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Review

Development of Elementary Education in Kashmir-A case study of District Shopian, J&K

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Primary education is the basic pillar of the whole education system. Formal, non-formal, technical, professional and academic etc rest on this foundation. It works as a backbone of the whole edifice on which the educational structure and system is based. In the present paper, an attempt has been made to study the overall conditions and the pace of development in elementary education in Shopian district of Kashmir from the year 2007 as the administrative unit of Shopian district came into existence that year. The researcher has used the primary sources with thoughtful insights from secondary works to make it an in-depth study. The paper studies both the public and private institutions of elementary education. The investigator showed the lower and upper primary system of education and their developmental process separately and makes a comparison among them in addition to the comparison between public and private institutions.

Keywords: Elementary Education, Primary Education, Shopian, India

INTRODUCTION

As we know, education is a lifelong process which starts from cradle and continues up to the death of a human being. Before the formal system of education, the child receives informal education as infant from his/her caretakers at home. The formal education immediately follows the informal period and the state bears the responsibility of country's primary educational system for collective development. The World Education Forum, held in 2000 set an ambitious goal of providing universal primary education by the year 2015. Schooling of all children until they reach young adulthood is recognized as important because it leads to many substantial positive effects: better family health, lower birth rate, higher productivity, higher earnings, and improved economics of the country as a whole. Globally, however,

more than 115 million children of primary school age do not attend school.

The constitution of India supports the right of universal education until the age of 14 and has had a long-standing goal of free and compulsory education for all children between the ages of 6-14 years. However, India remains a land of contradictions. Despite a vibrant emerging economy and a string of excellent colleges that produce high calibre professionals, India has not made the requisite progress yet on primary education.

Current status of primary education in India

About 20% of Indian children between the ages of 6-14 are not enrolled in school. Even among enrolled children, attendance rates are low and 26% of pupils enrolled in

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primary school drop out before Grade-V. The situation is worse in certain sectors of the population: the poor, those living in rural areas, girls, and those living in some states, such as Bihar and Rajasthan. But the situation of elementary education in Jammu and Kashmir is better than many states in India.

Barriers to universal primary education in India

The reasons for the situation are many and complex.

- ❖ India is a developing country with a population of over one billion. A significant portion of that population lives in poverty: 26% live on less than US \$1 a day and 25% are considered illiterate.

- ❖ In a large country, physical distance can be an issue. In rural areas, some communities do not have a school nearby. In urban settings, unsafe travel conditions, such as travelling alone or crossing busy roads and train lines, may prevent parents from sending their children to school.

- ❖ Social distance can be an even greater hurdle. Some communities do not see the value of school education

- ❖ They feel the things learned at school are not relevant to their lives. In some cases, the school may be in another community of a different socio-economic class, caste, or religion, making it difficult for the child to cross that invisible but effective barrier. While discrimination on the basis of caste is now illegal, attitudes of thousands of years are difficult to change quickly.

- ❖ Gender gaps exist. Literacy rates are 21% lower for females than for males. Among those children aged 6-14 not enrolled in school, more than 60% are girls. Some communities do not see the need to educate daughters because they will be married off at an early age and live and work with their in-laws, mostly doing housework and raising children.

- ❖ Child labour is prevalent. Many children need to work and earn in order to supplement a meagre family income and therefore do not attend school.

- ❖ Schools often lack facilities and teaching aids including classroom space, toilets, drinking water, blackboards, and chalk.

- ❖ Teachers lack training and motivation.

Improving primary education in India

Realizing the importance and the critical state of primary education in India today, many organizations on many levels are focusing on this issue.

International agencies, such as UNESCO and UNICEF, are deeply involved. Both are supporting the Government of India in its task with funds and expertise.

