International J. of Ext. Educ. Vol. XXI : 59-70, 2025 ISSN : 2319-7188

Pursuing Quality Elementary Education through Communitisation in Wokha Sardar of Nagaland: An Innovative Approach

Sharon Kikon[1],Buno Liegise[2] and Anu G.S.[3]
1. Research Scholar, Department of Education, Nagaland University, Kohima
2. Professor, Department of Education, Nagaland University, Kohima
3. Associate Professor, Department of Education, Nagaland University, Kohima
Corresponding author's email: anueducation@nagalanduniversity.ac.in

ABSTRACT

Elementary education is the basis for educational excellence and better future prospects for an individual in society. The provision of high-quality education is hampered by a number of factors, such as in rural areas where many people can only dream of receiving such education. On the other hand, community participation in these far-off and rural regions carries immense potential in raising the standard of Elementary Education. The National Education Policy (NEP) 2020 also recommends that providing quality education is not only the responsibility of schools and teachers but also the community at all levels of education. In the setting of Nagaland, the Communitisation of Elementary Education attempts to involve local communities in the management and improvement of schools in the state, and has emerged as a novel and promising strategy to attain numerous educational objectives that had never accomplished before. As a result, this study investigates the state of pursuing quality elementary education through communitisation in Wokha Sardar as well as the dynamic role that community participation plays in raising the standard of elementary education. The study data were gathered using questionnaires from the sampled schools. The study uses descriptive techniques for analyses such as percentage and the data is shown in tabular and graphical form.

Keywords: *Communitisation, Elementary Education, Innovative approach, Wokha Sardar.*

INTRODUCTION

Education is a fundamental right that lays the foundation of every individual's development and contributes to the progress of society at large. In this manner, Elementary Education plays a crucial role in shaping the future of students, which sets the stage for intellectual, emotional, and social growth during the formative years of a child's life.

Community participation in the education of the children within the community is not a new concept. Throughout history, it can be observed that communities have been crucial to the administration and provision of schools across the globe. It also indicates that multiple initiatives have been made in different nations to increase community involvement in school operations through the School Management Committee (SMC) and Parent-Teacher Association, especially in countries like India. However, it may not be ideal or rational to include aspects such as curriculum development, teacher recruitment, or educational policy design since literacy level is low in most rural areas. However, communities carry immense potential in how they mobilize minor resources such as inspecting schools, providing valuable resources in-kind or in the form of monetary assistance, and strict monitoring during the construction of school buildings and other infrastructural facilities.

The Samagra Shiksha Abhiyan (SSA) is a scheme that has surfaced to be one of the most important programs in strengthening communitisation for universalizing elementary education in India. Recently, there has been a rapid growth of elementary education in the country, especially in enrollment status. At the same time, several challenges have risen in elementary education; the foremost among them is the poor quality of education. Therefore, to enhance the quality of education, communitisation must play a major role in lifting the status of education, especially at the elementary level.

In the context of Nagaland, Communitisation was implemented in the school sector as a result of the Nagaland Communitisation of Public Service and Institution Act 2002, passed in the Nagaland Legislative Assembly. It was initiated as a unique partnership between the State Government and the community at large. This project on communitisation as part of elementary education was officially launched on 1st July 2002 by the then chief secretary of Nagaland, Shri R.S. Pandey. According to him, "Communitisation is a process where the government and the community get into a partnership, working and sharing the responsibilities to manage any institutions. It gives an opportunity to invest and own in delivering inputs to the growth of management. It also refers to the process of creating and fostering a sense of community, collaboration, and shared responsibility within a group or society. It also involves promoting collective participation, cooperation and mutual support among individuals for the betterment of the community as a whole." (Pandey, 2010). The basic idea behind introducing communitisation was to create the power and ownership management of elementary schools in the village/town community, with a focus on strengthening the rich community spirit prevalent in Naga communities. In this way, all the Government Primary and Middle schools in the State have been communitised, so as to speak. In this communitisation process, every village, town, or ward, established a Village Education Committee (VEC) / Town Education Committee (TEC) /Ward Education Committee (WEC) /School Management Committee (SMC) to oversee the education of children in each locality. Continual cooperation between the Government and the community occurred in this arrangement: The State Government provides the basic infrastructure and salaries of the employees. The Education Committees took responsibility for the actual withdrawal and payment of the salaries and were empowered to cut the salaries of employees for dereliction of duty when required. While the Government provided funds for physical infrastructure, the community could decide on how the infrastructure is to be built, how they wanted their school(s) to be run, what kind of facilities/amenities ought to be provided, how to raise extra funds, etc. The Government retained its power to appoint the teachers, but each community could recommend applicants for new appointment. In this manner, the entire planning and management of the schools were turned over to the communities with the Government playing a supporting role.

