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**.UNDERSTANDING Government Education System: Problems and solutions**

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*“Education is simply the soul of a society as it passes from one generation to another.” – G. K. Chesterton*

Literally, Education means the imparting and acquiring of knowledge through teaching and learning, especially at a school or similar institution. Politically it's a Fundamental right provided to us by our Constitution. Economically, it is one of the most flourishing businesses with low investment and high return and with an ever increasing market. It is an enterprise; a public and private sector enterprise.

We have seen government trying its best to enhance the quality of government schools. A number of steps have been taken and several of them have been successful. Despite all the planning and money spent, the quality of education has declined over the years.

Highly qualified staff has been selected through rigorous examinations and interviews. Capable and honest officers see to it that the schools function properly. Despite these the quality is validly low. There ought to be a mole somewhere?

Let us examine a few of these policies meant to improve the government school.

**Mid-Day Meals.** It is an attempt to increase the attendance and admission intake of the schools by luring in the poor people by providing free-meals as bait. Though it is a nice and effective initiative and serves its purpose it has no other role in education system. A good deal of money is involved in the scheme which leads to several scams, some big and some small. Fake admission and attendance records have been maintained by a number of schools to extort money from the government scheme.

**NO-failure upto class 8<sup>th</sup>:-**One of the main culprit schemes of government schools. Every student up to Class 8<sup>th</sup> is given a pink-slip into the next class, no matter what. Whether he comes to school or not, whether he studies or not, whether he is capable enough or not, if his details are existent on the school register, no matter fake, he is bound to pass under this scheme. The scheme is a trick of government to increase on papers the literacy rate of the state. The main problem with this scheme is if you know u can do a thing in easier way why would you try the harder way.

**Parameters of Quality:-**You measure a fish by its ability to fly. It will fail. The government schools emphasise on such hollow parameters which instead of vouching for the quality become its main hindrance. A teacher is bound to reach on time, he has to make a teacher's diary and lesson plans, he has to leave the school on time and he has to complete the syllabus on time. Now this seems good.

A teacher is not accountable for what he does in the school, he just has to come and leave on time, rest of the time he can kill the time. Lesson plans and diary are a way to convince the officials that they come prepared and that the course work is running as per schedule. Nobody knows if they are genuine or fake.

To ensure this the government has a power to stop the pay of the teacher who has poor results. This is somewhat better. Witty, isn't it. No student fails as a policy and therefore every teacher have a 100% pass percentage of his students. Wow! And as far as Board Examinations (8th) are concerned it is a big Hoax. Corruption is a boon! A necessary evil.

*Carter G. Woodson once said "For me, education means to inspire people to live more abundantly, to learn to begin with life as they find it and make it better."*

**The System:-** To run this defunct educational process an efficient system is already in place. A primary/middle school is looked after by a Headmaster. A number of middle schools form a cluster which further associate under a higher-secondary school as its cluster head. All these schools in a Zone are directly under Zonal Education officer. All the zones of a District report to a Chief Education Officer who intern is answerable directly to Director Education. Honesty at its core the system works properly. Pun intended.

So everything is summed up when we compare a government school student with a student from a primary school.

Talking of Government Schools, on an average 95% of class 8<sup>th</sup> students cannot comprehend a paragraph of English and are unable to solve the basic numeracy question. They have poor scientific and general knowledge. Most of them are not even able to understand and converse in Urdu.

With recent news of a teacher who was not able to formulate an essay on COW and their leave application gone all wrong, only a minor fraction of teachers are unworthy of being a teacher. More than 93% of teacher recruited in past 10 years are highly educated and have a strong hold on their respective subjects. The general line teachers are capable enough to teach any subject up to class 8<sup>th</sup>. So where does the problem lie?