The Government of India began a program for improving the status of primary education in 2001, with

the following areas of focus:

- ❖ Increase in teacher appointments and training.
- ❖ Improvement in elementary education content and techniques.
- ❖ Provision of teaching materials.
- ❖ Improvements in infrastructure.
- ❖ Education for disadvantaged groups: girls, disadvantaged castes, and the physically challenged children in addition to children of the remote and far-flung areas.

The Indian national government hoped to achieve universal primary education by 2010, five years earlier than the set goal. This was an ambitious goal, and much depends on the will to make it happen at the national and international level, and on the thousands of NGOs involved in educational development in primary sector.

The future of primary education in India

The importance of universal primary education has now been widely recognized by everyone involved. Policies and pledges are easy to make but implementation can be difficult and goals hard to achieve, especially in a vast and populous country such as India. International agencies, the government of India, and the numerous NGOs will have to work together with will, wisdom and tremendous energy and to make their desire for universal primary education by 2015 a reality in India.

Objective

The following objectives were formulated for the present study:

1. To study the various private elementary educational institutions involved in providing education in District Shopian.
2. To study the various public elementary educational institutions involved in providing education in District Shopian.
3. To make a comparison between the growth, progress and development of private and public educational institutions in the district Shopian.

Data Base

The data for the present study was collected from the following institutions:

1. State Board of School Education, Srinagar.
2. Directorate of School Education, Srinagar.
3. Directorate of Statistics and Economics, Govt. Jammu and Kashmir, Srinagar.
4. Chief Education Office, Shopian, Kashmir.
5. Zonal Education Offices, Shopian, Kashmir.

The investigator also studies various books,

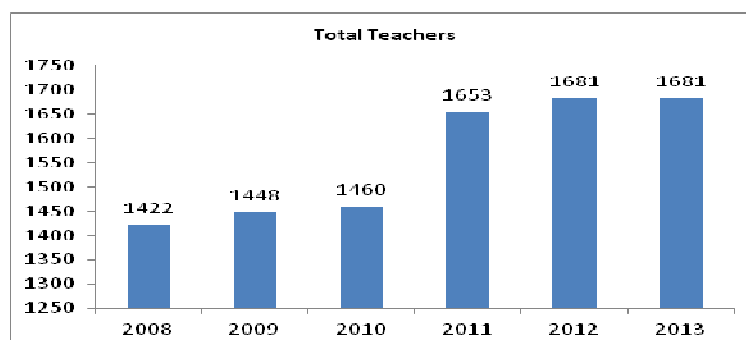
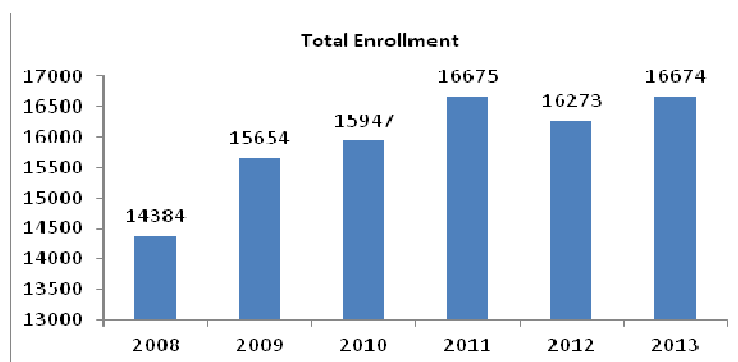
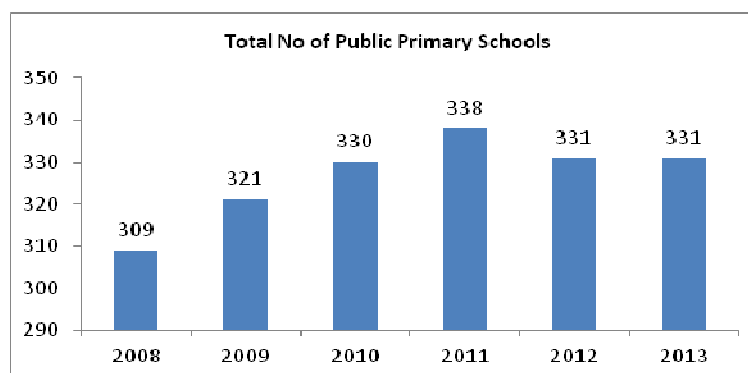
Analysis and Interpretation

