An Evaluation of the Quality of Education Provided in Primary Schools under the Public School Support Program

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KEY WORDS	ABSTRACT
	Education is the fundamental right of every child and it is the duty of the government to ensure that institutions are imparting quality education and also an easy access of its citizens to this quality education. This research aimed at evaluating the quality of education in schools running under the "Public School Support Program" (PSSP). These schools were earlier public schools that were given to private partners due to their low academic performance. This study is descriptive in nature and data was collected through questionnaires, checklists, personal observation and document analysis. The respondents of the study included the teaching staff and management, of all PSSP schools in Sialkot. A checklist with three sub-areas and three questionnaires comprising closed ended statements were developed to gather the required information. This study concluded that the enrolment rate had increased but the infrastructure and other financial, human and material resources are not sufficient in these schools which further affect the educational indicators and quality of education. More support should be extended to the system by the concerned authorities.

Introduction:

Education is the fundamental right of every child. Civilized nations are profoundly concerned about the provision of this basic right. The government's effort in providing education alone is not sufficient but enabling their citizens to get easy access to education is its prime duty. For this, it is important to empower people financially, in order to have access to education and to convince and satisfy them that education is the most effective change agent in their individual and social lives. Hence, the decision to acquire education depends on the financial status of the people and its outcomes.
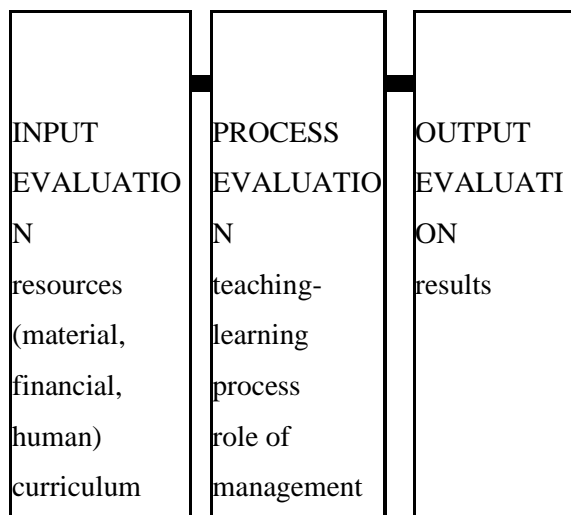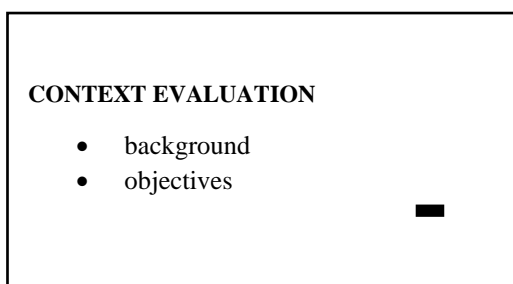
In order to have an easy access to education, the government should provide free education so that even the most deprived segment of the society can benefit. As far as the outcomes of the education are concerned, they depend heavily on the quality of education. It must be noted that the real purpose of education is not only to memorize facts from books and reproduce them in exams and eventually earning the degree.

Regarding the provision for free and quality education for every child especially at primary level, the Government of Pakistan shall be accomplishing the gigantic tasks and targets set by the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and Education for All (EFA). This certainly cannot be done single handedly by the government. After the 18th amendment of the constitution, education is now a provincial matter. Thus, the responsibility lies with the provincial governments to work towards the attainment of these goals of free and quality education. In Punjab, the Punjab Education Foundation (PEF) is a part of these efforts. PEF is an autonomous body established under the Punjab Education Foundation Act 1991. The foundation is non- profitable and is working under the Punjab Education Department. Public School Support Program (PSSP) was one of the four programs run by PEF alongside Foundation Assisted Schools (FAS), Education Voucher Scheme (EVS) and New School Program (NSP). The program's objectives were to increase the enrolment rate of low performing schools by improving the quality of education and to reduce school dropouts by enforcing school children back to schools. PSSP schools are now working under an autonomous body known as "Punjab Education Initiatives Management Authority" (PEIMA) with its initial set objectives.