The State report of the 19th Joint Review Mission on Nagaland (2014) also stated that community involvement is a very strong component of Nagaland's education, and recommended that local authorities and the SMC be trained in order to raise awareness of the Right to Education (RTE) implementation in active communities. Report, such as Quality Achievement in Elementary Education in Nagaland under Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan (Liegise& Iralu 2011), Awareness of Community towards the process of Communitisation of elementary education in Nagaland (Jamir, 2022) and the like highlights that the people of Nagaland have benefited from the communitisation of elementary education, as several Government Primary School & Government Middle School (GPS & GMS) across the State have received support in a number of areas in terms of teacher regularity, student performance, and infrastructure. It is noteworthy to mention that many of the State's primary schools also saw a significant growth and progress within five (5) years of the introduction of the communitisation program. In this manner, there is high probability in this program to accomplish a great deal more by carrying out the developmental work with the selected communities' effective engagement, which allowed schools to enhance their facilities, as well as student and teacher performances.

Reflections from Literature Review

Kumar(2023) stated that the present education system focuses on community participation that plays an important role in increasing the quality of education. He further claimed that community participation creates a sense of ownership and responsibility towards enhancing schools. Nevertheless, community participation is not a full

solution to solve every issue and problem of the school, but it facilitates the school to bring qualityin terms of the teaching-learning process.A study conducted by Jamir (2022) commented that the Communitisation of Elementary Education in Nagaland has been realized to encourage community participation in the management and functioning of the schools. The author also found out that majority of communities was aware of the communitisation process in elementary education. However, various parameters such as illiteracy, excessive personal responsibilities at home and an indifferent attitude of some parents were still the cause of hindrance to community participation in elementary education in Nagaland. Sebu(2016) also revealed that Communitisationenhances the sense of ownership in the community towards the school. However, it was felt that community support may still be further harnessed. Nevertheless, the overall performance of the scheme in the selected schools was worthy of appreciation. Further, it was suggested that strengthening Parent-Teacher Associations (PTAs) and keeping it active through interactions could improve the functioning of schools. Kholia(2014) also stated thatgovernment schools in Nagaland had largely benefited from communitisation. Although there had been notable improvements since the introduction of communitisation in primary education, quality education was still missing, necessitating the active involvement of the Village Education Committee/SMC in order to really reform the system.Pathak(2014) stated that, although there was no such formal assessment of how the quality of education has been affected, there was a general agreement that communitisation had been an advantage in ensuring teachers' regularity, improving infrastructure, and improving the academic performance of the students.

Need of the Study

This study is needed to explore how communitisation in an educational setting can be a driving force in enhancing the quality of elementary education in a rural and culturally rich area like Wokha Sardar. The National Education Policy (NEP) 2020 also emphasizes the importance of community participation at all levels of education. Hence, the study attempts to examine community involvement in the field of elementary education so as to contribute to understanding how NEP 2020's goals can be met in real-world settings, while also being able to identify any gaps with a view to bringing about improvement in elementary education.

Objectives of the Study

The research study was conducted to fulfil the following specific objectives:

1. To examine the status of elementary education in terms of infrastructural facilities, curriculum, and pedagogy.
2. To find out the role of the community for quality elementary education, and to assess the outcome of communitisation on elementary education.
3. To identify the issues and challenges faced by the school, teachers, and SMC.

METHODOLOGY

The study is descriptive in nature, and percentage is used for analyses and interpretation. It relied on primary and secondary sources for gathering data. The researchers consulted a few articles and documents related to the study. Thereafter, items were identified and analyzed in terms of research objectives, and four (4) sets of questionnaires were framed to collect the required data using the survey method.

