

Practices adopted for improvement of Quality of Elementary Education in Tripura

Introduction

The erstwhile princely State of Tripura merged with the Indian Union after independence on the 15th October, 1949 and became a Union Territory without legislature with effect from November 1, 1956 and a popular ministry was installed in Tripura on July 1, 1963. Tripura became a full-fledged State on the 21st January, 1972.

With a view to taking the administration closer to the people, reorganization of administration unit was taken up. The State has now, 8 districts, 23 subdivisions, 58 blocks and also one Tribal Areas Autonomous District Council (TTAADC).

The TTAADC was set up in 1982 under the Seventh Schedule of the Constitution, which was then brought under the Sixth Schedule in 1985. The TTAADC covers about 2/3rd of the total area of the State. It covers all the eight districts and has 1/3rd population of the State.

Background

Tripura is the 3rd smallest State of India located in the North Eastern Region, Tripura has diverse range of topography, people, flora and fauna. Tripura is a landlocked hilly state in northeastern India with altitudes varying from 15 to 940 m above sea level, though the majority of the population lives in the plains. Tripura has a tropical climate and receives rainfall during the monsoons. It is surrounded on the north, west, and south by Bangladesh and is accessible to the rest of India through the Karimganj district of Assam and Aizwal district of Mizoram in the east. The length of its international border with Bangladesh is 856 km (84 per cent of its total border) while it shares a 53 km border with Assam and a 109 km border with Mizoram. The state extends between 22°56'N and 24°32'N

and 90°09'E and 92°10'E. Its maximum stretch measures about 184 km (114 mi) from north to south and 113 km (70 mi) from east to west with an area of 10,491.69 Sq.km.

School Mentoring Programme

A number of activities, measures and programmes have been undertaken by the Education Department in the State with a view to augmenting a strong favourable environment to achieve a desirable position in improving quality of education. Among various programmes and activities undertaken, some key activities are detailed below:

1. Project – 14 Schools :

Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan, Rajya Mission, Tripura has taken a new initiative named Project-14 programme on pilot project basis for selected 14 Govt. English Medium Schools taken from all districts. The programme was launched in 2014. Its aim is to develop Govt. English Medium Schools in its true sense and spirit. Right now, most of them are practically Bengali Medium Schools though they have the label of English Medium School. The Education Department wants to free the Government English Medium School from this stigma.

For each school there is one Mentor. The mentors guide 14 selected schools to develop into centres of educational excellence, which will be followed by other Government English Medium schools. Under this unique initiative, mentoring of 14 identified English Medium Schools has been entrusted with the Principals of four DIETs, DEOs of Eight Districts and Secretary, Ramkrishna Mission, Viveknagar, Agartala. This will be replicated in other schools over a period of time. The said Mentors, in addition to their normal duties, will take all necessary steps in co-ordination with respective Headmasters, Assistant Headmasters and the Education Department /Nodal Officer.

The aims and objectives:-

- To develop the basic knowledge of English and verbal communicative skills among the students of the State Government run English Medium schools in a systematic and planned manner.
- To improve the quality of teaching learning process of the adopted schools and ultimately to make these schools as a centre of excellence.
- Medium of teaching learning absolutely in English except regional language.
- Ensure hundred percent attendances of students and teachers.
- Better learning by the students.
- To use innovative teaching methods with the help of better teaching learning materials and computer aided texts, audios and videos.
- Additional classroom teaching /remedial class room for weaker students.
- Regular training of teachers for up-gradation of teaching skill.
- Organizing various academic competitions at different levels like English spelling, knowledge in grammar, essay writing, debate competition etc.
- Enhance the relation between school and parents & teachers.
- Adoption of better practices followed by reputed schools anywhere and regular monitoring of planned activities with evaluation or assessment techniques.