It is never easy to change the status of a school, from a public school to a public private partnership school. It affects both positively and negatively the whole environment of the schools and all the stakeholders namely, head teachers, teachers, students and parents. It is vital to note what can be achieved and what is being achieved through this decision. Schools provide free education by waving the fees and providing free books. A probing question: Is the quality of education in these schools up to the mark or the conditions are the same as before?

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CONTEXT EVALUATION

- background
- objectives

INPUT EVALUATION	PROCESS EVALUATION	OUTPUT EVALUATION
resources (material, financial, human) curriculum	teaching-learning process role of management	results

While discussing the quality of education, it should borne in mind that the quality of education has never been easy to evaluate. The concept is multifaceted. To evaluate the quality of education in PSSP schools, assistance was sought from the Context-Input-Process-Product (CIPP) model by Daniel Stufflebeam. This model is believed to be quite general and flexible for evaluation. PSSP is a program, which aims to provide free education to students with a belief of improving the quality of education in these schools. Being a signatory of Sustained Development Goals (SDG), Pakistan needs to work on attaining the 4th goal in SDG, that is, quality education.

Data collection instruments of this study were developed according to the four components of CIPP model. Chosen factors under all four components are represented by the following flow chart

Fig 1: Quality Evaluation under CIPP model (source: www. files.eric.ed.gov)

Objectives of the study:

  The following objectives were discussed and answered in this study:

1. To explore the content of PSSP schools

2. To find out the quality of input in PSSP schools.

3. To examine the quality of process in PSSP schools

4. To find out the quality of output in PSSP schools

Research Questions:

The research questions that guided the study were:

1. To what extent were the financial resources available?

2. To what extent were the material resources available?

3. What was the condition of the existing material resources?

4. What was the quality of teaching in the schools?

5. Did the quality of the curriculum offered met the requirement set by PEF?

6. Did the school management play an active role in ensuring the quality of education?

7. Did the students perform well in the Quality Assurance Test conducted by PEF?

8. Did the students perform well in primary and middle standard exams conducted by Punjab Education Commission?

Research Methodology

Researchers adopted Mixed Method approach and Simultaneous triangulation design. Data were collected through document analysis, questionnaires and checklists.

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Population and Sample of the Study

The population of the study was fifty (50) PSSP schools from phase I (20) and phase II (30), head teachers (50) and teachers (339) from the district of Sialkot, in Pakistan.

The sample of the study was 181 teachers selected randomly from 50 schools.

Instrumentation for Data Collection

A checklist with four sub-areas, namely availability of material resources, condition of material resources, availability of human resources and quality of teaching were prepared. Three questionnaires on financial resources, quality of curriculum and management in ensuring quality of education were developed with closed-ended statements. Questionnaires for teachers were developed on five Likert scale giving options from strongly agree to strongly disagree.

Data Collection and Analysis

The data was collected by administrating the checklists and questionnaires to licensees, head teachers and teachers. Document analysis was done through materials available on Punjab Education Foundation (2018); Punjab Education Initiative (2018) & Management Authority Punjab Examination Commission (2018)

Quality in Education

The term quality has been defined differently by different people at different times. The difference in opinions makes it difficult to gauge quality: its existence and the extent to which it exists. Motala, (2000) identifies that quality is a perceptual, conditional and has a somewhat subjective attribute and maybe understood differently by different people. Since Motala (2000), sees it as a subjective attribute, it is obvious that it will be interpreted differently by different people. The term 'perceptual' implies that the conceptualization might be different from different people's perspective since not everyone sees things in a similar manner.

There is a common disagreement among the experts, as to what is referred to as the quality of education. According to Cheong, (1997), the quality of education is about the quality of input whereas to some other experts they lay emphasis on the quality of processes and outcomes. Therefore, it is stressed that quality inputs like teachers' expertise, physical and financial facilities and curriculum can lead to quality output required standards of graduates but that depends heavily on the quality process.

UNICEF (2000) had identified healthy and well-nourished learners, protective and gender sensitive, relevant content and curriculum, outcomes encompassing knowledge, skills and attitudes are crucial for quality education.