Wokha Sardar, being one of the major districts in the state of Nagaland, has been selected as the study area purposively for the present study, representing the Lotha-Naga community. The concern block has 22 Government Middle Schools (GMS) and 23 Government Primary Schools (GPS). The selected sample consists of 9 school heads, 50 teachers, 20 Parents & 17 SMCs, which totals to 96 as respondents of the study. Within the aforementioned, 4 GMS &5 GPS have been selected using a simple Random Sampling technique.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

1. INFRASTRUCTURAL FACILITIES

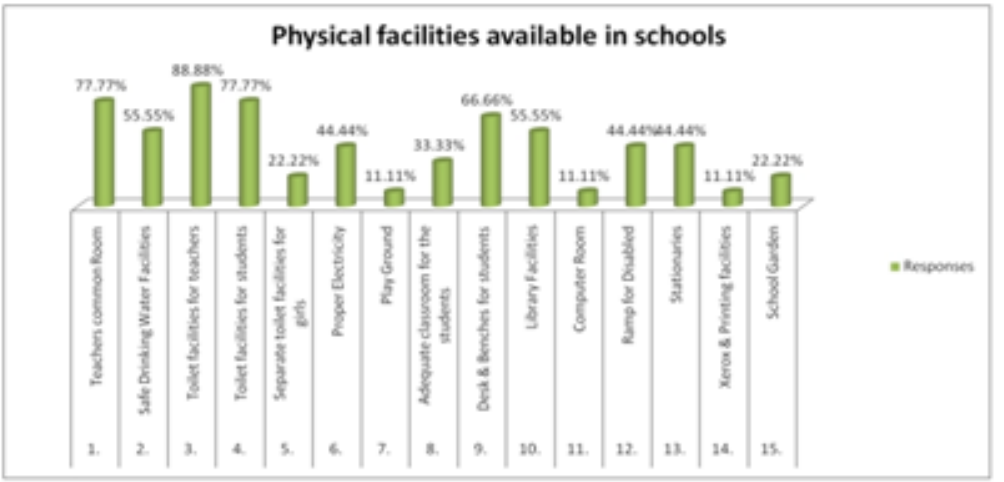


Fig. 1 Graphical Representation on the Status of Infrastructural Facilities.

Figure 1, shows that 77.8 to 88.8percent of schools had basic amenities, including separate teacher and student restrooms, a common area for teachers, desks and benches, and library. 44.44 percent of the schools had proper electricity and ramps to aid accessibility for children with disabilities. 22 percent of the schools lacked in terms of availability of gender-sensitive infrastructure, such as a separate restroom for girls, while 11.11 percent provides computer rooms. The fact that only 11.11percent of schools have adequate school playgrounds shows how less emphasis was placed on physical education and leisure activities, which are vital for students' mental and physical health.

2. CURRICULUM

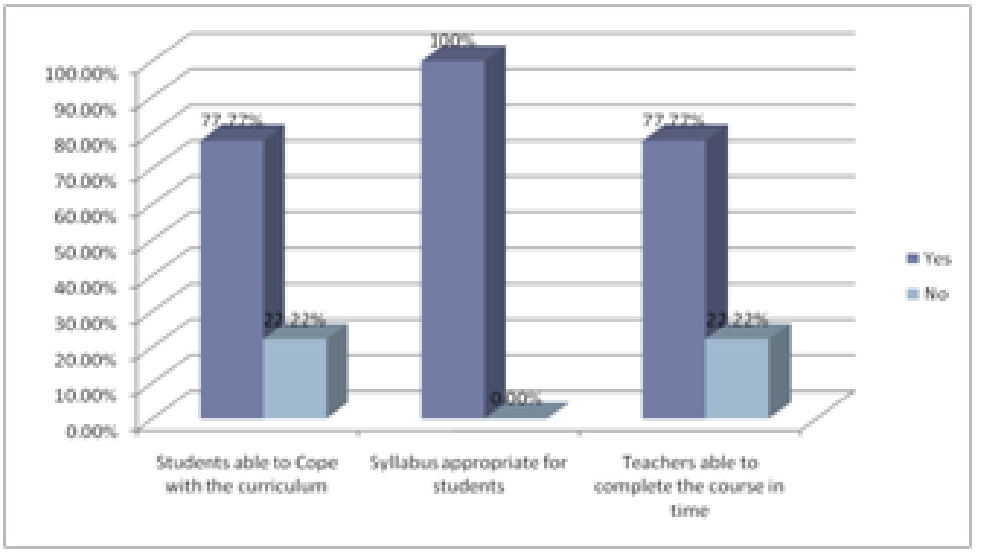


Fig. 2: Status of curriculum and extra-curricular activities.

