

Social Acceptance for Money and Other Resource Donations by Households (SAMRUDH)

The people of Maharashtra are very watchful and aware of activities at grassroots level in all areas. Recently a need for Quality Education is capturing the mindset of people and everybody is striving hard for the same. This is quite visible through admissions in English medium schools which are quite expensive. People from lower income group and below poverty line are also trying for admissions in English medium schools may be at quite a distance and are ready to pay for school bus fees.

However, it is also observed that Marathi medium schools imparting good quality education and teaching of English language with focus on spoken English are also in demand, and students from English medium schools are also returning back to such Marathi medium schools. These examples are observed in districts like Pune, Kolhapur, Nashik and Dhule. More studies will reveal such examples in other districts too. Such schools are receiving financial and other aids from parents and community on large scales. The practice is already followed in districts which are financially developed, but with inception of Pragat Shaikshanik Maharashtra (PSM) Program the process is geared up and being spread across the State. Some reasons for this could be listed as follows.

- 1) Government has issued clear directions to figure out students who are educated in real sense. Teachers in schools have already started taking steps for Quality.
- 2) PSM program not only expects Outcomes but also focuses on Processes. The teachers are free to adopt any process. However the statistical and other information on some visible items needs to be regularly submitted by the district, which includes information about schools that have switch to Digital schools, schools that have acquired ISO 9000 certification, schools following ABL or Constructivist Approach and schools adopted by NGOs/CSR in the district.
- 3) PSM program does not attract any financial provisions but expects Quality. Quality Education is directly related to expectations of the parents and as such parents are getting more and more involved in PSM program through extending support and services to schools which are working towards Quality Education. Some of the examples are as follows.

- (1) Kenjal, Zilha Parishad School, Tal. Bhor, Dist. Pune – Community contributed nearly Rs. 2 Crore for construction of multi storey building, developing Energy Park, well equipped Computer Lab, Tablet to every child, etc. The children who were admitted to English medium schools at nearby places were withdrawn by the

parents and are admitted in this school. One of the parents enquired to Headmaster about the fees to be paid. The parent was stunned when the Headmaster replied that local self Government schools impart free education. The parent voluntarily offered to extend support in words, “If you need anything please let me know”

- (2) Pashtepada, Zilha Parishad School, Tal. Shahapur, Dist. Thane – this is Tribal village with industrial zone. The teacher approached to industries under CSR and was successful in procuring Computer equipments and Tablets for students, costing Rs. 3 lakh. 100% students are using tablets for homework and practice at home also. Some students connect tablet to the TV in their house and study with the family. Some students video graph the happenings in the surrounding and watch it and discuss in school.

These happenings in the school attracted people’s representatives who visited the school. They could experience the hardships faced by the villagers and took steps to remove the same. In other words the village is developing but for the school.

- (3) Tal. Mokhada, Dist. Palghar- A teacher from Taluka who visited Pashtepada school decided to develop at least one school in Mokhada on the lines of Pashtepada. The population of the village is mainly tribal and very poor. There are no industries nearby. But teacher was determined. He approached Block Education Officer. Block Education Officer issued an appeal to all the teachers in the Taluka. The teachers spontaneously responded and contributed Rs. 1,000 – 1,500 each and supported the teacher make his dream come true.
- (4) Nikumbhe, Jilha Parishad Upper Primary School, Tal. Dhule, Dist. Dhule – The villagers donated a well equipped computer lab with 10 computers to the school. Some NGOs have also supported the villagers. There is a small hamlet near the village with a school. Grand children of a tribal (Bhilla) person leaving on daily earnings are studying in this school. He donated Rs. 500/- to the school in hamlet and Rs. 551/- to the school in village. When asked about donation to two schools, he said, “His tribe (Bhilla) would progress after getting Quality Education and therefore I gave donations.”
- (5) A gentleman born in Dhule District worked in New York in America. He decided to contribute his share in social support. He could get some computers and offered to pay 30% of the total cost for purchase of computers. He proposes to cover 100 schools and has so far covered 45 schools. He is aspiring to collect more finances from America and aims at still a bigger target.

It could be sensed from the above that this is a visual effect of the appeal made by Hon. Prime Minister at Madison Square Garden, New York.

Recently there was news of donations of Rs. 650 crore to New York University by NRIs. In America many Organizations / Alumni give donations to Educational institutions on very large scale. It seems that Dhule district is also following the footsteps on similar lines.

- (6) In Nashik district during a conference of Education Officers it was revealed that the contribution of the society has been up to the tune of Rs. 14 crore. The contribution is mainly towards construction, supply of computers, production of material for constructivist approach and ISO 9000 Certification.
- (7) In Nandurbar 60 schools have become Digital schools within the span of only 4 months.
- (8) All the schools are being given a face lift through peoples' contribution in 5 blocks having maximum dropout rate selected from 5 educationally backward districts. The blocks are Bhamaragad, Dhadgaon, Sengaon, Hadgaon and Manwat.

All the above examples clearly indicate that the society is getting actively involved in the process of education throughout the State. The reasoning for the changeover was discussed at State level. The discussions revealed following features mainly.

- (1) Poorest of poor parent has also sensed that education is the first step toward progress.
- (2) The teachers took efforts for bringing in Qualitative improvement in students which resulted in students expressing their thoughts freely, answering the questions with confidence and speaking in English. These changes make parents happy and they start taking keen interest in school activities and are also ready to contribute.
- (3) Contributions and help to schools from Local Self Government is less expensive than payment of fees and other expenses of English medium schools. The parents have clearly realized the fact.
- (4) Parents demand quality education for their children. They also want their children speak in English. They are withdrawing their children from even English medium schools which fail to provide Quality Education and create self confidence in student.

- (5) Even a labor working in employment guarantee scheme is also ready to contribute even financially when he is confident that his child is getting Quality Education. We could site many such examples in every district.
- (6) There is great fascination for E-Learning and Digital schools.
- (7) Increasing inclination towards ISO 9000 Certification.

Considering above facts the following directions are issued.

- (1) All the schools in the state self provide Quality Education to children. Every child should be able to respond with full confidence and should also be able to communicate in English. The school at its' level shall evaluate the achievement of the child. The task is incomplete till the last parent is satisfied with education being provided in the school.
- (2) In near future the Government proposes to develop its own skill for Certification of schools. All the schemes presently employed for evaluation assessment and certification schools shall be withdrawn. It is proposed to cover 100 % schools in the State in this process thereby all the schools could become Samruddha Shala "Social Acceptance for Money and Other Resource Donations by Households".