Thrust Areas:

Under Project-14, some thrust areas have been identified for more focused attention to achieve the desired academic improvement of the 14 identified schools;

- Teaching ONLY in English by Teachers

- Better learning by students in English.
- 100% attendance of students and teachers.
- Additional classroom teachings
- 100% pass and better ranks
- Innovative teachings including better teaching and learning materials, computer aided teaching.
- Regular training of teachers for upgradation of skills
- Adoption system / mentoring

Strategies:

Adoptions of suitable strategies hold the key to success of any project. Accordingly, some strategies have been developed under Project-14 for all mentors and school authorities to follow as indicated below;

- Categorizing the students of each class into four groups internally in order to cater to the learning needs of them depending on their academic attainment levels.
- Teachers shall make a plan to pay more attention / focus on weak students for improving their English and academic standards. One good student and one weak student sit together and teachers will facilitate their learning.
- Each school/ mentor may plan various training /activities as required to achieve objective.
- Each teacher shall adopt one class or each teacher may adopt a group of students for special support/mentoring, in addition to their normal duties, so that student's academic purpose will improve, including taking extra classes.

Role of Mentors:

- Mentors play a vital role in motivating and guiding the teachers of their respective schools and fostering a healthy and child friendly learning ambience in which all teachers teach and all students learn with ease. Much of the success of Project – 14 will depend on the effective delivery of

quality supports and guidance of the mentors and their efficient management, planning and monitoring.

- The mentors reflect on their responsibilities assigned to them and devise proper mechanism to constantly keep in touch with their adapted schools, to plan activities for improvement of quality of teaching and learning. Involving parents and other stake holders in planning and management, holding meeting with them and consulting them are of crucial importance in pushing forward the project – 14.

Incentives

The best performing school, Headmaster and teacher, will be rewarded incentivized suitably.

Training

Specific training is identified to improve the professionalism of teachers of the schools including taking support of reputed training institutions.

Activities undertaken:

- Selected 14 Mentor Institutions/ Officers from all districts. All Mentors are taking necessary measures to improve the quality of teaching learning of the respective schools.
- Swami Hitakamananda, Secretary, RamKrishna Mission, Vivek Nagar has taken the responsibility to train all the teachers and Head teachers of these 14 identified school. He is also analysing monthly reports send by Headmasters of Project-14 Schools and suggests measures for improving through Net. Separate database is maintained by him.
- Director, SCERT is also actively participating in this training focusing on curriculum training and effective teaching.
- Ramkrishna Mission, organised training for 61 HMs and teachers of 14 identified English Medium Schools.
- School based workshop is organised in all selected 14 schools. District level workshops have been organised.
- Multimedia CDs on different subjects procured from CIETS, NCERT, New Delhi were handed over to the concerned DEOs of eight Districts for distribution among the 14 identified schools under Project-14.

- School profiles in prescribed were collected from 14 identified schools for maintaining data base.
- Action plan prepared by each schools under Project-14 has been collected so that implementation of the action plan under Project-14 may be monitored
- Various academic competitions have been organised among the students of these schools at different levels.
- Best students are being awarded.
- Each Headmaster and teachers of respective schools categorize the students internally/ informally into poor, average, good and best for giving proper attention to each student.
- Teachers pay special attention to the weaker students to improve their efficiency in English and academics in general.
- Good students are paired with 2 to 3 weak students for peer assistance.
- Each teacher adopts one class or a group of students as required, to provide extra assistance in addition to his /her normal duties.
- The best performing Headmaster and the teachers are being rewarded suitably.
- To ensure academic improvement of the weaker students, parents and guardians are involved for adopting effective remedial teaching and follow up actions at home.
- DEOs facilitate specific responsibility to Block Resource Persons/Cluster Resource Persons to constantly guide the schools.
- Providing Electricity, Computer with internet facilities to all schools under Project-14.