It is observed that 22.22 percent of respondents stated that children struggled with the curriculum, which may be caused by learning gaps, curriculum difficulties, or a lack of support. Whereas 77.77 percent of respondents stated that students were able to deal with the current school curriculum. All respondents (100 percent) concurred that the current curriculum was suitable for students, indicating that it is in line with the students' requirements and skill levels. The majority of schools (77.77 percent) are of the opinion that teachers were able to complete the course in the allocated time.

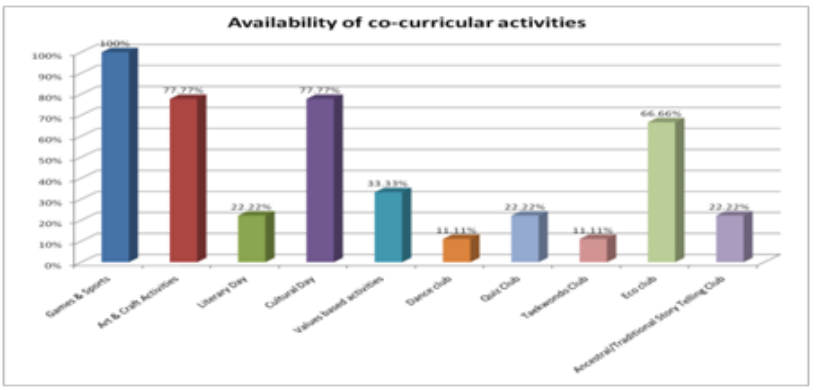


Fig. 3: Availability of Co-Curricular Activities

Figure 3showed that 100 % of schools in Wokha Sardar conducted games and sports as the main co-curricular activity. 77.77 percent of schools organize Cultural Day events, and also conduct art and craft projects for students. Further, 66.66 percent of the elementary schools had Eco club that engaged students in active learning. However, only 22.22 percent provide value-based events like literary day, and Traditional Storytelling Club. While, fewer with 11.11 percent had clubs like Taekwondo, Dance Club, and Quiz Club.

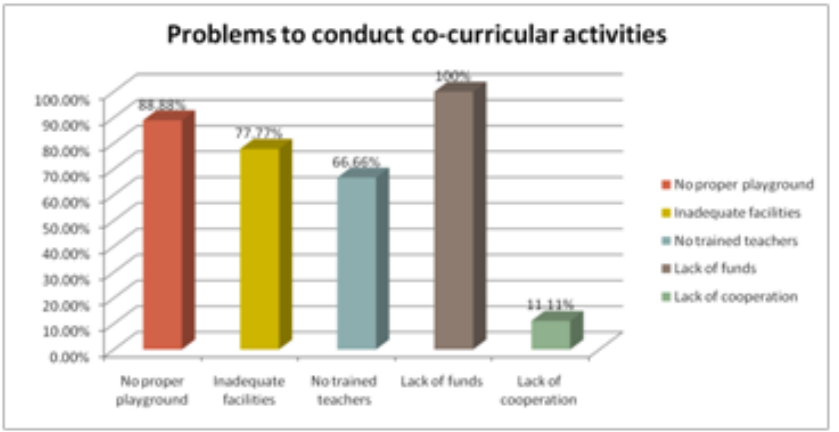


Fig. 4: Problems to Conduct Co-Curricular Activities

Figure 4 indicates that 100 percent of primary and middle schools in Wokha Sardar struggled to carry out extracurricular activities, due to a lack of funds. 66.66 to 88.88 percent of schools feel that their capacity to run successful extracurricular activities is being hampered by the lack of trained teachers, inadequate facilities, and no appropriate playgrounds. Lastly, 11.11 percent of schools reported a lack of cooperation, which demonstrates benefits such as unity, for the advancement of high-quality education.