Table 1 Showing the total No. of Public Primary Schools in District Shopian from 2008 to 2013

Year	Public Primary Schools							Pupil Teacher Ratio
	Total no. of schools	Total Enrolment	Male	Female	Total No. of Teachers	Male	Female	
2008	309	14384	7956	6428	1422	1057	365	10:1
2009	321	15654	8022	7632	1448	1078	370	10:1
2010	330	15947	8113	7834	1460	1080	380	11:1
2011	338	16675	8695	7780	1653	1228	425	10:1
2012	331	16273	8537	7736	1681	1250	431	10:1
2013	331	16674	8670	8001	1681	1250	431	10:1

Source Field Survey

The above table shows the total number of public Primary Schools in the District of Shopian from the year 2008-2013. We can see that there has been a continuous increase in the enrolment from the years 2008-2011 and the growth has stagnated from then onwards



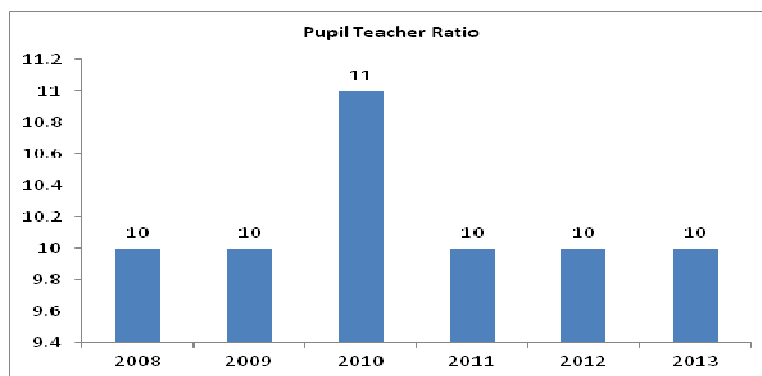
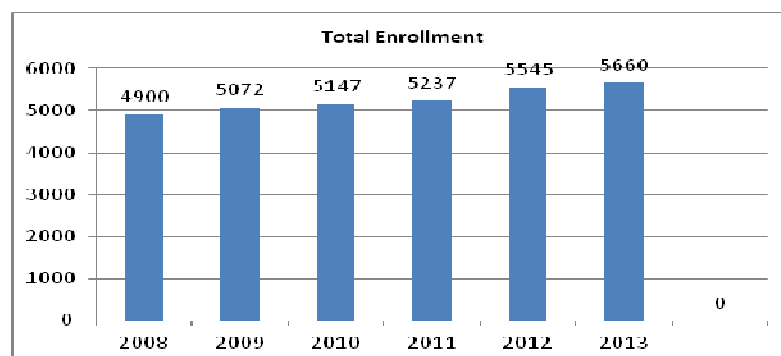
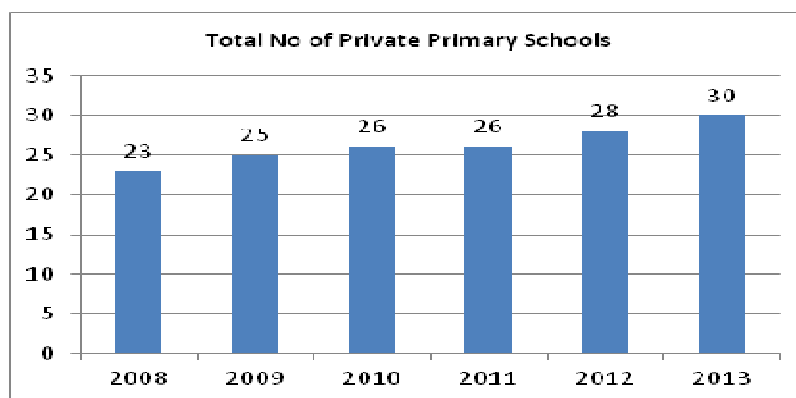