District wise name of Schools and Mentor under Project-14

Sl. No.	District	Name of school	Name of Mentor
1.	West	Dr. B. R. Ambedkar Eng Med HS School	Swami Hita Kamananda
2.		Henry Derozio Academy (HS) School	Principal DIET, Agartala

3.		Bhagat Singh Eng. Med. JB School	DEO, West, Tripura
4.	North	Kanchanpur Govt. Eng. Med School	DEO, North
5.	Sepahijala	Sonamura Eng.Med. HS School	DEO, Sepahijala
6.		Baganbari Eng. Med JB School	
7.	Gomati	Udaipur Eng.Med HS School	DIET, Kakrabon
8.		Amarpur Govt. Eng Med School	DEO, Gomati
9.	South	Belonia Govt. Eng. Med HS School	DEO, South, Tripura
10.	Unakoti	Netaji Bidyapith HS School	DEO, Unakoti
11.		Kumarghat Eng. Med JB School	DIET, Kailashahar
12.	Dhalai	Kamalpur Govt. Eng. Med HS School	DEO, Dhalai
13.		Chailengta Eng. Med High School	DIET, Kamalpur
14.	Khowai	Khowai Govt. Eng Med High School	DEO, Khowai

No extra fund is provided for implementation of the programme. No fund from MHRD is sought in this regard. The cost of computer with recurring monthly charges of internet facility is being borne from the concerned **District Management Cost of SSA.**

For proper implementation of the programme guidelines and official orders have already been issued. The programme is coordinated and implemented from the SSA Rajya Mission, Tripura.

2. Other Practices :

• Development of Teacher Trainings Module :

In order to make the Teacher Trainings at elementary level more fruitful, the State Office of SSA Rajya Mission, Tripura has developed 2 (two) Teacher Training Modules (one for primary level i.e class I-V and another for Upper-primary level i.e VI-VII) in collaboration with Vikramshila Education Resource Society, Kolkata. These two training modules are used in the orientation Teachers' training programme at Block/Urban Resource level and specially for Primary and Upper-primary teachers .The primary module has been prepared for Bengali, English, Mathematic & Social Science and the upper primary module has been prepared for Bengali, English, Math , Social Science & Science.

• Convergence with other Departments / Organizations :

- SSA Rajya Mission, Tripura, in collaboration with TATA TRUSTS, a renowned Nationally-acclaimed NGO, has launched an educational project in Tulashikhar block of Khowai District during 2015 to improve the learning levels of students in classes I to X to achieve appropriate in competency in English, Mathematics, Science and also to increase the number of students passing Madhyamik (10th class) examination.
- The Government of India launched a scheme called Kasturba Gandhi Balika Vidyalaya (KGBV) in August 2004 to provide educational facilities for the dropout and never enrolled girl children between the age group 10-14 years belonging to SC/ST/OBC and Minority communities and families below the poverty line in educationally backward blocks. But in Tripura even after completion of their Elementary Education, they are enrolled in class IX in a nearby school having hostel facility for securing their future destiny and also for preventing them from being further dropped out of schooling system.

- Similarly, in the residential hostels set up by SSA, the students of classes I to VIII are retained in the same hostel after completion of their elementary education to ensure that they continue their studies. Convergence with ST/SC/Minority Welfare Department is done and the logistic support in this regard is provided by the State SC Welfare Department, ST Welfare Department and Minority Welfare Department.
- **Revamping of Inspection Mechanism:**

In order to monitor and ensure quality of education, the State has taken initiative for regular inspection of schools to evaluate and monitor various aspects, like: teaching-learning process, students' attendance, teachers' attendance, arrangement of mid-day-meal. Though existing for a long time, the school inspection mechanism has recently been revamped and accelerated by fixing monthly responsibility of school inspection.
- **Formation of Core Committee in each school:**

Following an instruction issued by the Government in School Education Department, a 'Core Committee' has been formed in each school of the State comprising the HM / AHM, Secretary of Teachers' Council and a Senior Teacher of the School. The Committee looks after the internal administration of the school and meets once a week to take stock of overall performance of the school and sorts out various issues.
- **Use of Teaching Learning Materials (TLM):**

In order to make teaching-learning process more attractive as well as to increase interest in subject with a aim to provide accurate subject knowledge and to increase attendance of the students, Department of School Education always pay special attention to develop and use Teaching Learning Materials (TLM) in the schools by locally available very low cost materials.

