CASE STUDY ON POPULAR PARTICIPATION IN BIHAR EDUCATION PROJECT CENCORED, BIHAR
Participatory Research In Asia

Participation is becoming the central issue of contemporary time. Recent development all over the globe have posed new threats and opened up new arenas for the common people to participate in the development projects.

Popular Participation in Education is becoming a strong component in the current development scenario. To understand the underlying dynamics involved and the impact of participation in Education the study was focussed on the Bihar Education Project in the East Singhbhum and Muzaffarpur district of Bihar.

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

The study has focussed on the two Local Stakeholder Organisations under the Bihar Education Project –

Local Stakeholder Organisations (LSO)

Mahila Samooh

Mahila Samooh is an important segment and grass root unit of Mahila Samakhya component under the Bihar Education Project. The Mahila Samakhya Project aims to offer real women the opportunity to reflect critically on their lives, to understand the socio-economic process which impinges upon it, to maximize individual and collective self expression and promote personal and political growth. The components of the project are designed to facilitate this collective action and to expand opportunities for basic education in the rural areas.

Bihar Education Project (BEP) District Executive Committee along with District Task Force is responsible for the Mahila Samakhya Programme in the District. Mahila Samakhaya core Team (DCT) comprising a coordinator (Consultant) and one or two resource persons/Assistant resource person is directly responsible for the implementation of the project in the district.

The Mahila Samakhya was started as an important component of BEP in early 1992. The project is currently running in seven districts Viz, Ranchi, Rohtas, West Champaran, Sitamarhi, East Singhbhum, Muzaffarpur and Chatra.

In East Singhbhum and Muzaffarpur districts the DCT identified Sahyoginis through meeting and discussion with women at subdivision block and village level. Sahyoginis in each cluster contacted village women, specially from the deprived sections and created Mahila Samooh in these villages. It has been reported that various Mahila Samooh in the district have tried to find the solution of the problems associated with their life and work situations through collective action. These issues were related to improvement in quality of education and health of children, access to government facilities, like drinking water, ration card etc.

Village Education Committee (VEC)

Village Education Committee is a small unit selected by the village people through organising a general meeting at the village level which is supposed to execute all the activities related to education. Even before launching the Bihar Education Project: Village Education Committee (VECs) were created through the resolution of October 15, 1988 of the Directorate of Primary Education (Bihar). The resolution stated that in the light of the National Education Policy 1986. It was resolved to constitute village Education Committee aimed at people’s participation in ensuring free and
compulsory primary education and deprivation of the activities of teachers in primary/middle school. adult education centre, NFE was Centres and other education institutions in the rural and urban area. In general the VEC will have 15 to 20 members, each VEC will be created in a revenue village in the rural area and in a ward in the urban area.

Initially the Bihar Education Project adopted the VEC model propagated by the Primary Education Directorate with some modifications like inclusion of member of voluntary agency working under BEP, anganwari Sevika and Sakhi of Mahila Samooh. The meeting of VEC was scheduled to be held bi-weekly. The BEP council Patna brought out a comprehensive booklet entitled “Community Participation in Primary Education and Village Education Committee” in the year 1994. A new set of guidelines has been incorporated in the booklet, the copies of which have been sent to all the VECs in the BEP districts for constitution/reconstitution of VECs.

The new guidelines suggest that the VEC will be constituted at School/village level. The number of VEC members range from 7 to 15. Members of VEC will be selected from the categories of guardians, educationalists, panchayat members, school teachers and instructors of Adult Education and NFE Centres. The members of the VEC will also be drawn from the cooperative society and women. It is compulsory for the sakhi of the Mahila Samooh to be the member of the VEC. There will be representative of SC/ST, minorities, Gram Sewak, ANM, Anganwari Worker and the village youth.

Important activities of the VEC include survey of educational needs of the village, preparation of short/long term educational development plans and drawing up plans for the village primary school, NFE Centre, anganwari centre etc. It will undertake enrollment drive, take steps for retention and motivate the guardians for enrolling their non school going children. The VEC will supervise and monitor proper functioning of the school, NFE Centres in the village and will ensure creation of adequate educational facilities and infrastructure through community participation.

METHODOLOGY

Research Questions

- Does the Degree of participation in local stakeholders effect the goal accomplishment?
- Does popular participation improve effectiveness of LSO?
- Does participation in decision making improve PIDP?
- Does shared understanding of participation improves PIDP?
- What are the consequences of participation?