Table 2 showing the total No. of Private Primary Schools in District Shopian from 2008 to 2013

Year	Private Primary Schools							Pupil Teacher Ration
	Total no. of schools	Total Enrolment	Male	Female	Total No. of Teachers	Male	Female	
2008	23	4900	2510	2390	148	77	71	33:1
2009	25	5072	2570	2502	157	81	76	32:1
2010	26	5147	2581	2566	167	88	79	31:1
2011	26	5237	2578	2659	170	89	81	31:1
2012	28	5545	2808	2737	190	95	95	29:1
2013	30	5660	2960	2700	201	102	99	28:1

Source Field Survey

The above table shows the state of the Private primary schools in the district of Shopian from 2008 to 2013. We can see from the table that there has been an increase in the total number of schools and enrolment. Also we can see an improvement in the pupil teacher ratio which shows betterment in the quality of education in these schools.



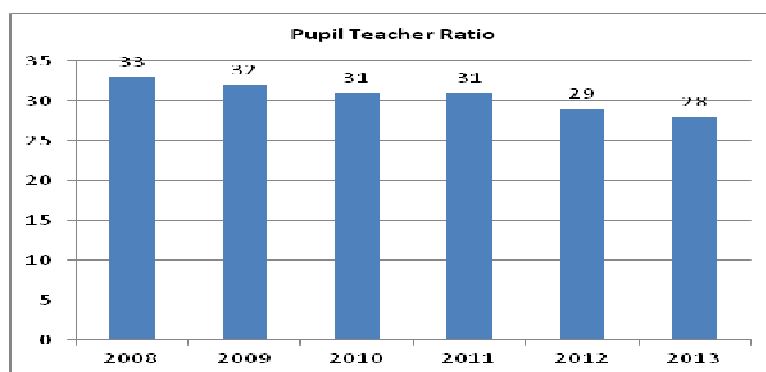
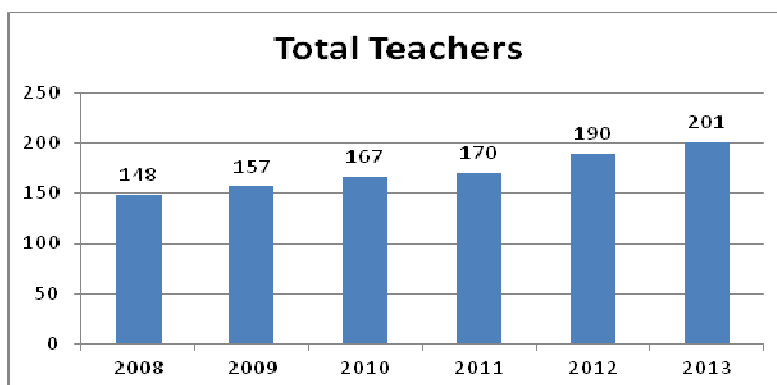
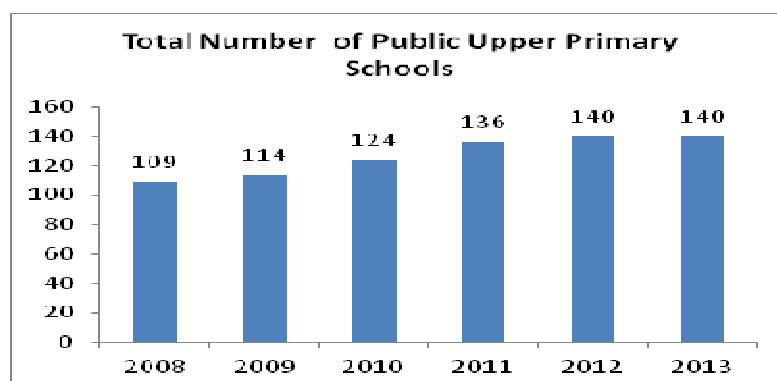