3. PEDAGOGY

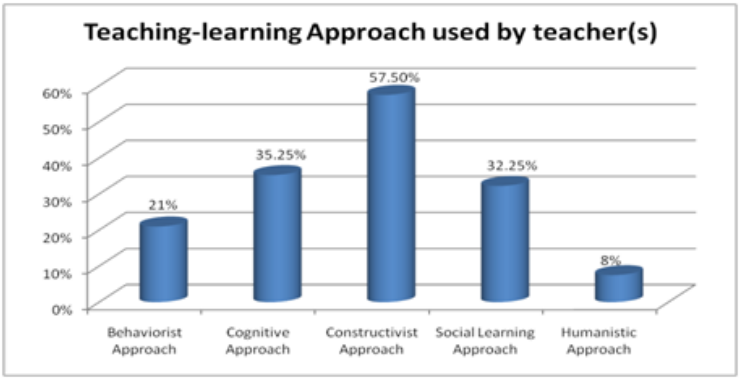


Fig. 5: Teaching-Learning Approach used in the classroom by teachers.

Figure 5, revealed that 57.50 percent of teachers in Wokha Sardar schools most frequently employed the constructivist method to communicate information in the classroom. While 21 to 35 percent of teachers rarely employed behaviorist approach, the cognitive approach, and the social learning approach as alternative teaching methods, while only 8% followed the humanistic approach.

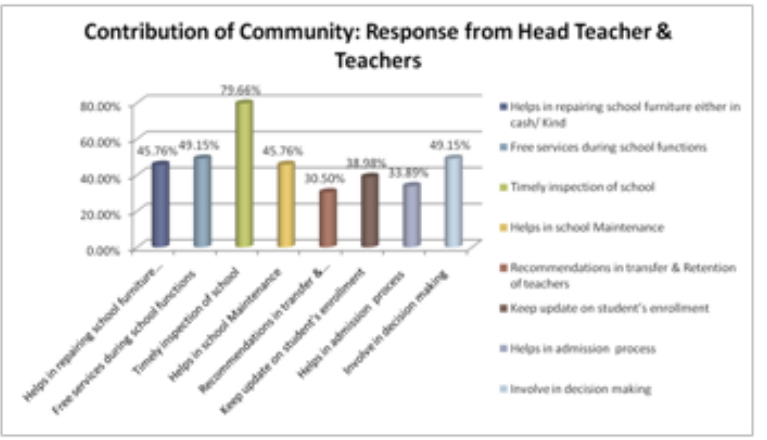


Fig.6: Contribution of Community: Response from Head Teacher and Teachers

Figure 6 indicates that 79.66 percent of head teachers and teachers concurred that the community contributed to the growth of schools by conducting timely inspections to provide updates on how well the schools are operating and progressing. Only 30 to 49 percent stated that SMCs/VEC facilitated resources towards the school in the following ways: recommendation in terms of transfer and retention of teachers, helping in the admission process, keeping updated on students' enrollment, helping in school maintenance, providing financial or in-kind assistance for school furniture repair, involved in decision making, offering free services during school events. These show that the SMC/ VEC help the schools in a variety of ways.

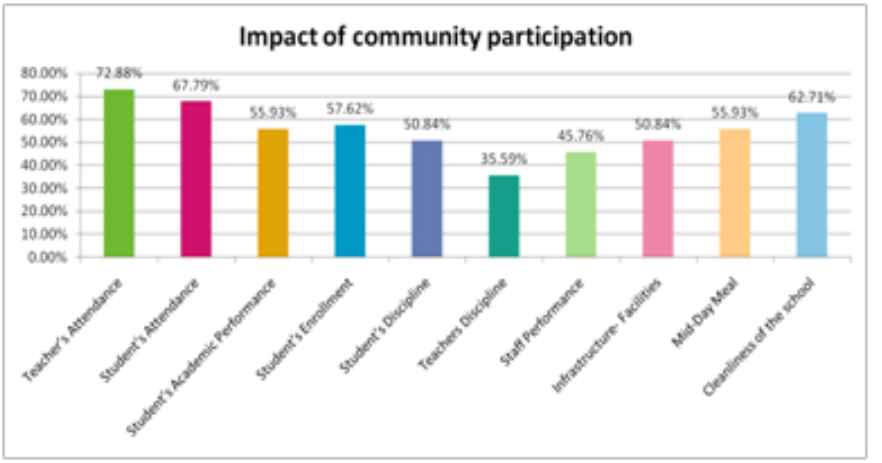


Fig. 7: Outcome of Communitisation: Response from Head Teacher and Teachers

The above Figure 7 reveals the outcome of community participation, since its implementation in Wokha Sardar. Studies revealed that 50.84 to 72.88 percent of the head teachers and teachers stated that the schools have seen improvement in the following fronts after communitisation: infrastructural facilities, student discipline, mid-day meals, students' academic performance, student enrollment, cleanliness of the school, and students' and teachers' attendance. While 45.76 and 35.59 percent of the head teachers and teachers said that staff performance and teachers' discipline have improved, respectively.

