allotting classes according to the age of the student is also not helping in the standard of education being maintained; as a result quantity wins over quality.

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