- **Literacy, Cultural Activities and Awareness Generation:**

Department of School Education has made it compulsory for each school to conduct weekly Activities like “Sahitya Sabha”, discussion on issues like sanitation, environment, plantation, blood donation, lives and works of great men etc.

- **Introduction of Yoga Class:**

Keeping the benefits of Yoga in mind Department of School Education has introduced Yoga compulsory for students of Classes I to VIII in each school of the State. Necessary training is being imparted by Youth Affairs & Sports Department.

- **Presenting of best School and best Teacher Award:**

It's no secret that giving proper recognition to a school or teacher is an essential ingredient for sparking motivation, boosting morale and fostering loyalty creates a clear and powerful message that their efforts matter. Every year the State Education Department is giving Best School Award to 11 schools of the State by judging various school performance parameters. Similarly, on the occasion of Teachers Day, every year Best Teachers Award are being facilitated to 22 teachers of the State to honour their dedication and also to encourage others.

- **Issue of instructions and other documents by School Education Department:**

The State School Education Department issues various documents, instructions, Letters and appeals etc. at regular intervals to the HMs, Teachers, Education Administrators etc., with the ultimate goal of improvement of quality of education. Some of these are mentioned hereunder:

- A Memo containing 17-point actions to be taken by the HMs for improvement of day-to-day school functioning. This document has later been published and circulated in the form of a booklet. This booklet has also been translated into Bengali to break the language barrier and ensure its greater reach.
- The Hon'ble State Education Minister regularly appeals to all teachers of schools, in the form of letters, to motivate them to work harder and get actively involved in teaching-learning process to improve quality of education.
- The Principal Secretary of the State Education Department has written a DO Letter, addressed to the District and Block-level Education Officers for improving administrative and academic functions of schools.
- The Principal Secretary has also written a DO Letter, addressed to each HM of the State, asking them to take steps toward improvement of school-functioning and to take special care of improvement of school education.
- A handbook containing various important documents, instructions, guidelines, depicting various roles and responsibilities of education administrators has also been published and distributed among them. This book serves as a ready reference for monitoring and supervision of school functioning, that ultimately enhances the quality of education.
- In order to achieve the ultimate goal of improvement of quality of education, the State Office of SSA Rajya Mission has developed a handbook defining the roles and responsibilities of the Block/Urban Resource Coordinators (BRCCs/URCCs), Cluster Resource Coordinators (CRCCs), Block Resource Persons (BRPs) and Cluster Resource Persons (CRPs) and distributed among them so that they could properly supervise and monitor the school functioning.

3. Apart from other activities for improving quality of education, special initiatives have been taken for improvement of Result of Madhyamik Examination:

Teaching learning process in schools at elementary stage has reflection on the results of Madhyamik (Secondary) Examination. One analysis was carried out to examine the result of the Madhyamik Examination, which is as follows:

Number of candidates appeared:

Year	No. of candidates appeared in the Board Examination			% of ST Candidates appeared	% of SC Candidates appeared
	Male	Female	Total		
2015	24211	22965	47176	29.71%	17.26%

Results:

Year	% of regular candidates passed	% of Girls' passed	% of ST passed	% of SC passed
2015	66.41%	64.67%	46.75%	72.69%

In the Madhyamik (Secondary) Examination 2015, the overall pass percentage of the state is 66.41%. The pass percentage of SC regular candidates is satisfactory but when it comes to ST regular candidates it is a matter of concern. The poor performance of student especially in the schools located in **Tripura Tribal Areas Autonomous District Council (TTAADC)** area which is 43.75 % is a matter of concern and raised question about quality teaching in the schools. Despite efforts done by the department and SSA the success rate in regard to academic performance was not as per the desired level.