Hypothesis

Hypothesis I participation in VEC would result in higher enrollment at primary level of schooling.
Hypothesis II participation in VEC would result in higher retention at primary level of schooling.
Hypothesis III participation in Mahila Samooh would result in higher enrollment at primary level of schooling.
Hypothesis IV participation in Mahila Samooh would result in higher retention at primary level of schooling.
Study Sample

The study is concerned with the Bihar Education Project (BEP) in East Singhbhum and Muzaffarpur districts of Bihar. Two districts have been selected from different culture, topography and rural set up. Simultaneously BEP Project also run by Governmental organization and voluntary organisation. On the one hand Muzaffarpur is run by Governmental set up while East Singhbhum is run by Xavier Labour Relation Institute which is a voluntary organisation. East Singhbhum is located in the south part of situated in North Bihar where non-tribal culture is found. Both the areas are totally different in geographically, economically and socio-politically this is why we selected two different districts for our study.

In this study Local Stakeholders (LSO) under the Bihar Education Project was selected in two Panchayats of Muzaffarpur and East Singhbhum districts both. This is why the study of Mahila Samooh (MS) and Village Education Committee (VEC) has been designed to cover in Patamda panchayat in East Singhbhum and Kanhara Panchayat under Bochahan blocks in the Muzaffarpur district.

Data Analysis

Five points scale was used for proving the hypothesis. SPSS method was used for date analysis work. Co-efficient of correlation. T-test are the main basis of analysis.

Indexes formed

12: Participation sub variables: How decision are taken, Degree of Participation control over physical and educational improvement, understanding about people's participation and coordination with Mahila Samooh.
13: ENROLLMENT Sub variables: Control over physical and educational improvement, steps taken by committee for enrollment and impact of steps taken.
14: Retention sub Variables: Utilisation of school material, impact of the activities for attached activity of committee for retention and impact of activities for retention.
V15: Sub Variables: Understanding about people participation.
V9: Sub Variables: Impact of steps taken for enrollment.
V13: Sub Variables: Impact of activities for retention.
V12: Sub Variables: Activity of committees for retention.

RESULTS

Table I

MAJOR FINDING

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variables</th>
<th>VEC</th>
<th>MS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I 2 &amp; I 3</td>
<td>.7075*</td>
<td>.8669**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I 2 &amp;I 4</td>
<td>.5060*</td>
<td>.9192**</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

*Significant at .01 ** Significant at .001

1 Now East Singhbhum is in Jharkhand State.
Table II

OTHER FINDING

<table>
<thead>
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<th>Variables</th>
<th>Correlation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
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<td>V15 &amp; V9</td>
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<tr>
<td>V15 &amp; V13</td>
<td>.73</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>V12 &amp; V13</td>
<td>.83</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Hypothesis I participation is VEC would result in higher enrollment at primary level of schooling.

Table I shows that the correlation (.70) between index of participation (I2) and index of enrollment (I3) is significant at .01 level of significant. The results suggest a high level of relationship between participation and enrollment in the VEC. The finding thus are consistent with hypothesis one.

Hypothesis II participation is VEC would result in higher retention at primary level of schooling.

Table I shows that the correlation (.70) between index of participation (I2) and index of retention (I4) is significant at .01 level of significant. The results suggest a high level of relationship between participation and enrollment in the VEC, thus supporting hypothesis two.

Hypothesis III participation in Mahila Samooh would result in higher enrollment at primary level of schooling.

Table I shows that the correlation (.86) between index of participation (I2) and index of enrollment (I3) is significant at .001 level of significance. The results suggest high level of relationship between participation and enrollment in the MS. Supporting hypothesis three.

Hypothesis IV participation in Mahila Samooh would result in higher retention at primary level of schooling.

Table I shows that the correlation (.91) between index of participation (I2) and index of enrollment (I3) is significant at .001 level of significance. The results suggest a high level of relationship between participation and enrollment in the VEC thus supporting hypothesis four.

INTERPRETATION

This study examines the relationship between participation and goal accomplishments in the Bihar Education Project. Group of respondents were interviewed in their village. Two LSOs i.e. Mahila Samooh and village Education Committee were our main respondents. In this study the correlation were largely consistent with the hypothesised relationships.

The study results suggest that the VECs having higher participation will show higher enrollment rate. Popular participation enhances the goal accomplishment of the
Project because the efficiency of the project and the willingful cooperation of the community gets enhanced.

The results also showed that the VECs having higher participation have greater sustainability of their goal accomplishments as reflected by the corresponding high-retention rates. This finding has far-reaching implication for similar findings have been found in the Mahila Samoohs. The high correlation scores between participation and enrollment indicate that higher participation in Mahila Samooh would result in higher enrollment at primary level of schooling.

The finding also provides substantial evidence regarding popular participation enhancing the sustenance of the achievements as indicated by the high retention rates in MS having high degree of community participation.

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