The report by UNICEF highlights the criteria which is the basis for measuring the presence of quality and/ or its extent. The quality of learners is assessed based on the early year experiences of the learner. His/her health, family background, regular attendance and family's support for learning, quality learning environment are decided based on physical facilities, safe environment, teachers' behavior and inclusive environment. The quality of content is student-centered, non-discriminatory, knowledge of life skills and provides peace education. The quality processes include learning and grooming of teachers, their motivation level, their relationship with

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management, the level of involvement of teachers and management in relevant affairs.

Eze (2009), in his article, Features of Quality Education, identified the five main elements that ensured quality education. They are:

Healthy active learners with support from community.

Safe and healthy environments with adequate facilities.

Relevant learning content.

Trained educators and child-centered methodology as instruction processes.

Outcomes related to knowledge, skills and attitude that are linked to national and social goals.

Public School Support Program

The Public School Support Programme (PSSP) started in 2016 under PEF. The main objectives in this program were to increase enrollment ratio, to enhance the quality of education, to promote a conducive environment through educational facilities and address out of school children in their area.

Schools were handed over to individuals and organizations to meet the objectives. There were four different categories for PSSP licensees and the schools with low performance (in terms of results and enrolment) were given to these licensees. The major categories of these licensees were stated as below: Educational Chains includes:

NGOs (Social Sector/Education Sector)

PEF Partner Schools

Private Schools

Retired Government Employees

Private Individuals

Context-Input-Process-Product Model

Stufflebeam & Shinkfield, (2007) believed that an evaluation's more important purpose is not to prove but to improve. CIPP model by Dr. Daniel L. Stufflebeam holds an important place in the field of evaluation. It helps the evaluators in posing relevant questions and to conduct assessment either at the beginning of the project or while it is still in progress or at the end of the project. According to Stufflebeam (1985) these components are or can be viewed as separate forms of evaluation, but they can also be viewed as steps or stages in a comprehensive evaluation. The four parts of an evaluation are known as context, input, process and product. These following questions help to gather relevant and pertinent information.

What needs to be carried out?

How should it be?

Is it being?

Did it succeed?

The evaluation of context assesses the needs and problems within a distinct environment. Input refers to as those means that are used to achieve the objectives in education. Physical facilities, human resources are a part of it (Scheerens, 1991).

Product indicates the success of the process and shows to what extent it has succeeded. Diagrammatical representation of CIPP model is as below:

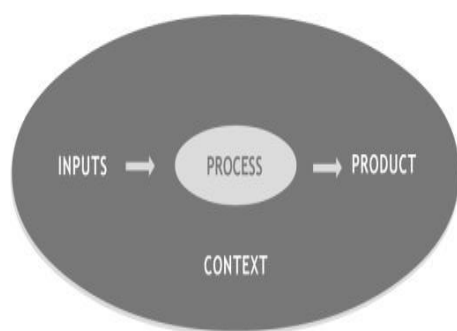*Corresponding Author's Email Address: tahira.naushahi@aiou.edu.pk

Fig 2: CIPP Model (Source: www.cglrc.cgiar.org)

CIPP Model for Evaluation of Quality of Education

According to Patil and Kalekar, (2012), CIPP model can be applied to assess various aspects of a school's evaluation by asking series of questions on the four elements of the model namely, context, input, process and product. To examine and describe the background of the school is the context, which also includes their objectives, mission and goals. Input includes all the physical, financial, academic and human resources and also the strategies to access the resources to achieve the objectives of the school.

Patil and Kalekar, (2015) further explained that 'process' includes utilization and implementation of the resources for product. 'Product' includes the outcome of the school, that is, the graduating students of the school. The students, per say are not the product but the knowledge, skills, values and attitude that are gained by the student is the product.

3. Context Evaluation of PSSP schools Program
The first component of CIPP model is Context. The context evaluates the needs and problems within a distinct environment keeping in view the background and objectives. It is, therefore, necessary to discuss those objectives which are followed by the PSSP schools and the background in which these schools were given the partnership. It is worth mentioning that PSSP is not confined to primary schools. However, in the district of Sialkot, the schools that were given the private partnership so far were all primary schools.

In this research, the context was evaluated through document analysis. All PSSP schools have the same objectives that are proposed by PEIMA. The main objectives are to increase the enrollment in low performing schools and to improve the quality of education in these schools. Increasing the enrollment is justified as an objective for PSSP schools as the status of school are public-private partnership to get the benefits of both systems.

