

Financing and Management of Secondary Education in Uttar Pradesh



Mohd. Muzammil

Secondary education system of Uttar Pradesh (UP) is one of the largest in India, viewed in terms of the number of students, teachers and (various types of) educational institutions imparting secondary education. It involves education in Classes IX and X (high school) and in Classes XI and XII (intermediate), popularly known as higher secondary education. The UP Board of High School and Intermediate Education performs the great task of regulating and conducting the high school and intermediate (Board) examinations in the State of UP. Two earlier studies conducted at NIEPA, New Delhi, published in book forms, have focussed on financing of secondary education and management of secondary education. The first was led by Prof. Jandhyala B. G. Tilak (2008) while the study on management of secondary education in some States was carried by Sujatha and Rani (2011).

Despite being one of the largest at this level of education and having several firsts to its credit, the secondary education system in the State of UP also has the dubious distinction of having the largest number of drop-outs as the exams begin under strict vigil along with intense teacher politics and fluctuating results. The drop-outs in Board examinations have been so large that the news became top headlines in national newspapers in 2018 as the exams were held under CCTV camera vigilance. 'After Crackdown 5 lakh Students drop out of UP Board Exam' wrote The Times of India in its top headline dated February 8, 2018 (other sources reported drop-out of ten lakh students!). The situation is no better in many other Boards from several considerations. The case of Central Board of Secondary Education (CBSE) is in point when angry high school students went out on the streets to protest against the leaked question papers in the 2018 Board examinations of Classes 10 and 12.

Educational reforms, with a view to streamline financing and improve management, have been attempted by the State Government but have often been resisted

Mohd. Muzammil (✉)

Ex Vice Chancellor, Dr B R Ambedkar University, Agra, F-2260 Rajajipuram, Lucknow, Uttar Pradesh 226017, India

e-mail: prof.muzammil@gmail.com

© Council for Social Development 2020

J. B. G Tilak (ed.), *Universal Secondary Education in India*,
https://doi.org/10.1007/978-981-15-5366-0_19

409

by teachers and employees' unions, cartels and other vested interests (Nayak 2018). This resulted in lowering merits and quality of education and, sometimes, became the reason for financial crunch and managerial inefficiency. The system continues to suffer from general degeneration and slow progress, due to lack of an effective mechanism of surveillance and governance. Governmental-appointed educational commissions and committees often recommended that government should assume direct responsibility for contemplated reorganisation of secondary education as frequently as required. Recognition to school should be given on clearly defined conditions that would ensure their proper running and the maintenance of standards. The Government of UP is now cracking down on unrecognised schools in the city of Lucknow.

The system of secondary education is very poorly managed at the institution level, the district level and in the State as a whole. While Government Inter College (GIC) is an iconic symbol of higher secondary education in all district headquarters, and situated at the most prime location in the heart of the town, but its present condition is indeed deplorable. The college premises are largely encroached upon, staff reduced, teaching positions are vacant, infra-structure is in shambles and enrolments have plummeted to almost zero in many cases.

The management of all the three types of secondary institutions is, generally, weak and leaves much to be desired. We have highlighted this point very prominently in our earlier researches and whenever we visit the institutions from time to time, the same sorry state of affairs greets us again and again. In all the three types of secondary institutions in the State of UP—the government schools (inter colleges), aided schools and unaided private schools—efficient management is virtually absent in almost all cases. The reason seems to be threefold: non-committed teachers, demotivating environment and disenchanting students, in general. But all is not murky. Wherever the teacher commitment is there and the management has created a conducive environment, with PTAs too playing an active role in encouraging students to learn, good results are obtained.

The centrally sponsored *Rashtriya Madhyamik Shiksha Abhiyan* has not yet been able to achieve the goals that the Government of India set for all the States to achieve in a stipulated time frame. It is focussing on making available quality education for all children at the secondary level, particularly those from the underprivileged sections of society. These groups comprise mainly of SC/ST, economically weaker sections and the minorities. The Government in UP is still trying to have a secondary school within a distance of five kilometres and a higher secondary school within five to seven kilometres for all the students in the secondary education age group. The map of distribution of secondary schools in the State indicates that they are not evenly distributed. Economically backward regions do have lesser number of schools and much less good quality schools (which are mostly concentrated in urban agglomerations). The gross enrolment ratio (GER) in secondary education is to be raised to universal level but it is far below the desired goal. Universal retention of students in secondary education is also to be achieved by 2020 but the State is far from this goal too.

The system of secondary education in UP depends on a multi-source mechanism of educational finance. These are coming forth both from internal and external sources in the form of public grants and private contribution which, in turn, is both voluntary in nature and also obligatory as tuition fees of the students. The relative significance of these sources of finance to secondary education differs widely in the case of three types of differently managed secondary schools in UP—Government schools, private-aided schools and private-unaided schools as mentioned above. Government secondary schools form the oldest type and it would be instructive to find out, in detail, their present relative significance and how it has changed over time.