** Illustrative achievement of Elementary School over the years in Wokha Sardar

- GPS Etsutchukha received the District Award for Best Fluency in Language and Numeracy (FLN) Activities, showcasing its exceptional efforts in strengthening foundational literacy and numeracy among students.
- GPS-Orchid emerged as the Winner of the Nagaland Reading Festival 2022-23, setting a benchmark for promoting a vibrant reading culture among young learners.
- GPS-Airfield was recognized for excellence in FLN activities within the Wokha district in 2023, reflecting its ongoing commitment to foundational education.

Ø GMS-A Wokha Town was honoured as the Best Performing School in 2013 and also earned recognition in the SwachhtaPakhwada campaign in 2017 for its dedication to cleanliness and sustainability.

Table 1
The Role of Community in Elementary Education.

Sl. No	Parameters	Yes	No
1.	SMC supports in monitoring the function of the school	88.23%	11.76%
2.	School in-charge has constant interaction session with the community.	88.23%	11.76%
3.	SMC provides guidance to the school staff	82.35%	17.64%
4.	Communities provide support in upgrading the school development	64.70%	35.29%
5.	Free support in any ways during school functions	58.82%	41.17 %
6.	SMC initiates action against erring teachers/employee.	58.82%	41.17 %
7.	SMC provides mobilize compulsory education to the community	41.17 %	58.82%
8.	Organize special programs for students, teachers	35.29%	64.70%
9.	SMC raise funds for the school	5.88%	94.11%

Table 1, indicates that 82.35 to 88.23 percent of respondents agreed that the SMC/VEC provided guidance to the school staff, supported in monitoring the functioning of the school, and also that the school in-charge had constant interactive sessions with the community. In addition, 58.88 to 64.70 percent agreed that the SMC/VEC facilitated free support in numerous ways during school functions/ programmes. Studies also prove that they initiated action against erring teachers and provided support in upgrading the school's development. While, 35.29 percent and 41.17 percent said that the SMC/VEC organized special programs for students and teachers, and also mobilized compulsory education to the community, respectively. The data also indicates that only 5.88 percent of respondents stated that the SMC/VEC raised funds for the schools.

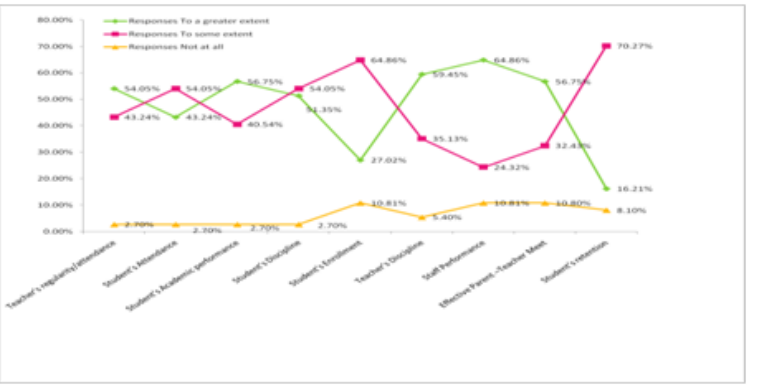


Fig. 8: Outcome of communitisation in schools: Response from SMC & Parents

Figure 8, reveals that 54.05 percent to 64.86 percent of respondents stated that teacher's regularity or attendance, students' academic performance, effective parent-teacher meet, teacher's discipline, and staff performance were improved to a great extent. While, 54.05 to 64.86 percent of respondents stated that students' attendance, student discipline, and student enrollment have been impacted to some extent. Further, 70 percent of respondents agreed that student retention in the schools have improved after communitisation.

Table 2
Problems faced by Government Elementary Schools in Wokha Sardar.