### **Analysis the problem.**

*"Education...has produced a vast population able to read but unable to distinguish what is worth reading." says G. M. Trevelyan.*

Education is a give and take business. A student is a product of hard-work of not just the teacher but also the parent. It's a 60-40 game with 60% development at home and 40% at school. Why do you think a student of private school performs better than a government one? To put it simply a private school student's parent pays 5000-12000% more fee than a government school teacher, he is more actively involved with the progress of the student, he forces his ward to study at home, he even gets him tutored at a coaching centre, he gets him new and clean clothes, he visits the school at PTM's and the list goes on and on. Not even one of this is met by the parents of a government school student's parent.

Second and more importantly a flawed evaluation system for both students and teacher can bring good results. To understand this we have to go with an example and prove this by the contradictory theory.

Our evaluation system is based on either unit-term examination system or continuous and comprehensive evaluation (CCE) system. Ask a teacher about CCE and he will only be able to give its full-form and a faint and quaint idea of it. Both the systems in a government school are on papers. A student who knows nothing about basic numeracy passes with high marks in maths. Same goes for other subjects. There are a few reasons for this. First a fake examination held, with every student getting pass marks without even appearing in the exams. Second, even if the examination is held, it is just a formality to make students fear and think that there in reality exists a system of education at a building they call school. Thirdly, a teacher who fears about his pay being held because of poor results is willing to pay to get his students through the 8<sup>th</sup> boards. Lastly and most importantly, lack of accountability.

A teacher sets the examination question paper according to what he has taught, giving full regards to the prescribed formats or syllabus, then he helps the students to secure pass marks and at the end of it he checks the paper to ensure that every student of his

class has passed with at-least 60% or more. Now this is something worth checking, isn't it?

Inadequate buildings and infrastructure. Most of the government school have building with just a few rooms and as a result the classes are shared with more than two classes sitting in a single room causing continuous disturbance to one another. Students sit on mats in 80% of middle schools.

### **The Solution.**

*“Spoon feeding in the long run teaches us nothing but the shape of the spoon” were the words of E.M.Forster*

After careful analysis and research the solution to this highly flawed and quality ridden education system comes out that a complex and a completely new framework be made.

Parent-teacher interactions have to be increased. The best possible way is to send the ward home to bring his parent every once in a while where student's assessment can be given to them. Government aided psychological session for orientation of parents should be held with collaboration with Panchayats.

Corruption cells within the department should be made. What can be done should be done without money and what cannot be done should not be done with money.

A shift from syllabus-oriented teaching to learning-oriented teaching is must. New syllabus be formulated based on learning of students, with a freedom provided to the teacher to practice the best suitable method he deems appropriate. A time bound but flexible leaning objective needs to take over the rigid sheet of syllabus provided at the start of the session. This is a small duration method to reform the teaching system. Once the results are obtained the changes can be rolled back with the following changes.

A new evaluation system should be enforced where all the examinations for all the classes are held externally. A question paper set and evaluated by the Board, based on the format and syllabus provided by the examination authority for all the unit and term examinations. By externally we can mean an outsourcing private agency. If a teacher has to teach for someone else to check his progress he would not compromise on the quality. A third-party evaluation system can work wonders provided they are not also corrupt and malice.

Building and infrastructure upgrade where every class has a separate room. Mats will do for the moment.

### **A Model School: A dream.**

This school has about 13 teachers and around 100 students. Adequate number of classrooms where every class is in a separate room and teacher can teach without disturbance. More importance is given to practical learning. The teachers are not bound to complete the lesson in a said duration but the headmaster needs the student not to learn the question and answers but to understand the lesson so that he can himself solve the questions. Once a month parents come to check the progress of their children. No fake admissions or attendance are kept and mid-day meal is served in the best possible way. At the end of the said duration an external agency comes to evaluate the progress of the school and examinations are held which not only evaluate the student but also the teacher. Remedial classes are held if needed. Infrastructure is adequate and the students are competent with their peers from private schools.

A lot of mud-slinging has been done with the government teachers, who are thrown, blindfolded and hands tied behind their backs, into a dark room and are told to find a way out by bumping their heads into the walls. The system if changed or even if instated with strictness, government teacher can prove to be the most important asset to the state and community. As always said Teachers are the builders of the nation, but what can a builder do without an architect, labour and raw-material.