It is also interesting to note that the ratio of government schools and aided schools to the total number of secondary schools has dwindled rapidly. There are several reasons for this relative decline. The State government stopped opening government secondary schools long back and also put curbs on taking (since mid-1980s) more schools on the grants-in-aid list at the secondary level of education. On the other hand, the demand for secondary education has been rising gradually and the same is increasingly being met by unaided private schools. One of the reasons for the decline in private voluntary financial assistance to secondary schools has been the failure of educational leadership to prevail upon the possible dispensers of funds. The money-mindedness of the affluent class and the political leadership added to establish private schools even without government grants and often with high fee rates. Within this general scenario, there are institutions of secondary education in the UP with big success stories that need to be emulated by other private-unaided schools. But these are rare and have become distinguished because of their noble legacy of high quality education.

When we look at the proliferation of unaided secondary schools in the State along with its implications, we are overwhelmed with mixed emotions of love and hate for them (Kingdon 2018). Many are, very often, aptly labelled in the media as teaching shops established for minting money and alongside them are the coaching institutions, which have developed as a subsidiary market for secondary education of various types. Both these have earned a bad name in the sector of secondary education in the State of UP. Despite this dark scenario, new schemes are providing rays of hope and optimism. The implementation of the RMSA is in progress in the State but the rate of implementation is too slow. The projects of communication and mass communication technology are under implementation. Government secondary schools have adopted various courses of vocational trades of different types. Construction of girls' hostels and integrated education for the differently abled students are few schemes, worth mentioning, that are underway. The government (as manager) has also risen to the occasion for reconstructing the dilapidated buildings of centuries' old GICs and undertaking general renovation on select basis.

The system of public financing of secondary education in the State needs to be discussed in detail, especially with reference to the reforms attempted by the government in recent decades. A long-term analysis shows that the share of secondary education in total public funding of education in UP had gradually increased in earlier decades (Muzammil 1980), and, then, declined subsequently. The State government stopped taking additional private schools on the grants-in-aid list since the decade of

1980s. It also had to compete with primary education which enjoys the mandate of the Constitution of India having the status of nothing less than a Directive Principle of State Policy. As a result, gradually the share of primary education has increased. This is mainly because of more centrally sponsored schemes that are being run at the primary level in the State of UP. The decade of 1990s in the State has been remarkable from the viewpoint of the positive impact of central educational schemes in UP.

The public funding for secondary education in UP comes largely in the form of grants-in-aid to privately managed secondary educational institutions. The system of grants-in-aid is essentially what was inherited from British India. The objective criteria, suggested from time to time, have been incorporated but, in essence, the system remains virtually unchanged (Muzammil 2009). Politicisation of secondary education is most intense and deep in UP as compared to other levels of education in the State itself as well as other States of India at the secondary education level. The pressure of teacher unions has stalled the process of reforms on many occasions and reduced the extent of teacher accountability in teaching work. Political influence on management and governance has often vitiated the teaching environment in schools and in the State during prolonged agitations by teachers' unions not only in UP or in other States in India but across the world (Tara et al. 2017). Administrative reforms have also been resisted strongly by teachers' unions. Consequently, due to weak administration and governance, the quality of teaching could not improve (Kingdon and Muzammil 2003).

An analysis of budgetary data of the State government shows that there is an increasing trend in growth of public expenditure on secondary education. The main reason for this increase is the incremental obligatory payment of increased teachers' salaries over successive years. The analysis of composition of public expenditure reveals that heads like direction and administration and inspection receive very small ratios of expenditure. Same is the case with heads like equipment and maintenance of buildings, teacher service and teachers training, non-formal education. Grants to non-government secondary schools are the largest head of expenditure in the secondary education budget, followed by Government secondary schools. Examinations and scholarships are other heads of expenditure worth mentioning. However, the conduct of the former and the reimbursement of the latter leave much to be desired.

While the system seems to be largely based on government grants to schools but, in effect, the contribution of students (households) in the form of fees and other charges is rising rapidly, having important implications for parents and the learning outcomes. It also needs to be analysed separately as to why the system of grants-in-aid, as evolved in the British period, has remained virtually the same over decades and how the RMSA has influenced the financing and management of secondary education so as to develop it as the terminal stage of education. Its impact in improving financial viability and quality of teaching in schools also needs to be assessed in its own right, afresh.

The economics of fee at the secondary level, as at other levels of education, is very important. We have enquired, in detail, into the prescribed (tuition) fee rates, and fee as a technique of financing the entire cost of education at the secondary school level,

in our earlier research on secondary education. Now two issues are important for a relook.

- (A) The issue of reimbursement of fees by State government to schools, where reserved category students are enrolled, is a new topic on the agenda in all its dimensions. A comparative study of data with other States shows that UP is giving lowest reimbursement to schools as compared to other States under the Right to Education (RTE) Act. This has put many good schools under financial distress (Kingdon and Muzammil 2018).
- (B) The Government of UP has brought out an Ordinance in April 2018, known as Ordinance for Self-Financed Independent Schools (Regulation of Fees) Bill 2018 (UP Act No 6 of 2018), to tighten the noose around the schools charging staggering fees. It applies to all levels of school education in the State. The law restricts private schools from raising fees beyond 8% annually. The Bill requires that private schools must consult the Panel, headed by the Divisional Commissioner (in which parents and school managements are also represented), on fee hikes. The panels will decide the quantum of fee hike, keeping in mind consumer price index and increase in staff salaries.