Table 3 Showing the total No. of Public Upper Primary Schools in District Shopian from 2008 to 2013

Year	Public Upper Primary Schools							Pupil Teacher Ratio
	Total no. of schools	Total Enrolment	Male	Female	Total No. of Teachers	Male	Female	
2008	109	6347	3392	2955	567	405	162	11:1
2009	114	6878	3602	3276	573	409	164	12:1
2010	124	7312	3752	3560	578	401	177	13:1
2011	136	8204	3972	4242	600	400	200	14:1
2012	140	6215	3558	2657	600	400	200	10:1
2013	140	6317	3490	2829	612	405	207	10:1

Source Field Survey

The above table shows the state of Public Upper Primary schools in the District Shopian in the years 2008 to 2013. We can see an increase in the total no of schools but there has been a negative growth in the total enrolment from the years 2011 to 2013 which shows a waning interest among the public to send their wards for upper primary education to a public institution.



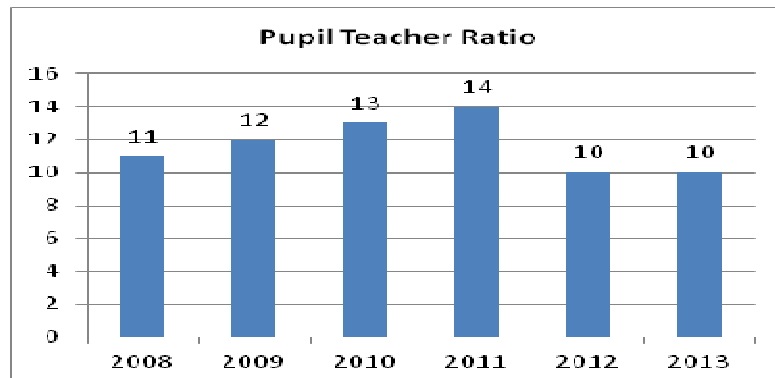
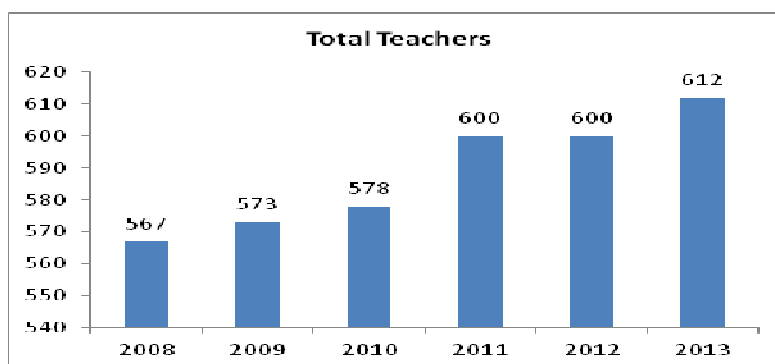
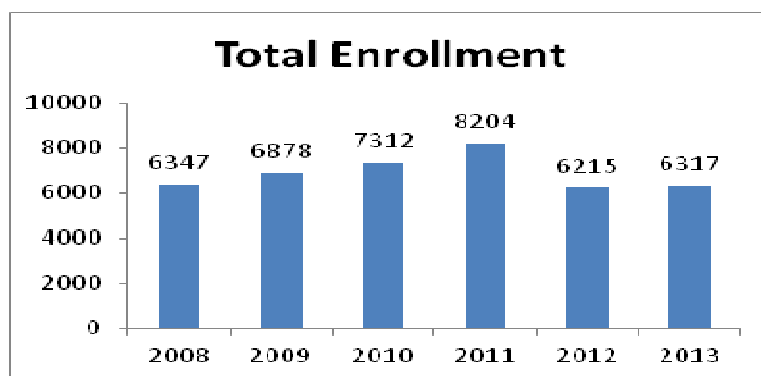
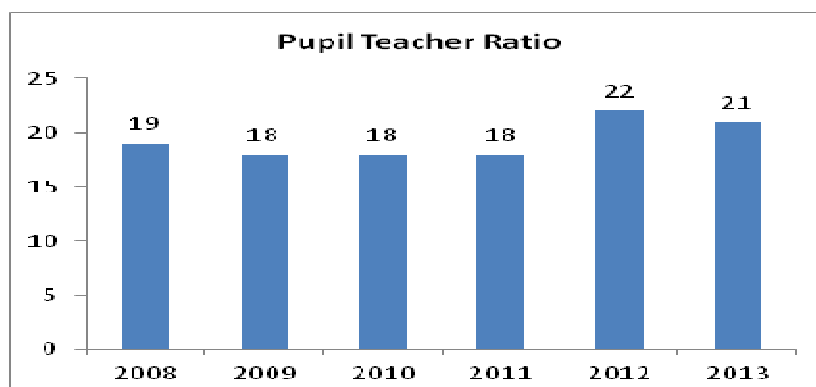
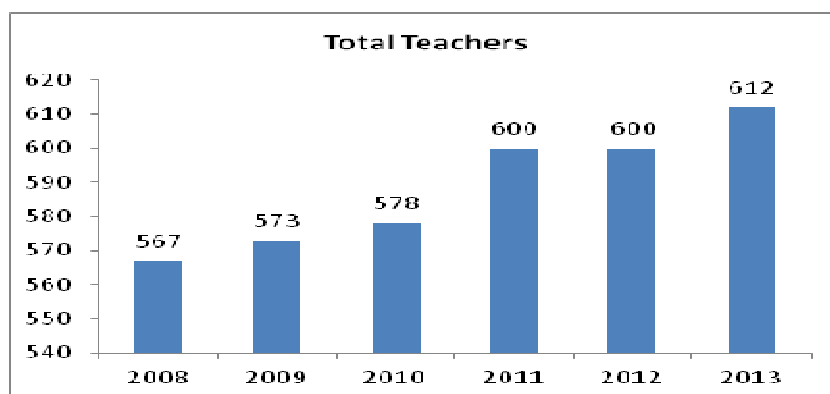
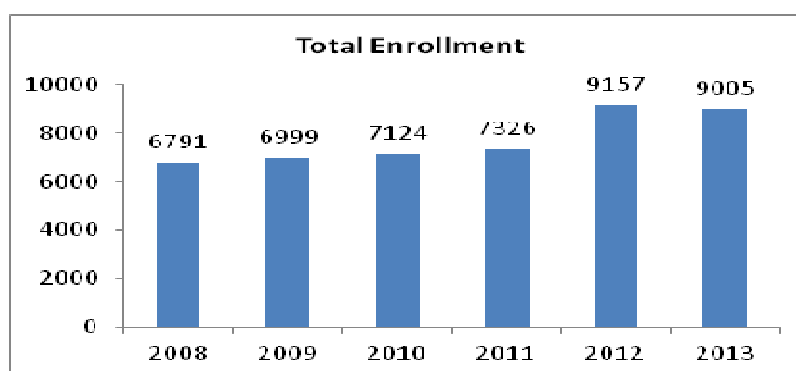
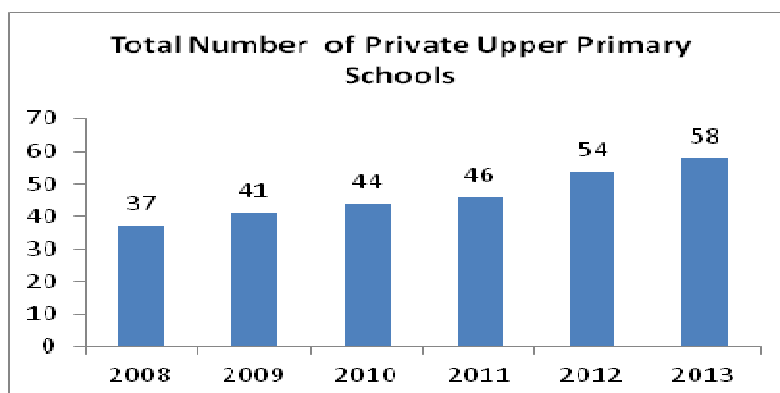