Sl. No	Parameters	Frequency	Percentage
1.	Lack of proper infrastructure and resources	21	35.59%
2.	Lack of parental and community involvement	11	18.64%
3.	Lack of proper School administration and policies	7	11.86%
4.	Lack of proper teacher and student management	6	10.16%
5.	Social and environmental challenge	3	5.08%
6.	Lack of inclusiveness	2	3.38%

Table 2, reveals that 35.59 percent of Government Elementary Schools in Wokha Sardar lacked proper infrastructure and resources, which is one of the biggest challenges. Also, around 10.16 to 18.64 percent of respondents stated that the schools face problems such as a lack of proper teacher and student management, lack of proper school administration, and a lack of parental and community involvement. Also, only 3.38 percent and 5.08 percent lack inclusivity, social and environmental challenges, respectively.

Table 3
Problems faced by the SMC

Sl.No	Parameters	Frequency	Percentage
1.	Poverty of parents	14	82.35%
2.	Illiteracy of Parents	12	70.58%
3.	Lack of financial assistance	7	41.17%
4.	Insufficient teachers	7	41.17%
5.	Lack of cooperation from the community	7	41.17%
6.	Lack of organizational support 6	6 7	35.29%
7.	Communication gap with the authority	5	29.41%
8.	Lack of cooperation from parents	2	11.76%
9.	Lack of coordination among teachers and the community	2	11.76%

Table 3 shows that 70.58 percent to 82.35 percent of School Management Committee /Village Education Committee stated that illiteracy and poverty of parents were the biggest problems they faced in the pursuit of quality education. Whereas, 41 percent of respondents stated that there is a lack of cooperation from the community, lack of financial assistance, as well as insufficient teachers. Additionally, 11.76 percent and 29.41 percent of respondents stated that there is lack of cooperation from parents, lack of coordination among teachers and the community, and also a communication gap with the school authority respectively. 35 percent mention there was lack of organizational support, suggesting that structural or institutional assistance is insufficient to meet the needs of students.

SUMMARY & CONCLUSION

The status of elementary education in terms of infrastructure, curriculum and pedagogyrecapitulate that most of the elementary schools in the district provide basic amenities-restrooms, teachers' common room, desks, benches and libraries-but critical gaps remain in ICT facilities, playgrounds, auditorium and space for further expansion, indicating a pressing need for broader infrastructural upgrades. The surveyed respondents consider that the current curriculum is well-aligned with academic standards and life-skill requirements, showing a greater confidence that most teachers can complete it within the allocated time. Pedagogically, teachers overwhelmingly favored constructivist approach in their teaching-learning process, while approaches such as the behaviourists, social-cognition & humanistic approaches are rarely employed, suggesting limited methodological diversity. It further outlines that the extra-curricular programs mainly emphasise games & sports, cultural events, arts & crafts, with many schools running Eco-Club. However, value-based speciality clubs like dance, taekwondo, quiz, etc., are at scarce as schools areconstrained by insufficient funding, inadequate infrastructural facilities, and a shortage of trained teachers. Communitisation has,in fact, yielded notable gains in elementary education across the district of Wokha, with improvement in teacher-student attendance, cleaner schools, increased enrollment, better discipline, enhanced infrastructure and more reliable mid-day meals. Pathak (2014) corroborates the present findings of how communitisation has been an advantage in ensuring teachers' regularity and improving students' academic performance. Further, the involvement of community and School Management Committee (SMC) / Village Education Committee (VEC) is generally positive yet remains uneven across different areas, especially regarding to financial aid and participate in decision making. The study also highlights key challenges-inadequate infrastructure dominates the concern, while limited parental/ community involvement, pervasive poverty, weak link to higher authorities, teacher shortage, “house help” responsibilities that disrupt attendance and punctuality further hinders the quality of education. Jamir (2022) also highlighted those various factors such as illiteracy, excessive personal responsibilities at home and indifferent attitude of some parents continue to impede community participation in elementary education in Nagaland.

SUGGESTIONS

1. To improve student engagement and better prepare them for a technologically advanced world, emphasis should be placed on improving the infrastructure with an emphasis on inclusivity, gender-sensitive separate restrooms, and adequate library facilities for students and teachers for an efficient teaching-learning process, and enhanceICTfacilities for digital literacy.

2. More emphasis should be placed on leaders' and teachers' ongoing professional development to deliver high-quality education. Gaining expertise in contemporary teaching techniques, community involvement, and leadership may strengthen the effects of communitisation and help build a comprehensive learning environment for students. More committed and capable people ought to be chosen to serve in SMCs in order to effectively support school operations.

