

Baseline survey on schools exposed to the programme of school improvement (PSI): Preliminary findings

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The Programme for School Improvement (PSI), a concept related to decentralisation of decision making authority to the school, has been implemented from January 2006 in selected eight education zones to create awareness. Under PSI, the school principals will be empowered to manage schools in a participatory manner. This research paper is a part of an ongoing research which highlights the current status of school management in the pilot schools and the focus of this paper is mainly on the research procedure and the preliminary findings related to school planning, concentrating on vision, mission, objectives, short-term and long-term planning and school development projects.

The baseline survey will be conducted in three stages. The first stage is an attempt to identify and highlight the prevailing status of school management through a sample of 40 schools selected from the pilot schools. In addition similar number of non-PSI schools will be studied for the purpose of comparison. School profiles of both sets of schools will be prepared, based on the criteria developed on school management practices. In the second stage, in-depth case studies will be conducted in a sub-sample of schools. A survey will be conducted in the third stage, using the same instruments prepared for the initial survey. The information gathered will be compared with the baseline information to identify the impact of the PSI. Interviews were the main technique to collect data. Interview schedules were prepared for teachers, parents, students and community members taken into consideration of school level planning, role of the principal, curricular and co-curricular activities, community members, finance and administration, monitoring and evaluation. An interview schedule for the Zonal Directors was used to obtain their views and opinions about the schools. In addition a separate information sheet was prepared to gather details on the human and physical resources and examination results of the schools. The study evinces that majority of the principals adopt a participatory approach in the planning process. From the vision and the mission statements and objectives expounded by the principals, it is noticeable that the principals need a practical knowledge in formulating the above. There should be a balanced approach when formulating schools plans. The study indicates that the principals' involvement in educational needs of their teachers is minimal. The main method adopted by the principals for this purpose is sending the teachers for in-service training. Principals need more awareness in identifying staff development needs and should adopt innovative methods in school-based staff development programmes.

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