At this very crucial juncture, the main focus of the Education Department is to improve academic learning in the schools from elementary stage resulting in to better pass percentage at Madhyamik stage.

To tackle the problem and in order to improve academic performance the students, special initiatives have been taken and following action plan has been formulated:

- At first phase, 10 blocks were identified, which are having least percentage (13.44 to 41%) of pass candidates in the Madhyamik (Secondary) Examination, 2015, from different districts which needs school and class wise special attention in order to improve academic performance of students in particular and level of education in general.

- Details of 10 blocks are as follows:-

Sl.No	Block	District	Pass Percentage
1	Dumburnagar	+Dhalai	25.63
2	Raishyabari		19.00
3	Dasda	North Tripura	38.12
4	Jampuijala	Sepahijala	18.50
5	Belbari	West Tripura	34.48
6	Mandwi		32.97
7	Lefunga		21.33
8	Hezamara		13.44
9	Padmabill	Khowai	41.11
10	Tulashikhar		34.93

- The Principal Secretary has written D.O letters to the Sabhadhipatis of Zilla Parishads with request to mobilize support of PRI functionaries, District

Magistrates to take more initiatives and asking for their active involvement in the process of monitoring & supervision of school functioning with special emphasis on improvement of quality of education.

- For improvement of the academic performance and overall development of school in these 10 blocks, 10 Officers Senior Officers from School Education Department has been appointed as nodal officer and entrusted with overall responsibility of the High and H.S schools and to analyze and assess the reasons for poor result and to formulate the action plan as per requirement.
- Nodal Officers of these blocks would constantly monitor and supervise the overall functioning of schools with close coordination with the school authorities and School Management Committee.
- Block level meetings have been conducted in each of the 10 Blocks, involving the District Magistrate & Collector, Sub-Divisional Magistrates, Block Development Officer, Deputy Collectors, PRI Members, District Education Officer, Head Masters of all High and H.S Schools and Chairmen of School Management Committee and detailed action plan has been formulated to improve the academic performance of the students..
- **Activities undertaken:**
 - Students of Class X divided into groups and responsibility of each group is entrusted to Senior Teachers for monitoring of learning process.
 - Slow/weak students are identified and additional teaching is imparted to them either before or after school hours.
 - Based on school wise result of Test (pre-board) Examination each school focuses on additional teaching to weak students.
 - Arrangements are made for conducting Special Coaching Classes for the candidates in each school after test examination.
 - Core Committee meeting is held regularly to review improvements in school functioning and teaching learning process.

- After the Test Examination result, meeting is held with Guardians, SMC Members by the School Authority to ensure regular attendance of the students in special coaching classes, with a particular focus on weak learners.
 - Teachers and Head Teachers closely monitor the attendance of students and hold meetings with the parents/guardians on regular basis. Head Teachers supervise and monitor the functioning of the special coaching classes.
- Accordingly Special coaching classes have started in all the Schools of these 10 blocks from the last week of December. The nodal officers have been instructed to visit each and every School to monitor the special coaching classes.
 - Specific responsibility of each school is given to the officers including Sub-Divisional Magistrates, Block Development Officers, Deputy Collectors and Departmental Officers to look after the overall functioning of the schools and implementation of the action plan for improvement in academics. School wise review is being continuously made by the concerned officers to improve the quality of teaching, to increase motivational level of the teachers and other supports.
 - Tribal Welfare department has been requested to arrange for special coaching at the schools in these blocks, as these schools are located mostly in TTAADC area where maximum numbers of ST students are studying. Tribal Welfare Department has also engaged nodal officers against these 10 blocks to supervise the implementation of action plan.
 - Regular monitoring including periodical meetings are done by the Principal Secretary, Directors of Elementary/Secondary Education, District Magistrates and other Departmental officers.

No extra fund is provided for implementation of the action plan.