On the lines of the Government of UP, the Central Government is also thinking in terms of a legislation regulating school fees. The Times of India reported on June 8, 2018 'Centre mulls law to curb arbitrary school-fee hikes—will be based on similar UP Legislation'.

The implications of these two (A) and (B) above will be far reaching in the days to come as the system of secondary education in UP will be increasingly depending on independent private schools.

Management of secondary schools is related with rational utilisation of resources (financial, physical and human), with a view to maximise output in the form of learning outcomes. We have endeavoured to identify the reasons behind the apparently pitiable management of schools, in general, and teacher effort and accountability, in particular. We have also examined, in detail, the role of the State government as a facilitator by providing adequate funding and a better management environment for secondary education development and how innovatively it has helped in its advancement for the benefit of the students and the society (Kingdon and Muzammil 2013).

Emphasis is gradually shifting on good governance in secondary education in the State. There are instances in the administration of secondary education in the State of UP that the officers had to take strict action to ensure the attendance of teachers who had been skipping their duties of taking classes regularly. In one such instance, the District Inspector of Schools (DIOS), Lucknow, had to instruct the principals of government secondary schools and aided colleges in the district of Lucknow, the capital of UP, to ensure regular attendance of teachers in their school premises.

This was a consequence of poor results in government and aided institutions of secondary education in the district of Lucknow. The DIOS pulled up the teachers for poor results in Classes X and XII of their schools. There are 48 government

schools and 109 government-aided schools in Lucknow district. The DIOS asked the principals to monitor the attendance of teachers in three ways:

- (A) By having Biometric Attendance: Schools should use biometric attendance system for teachers/ employees. It was noted that despite government's order, only 10% schools have the biometric system of attendance in place.
- (B) By using Attendance Register: Teachers should mark their attendance in Attendance Registers of the school.
- (C) By using Movement Register: If a teacher needs to leave during school hours, he/she should make an entry in the Movement Register that would then be approved by the principal.

The DIOS impressed upon the teachers that they would be held responsible during school hours. School principals were also asked to install CCTV camera in their schools. The DIOS of Lucknow district said that he wanted the toppers in the UP Board Examination of Class X and XII to come from Lucknow schools and not from other districts. He exhorted the principals for achieving it. He said that teachers must regularly go to schools and take classes (Sunday Times of India, Lucknow—9 July 2017).

Likewise, in Delhi, in a move to improve examination evaluation governance, the Central Board of Secondary Education (CBSE) has sought the suspension of six teachers for blunders committed in evaluation of Class XII Board examination scripts. The regional centres of CBSE are also likely to adopt similar measures to improve evaluation and curb faulty evaluation. According to a Times of India report, the CBSE was spurred into action on erring evaluation by margins of at least 50 marks. The Board has sought action from the State government concerned for action against the erring teachers (The Times of India, 28 June 2018).

All in all, secondary education sector remains problem-ridden from the viewpoint of efficient management and good governance. All out efforts will be needed to improve the quality by improving the management and teacher efforts through good governance of the system. The beginning seems to have been ushered in.

References

- Kingdon, G. (2018). When ideology overcame sense. *The Times of India*, New Delhi, March 13, 2018.
- Kingdon, G., & Muzammil, M. (2003). *A political economy of education in India*. New Delhi: Oxford University Press (Second Impression 2015).
- Kingdon, G., & Muzammil, M. (2013, February). School governance environment in Uttar Pradesh India: Implications for teacher accountability and effort. *Journal of Development Studies*, 49(2).
- Kingdon, G., & Muzammil, M. (2018, April). *Government school per pupil expenditure in Uttar Pradesh: Implications for the reimbursement of private schools under RTE act*.
- Muzammil, M. (1980). An enquiry into the public expenditure on education in Uttar Pradesh—1949–50 to 1977–78. *The Indian Journal of Economics*. (July). Annual Number.

- Muzammil, M. (2009). *Teacher union, teacher politics and school governance in Uttar Pradesh, India*. Paper presented in the 10th UKFIET International Conference on Education and Development organized by the UK Forum for International Education and Training (UKFIET) at Oxford UK, September 15–17.
- Nayak, A. (2018). India's failing education system. *The Times of India*, New Delhi, April 3, 2018.
- Sujatha, K., & Rani, P. G. (2011) *Secondary education in India. Management of secondary education in India*. New Delhi: Shipra Publications.
- Tara, B., Kingdon, G., & Muzammil, M. (2017). Teachers union in India: Diverse, powerful and coercive, India chapter. In T. M. Moe, & S. Wiborg (Eds.), *The comparative politics of education: Teacher unions and education systems across the world*. UK: Cambridge University Press.
- Tilak, J. B. G. (Ed.) (2008). *Financing of secondary education: Grants-in-aid principles and practice*. New Delhi: Shipra Publications/National University of Educational Planning and Administration.