Table 4 Showing the total No. of Private Upper Primary Schools in District Shopian from 2008 to 2013

Year	Private Upper Primary Schools							Pupil Teacher Ration
	Total no. of schools	Total Enrolment	Male	Female	Total No. of Teachers	Male	Female	
2008	37	6791	3455	3336	367	276	91	19:1
2009	41	6999	3567	3432	388	291	97	18:1
2010	44	7124	3621	3503	399	296	103	18:1
2011	46	7326	3737	3589	402	301	111	18:1
2012	54	9157	5568	2589	406	298	118	22:1
2013	58	9005	4670	4335	427	299	128	21:1

Source Field Survey

The above table shows the state of Private Upper Primary Schools in the District Shopian from 2008 to 2013. We can see a positive growth in both the no of schools and enrolment over the years. The main point to be seen is there has been a sudden increase in the enrolment from 2011 to 2012 which was largely due to public interest shifting from public schools to private schools.



magazines, newspapers, periodically etc, about the growth and development of Primary Education in District Shopian, Kashmir.

Primary Data

Primary data was collected in almost all the educational zones with the use of designed information blank. The information was also collected from Chief Education office district Shopian.

Secondary Data

Secondary data was collected from various books, journals, newspapers, magazines and other relevant sources. Websites which contain lot of materials on educational development of the area. Besides that secondary data was also collected from the CEO and ZEO's Offices, Digest of Statistics, Directorate of Economics and Statistics, Government of Jammu and Kashmir and Census Hand Books of J&K.

Tools and Techniques

The data for the present study was collected through Information blank. Following tools and techniques were employed for the present investigation:

Information Blank: was used to collect the data decade-wise along with their total enrollment, gender-wise enrollment, total no. of teachers, gender-wise teachers from different educational offices.

CONCLUSION

The district which was established in 2007 inherits the education system of old district Pulwama. The present research paper reveals that the elementary education of private sector is showing more cheering results than public sector. Not only in enrolment of the existing institutions, but the expanding private sector in the district also indicates positive trend in private as compared to the public sector of elementary level of education. So far as pupil teacher ratio is concerned it is decreasing in public schools, because of the decreasing enrolment where as the trend is opposite in private schools. The fact of the matter is that the private institutions have succeeded in providing the basic facilities of infrastructure and accountability in management, the areas in which the public sector is lagging behind. Keeping in view the odd weather conditions of the region, the state demands special infrastructural facilities as compared to rest of the country, but in spite of the huge funding it is still unavailable in the public sector in general and the district

of Shopian in particular. The fact of the matter is that the private sector with its limited resources has succeeded by virtue of its better practices and accountability in running these institutions.

SUGGESTION

The study proved that government sector in elementary education lags behind the private sector so the following suggestions are being given to fill the lacunas.

1. Improving the infrastructure in public schools while keeping in view the peculiar climatic conditions of the valley.
2. Overhauling the system especially in public sector in order to make it more accountable and making provisions for encouraging competent, honest and dedicated teachers by meaning full rewards etc.
3. Initiating the attractive schemes (reinforcement) in government schools to expose the students to the outside world by making provisions for out of state tours which may help us in solving the problem of retention at the elementary level.
4. Making provisions for special training courses for government as well as private teachers especially developing in them the motivation skills so that advanced techniques of the teaching may be inculcated in them.

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