3. To guarantee academic quality and promote accountability and transparency in elementary education, SMC/VECs should continue timely or frequent school inspections. The community should continue to assist the schools whenever necessary in order to encourage students to participate in more extracurricular activities that will enhance their academic and social abilities as well as their personal growth. By adhering to the principle of "No Work, No Pay," the SMC/VECs should also keep an eye on the regularity of teachers and take appropriate measures against those who are negligent or inconsistent.

4. More regular scheduling of Parent-Teacher Meetings (PTMs) is necessary to promote open communication between parents, educators, and administrators. Appropriate use of the funds allocated for school development should be used for the relevant initiatives. This will improve cooperation and understanding; enable prompt resolution of student concerns, and advance student accountability and outcomes.

CONCLUSION

The community plays a critical role in ensuring improvement in infrastructure, general school administration, and educational quality. In Nagaland, involvement through the communitisation project has improved elementary education in number of ways. Because of the cooperation between the government, local communities, and schools, improvements have been observed in teacher and student attendance, academic success, and student discipline.

A sense of accountability and ownership has been fostered, and infrastructure has been improved as a result of the community's commitment to school monitoring. Improving facilities with an emphasis on accessibility, inclusivity, and contemporary materials is crucial to provide every student with a comprehensive, fair, and stimulating learning environment. Reducing these disparities will promote a more thorough educational process and further the more general objective of inclusive, high-quality education. However, as shown in the study, despite such positive developments, challenges still persist. Insufficient financing, a dearth of extracurricular activities, and a lack of gender-sensitive facilities and digital technologies all hinder students' overall development. This study underlines how effective community involvement may significantly improve elementary education when it is fostered and supported via programs like communitisation. School-community-government coordination must be strengthened going forward, especially in terms of resource mobilization, infrastructure improvement, and training for school personnel and community leaders. It may be mentioned that much improvement was seen in the quality of elementary education during the initial years of communitisation. However, over the last few years, a decline has been seen in terms of community-school cooperation, which is leading to the rise of several challenges. In this context, there is a need for a serious review of the communitisation process with a view to re-vitalising it. Such initiatives will not only maintain the benefits of the program but also tackle continual current issues faced in the field of school education, eventually creating a welcoming, encouraging, and excellent learning environment for the students of Wokha Sardar. There are many good lessons to be learned from the ongoingcommunitisation process in Nagaland, if any institution cares to look deep within. The communitisation process can be seen as an engine for effective fulfilment of the National Education Policy (NEP) 2020 goals especially by providing the community an opportunity to contribute towards the development of school education.

Paper received on 02/05/2025
Accepted on 26/09/2025

REFERENCES

Jamir, S (2022), Awareness of Community towards the process of Communitisation of elementary education in Nagaland. International Journal of Education Humanities and Social Sciences, 5(1), (p81-87). Retrieved from https://doi.org/10.54922/IJEHSS.2022.0347

Kholia, D (2014), Communitisation of elementary education in Nagaland with special reference to Phek district.

Kumar, S (2023), Community Participation in Indian Education System: A Reflection from the NEP 2020. Vidhyayana-an International Multidisciplinary Peer-Reviewed E-Journal-ISSN 2454-8596, 8(si6),p613-623. Retrieved from https://j.vidhyayanaejournal.org/index.php/journal/article/view/769

Liegise, B and Iralu , R.K (2012), Communitization on Elementary Education in Kohima District: A research project of Nagaland College of Teacher Education Kohima.

Pandey, R. S. (2010), Communitisation-The Third Way of Governance. New Delhi: Concept Publishing Company.

Pathak, N. (2014), Communitisation of Public Services in Nagaland: A step towards creating alternative model of delivering public services. Pune, Maharashtra: Kalpavriksh

Santhakumar, V (2020). Community Participation in School Management: Reasons it May Not Work in India. Retrieved from https://practiceconnect.azimpremjiuniversity.edu.in/community-participation-in-school-management-reasons-may-not-work-in-india/

Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan. (2014), 19th Joint Review Mission State Report: Nagaland (January 13-18, 2014)

Sebu, S (2016). Communitization of Elementary Education in Nagaland: A case study of Tseminyu block, Kohima. International Journal for Social Studies, 2(5), 63-74. Retrieved from https://edupediapublications.org/journals