As far as the improvement in quality of education is concerned, Verspoor (2008) is of the view that investment in education has been at expanding enrolments in education, for any given level of efficiency; increased enrolment requires increased resources, in order to maintain quality. If these resources are not forthcoming, the increase in educational quantity may come at the expense of quality (Duraisamy, James, Lane & Tane, 1997). So, the objectives are relevant to the prevailing situation.

Research Findings and Conclusion
This section includes the analysis and interpretation of the findings derived from the data collected through questionnaires and checklists
Input of PSSP Schools

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Table 01

Availability of financial resources

Item	Yes	No
Fund adequacy	04.4%	95.6%
In-time	02.3%	97.7%
provision	100%	00
By Self	100%	00
expenditures		
Free use of funds		

Out of all 95.6% schools, were of the view that funds are not sufficient to fulfill the needs of the schools. It is worth mentioning that schools run by the private individuals are paid Rs 550 per student and schools must make all expenses including variable and fixed costs from the very amount. Schools run by NGOs are paid Rs 750 per students. Extra 30% amount is paid as management cost. Only 2.3% respondents said that funds are provided in time. The inadequacy and delay in allocating the funds had put licensees in a situation where they had to meet the financial expenditures with their personal funds. All schools head (100%) said that they had to make some form of initial payments from their personal funds to meet the initial expenditure. However, all the heads said that they were free to use the funds provided for the betterment of their schools, with valid documents to show as proof of expenditure.

Table 02

Availability of material resources

Items	Yes (%)	No(%)
Availability of building	97.77	2.23
Building according to needs	13.7	86.3
New construction	27.8	72.2
Sufficient ventilation	54.3	45.7
Proper lighting	62.4	37.6
Sufficient space	23.8	76.2
Sufficient furniture	98.7	1.3
Writing board	100	00
Provision of electricity	100	00
Provision of free books	100	00
Availability of water	100	00
Sports ground	02.7	97.3
Safe learning environment	56.4	43.6
Library	00	100

From the 45 sample schools, 97.77 % of the schools still had old buildings, which were constructed earlier when the schools were managed by the Punjab Government. Since the strength of the classes was not large enough, there was no need for new rooms. But the situation has changed. The schools are now having a considerable number of students so new rooms and more washrooms are needed. Only 13.7% of the schools had a building according to the needs of the school. Only 27.8% of the schools made new construction to accommodate the increasing enrolment. 54.3% of the schools had proper ventilation and 62.4%

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schools had proper lighting. Only 23.8% of the schools had sufficient space for students' needs. Furniture was mostly available in the schools and a significant 98.7% of the schools had the necessary furniture that they needed. Writing-boards, water, electricity and free books were available in all the forty-five (45) schools. Sports grounds were available, but generally small and did not have sufficient space. Only 2.7% of the schools had sports grounds. None of the schools in the study had libraries for students.

Table 03

Condition of material resources

Sub-constructs	Yes %	No%
Safe building	100	Nil
Safe system of electricity	80	20
Suitable furniture	93.3	6.7
Clean surrounding	73.3	26.7
Filtered water	24.2	75.8

School buildings were found in safe and secure state in all the schools visited by the researcher. However, the electricity supply in some schools was not safe as the wires were exposed and it can cause danger to students. However, 80% of the schools had a safe electricity system. The furniture available in 93.3% of the schools was suitable according to the needs of the students. 73.3% of the schools had clean surroundings whereas the rest of the schools were surrounded by sewerage water, open gutters, garbage points. Schools had plastic coolers for water which were filled from taps. The electric coolers with or without filters were found in three schools only.

Table 04

Quality of curriculum

Sub-constructs	SA	A	DK	DA	SDA
Demanding Critical thinking	43	35.5	10.8	1.6	9.1
Problem solving skills	82.8	17.2	-	-	-
Development of Critical thinking	60.2	36.6	1.6	1.6	-
Ability to attempt unseen Qs	45.7	52.2	-	2.2	-
Interesting curriculum	39.2	46.8	12.4	1.6	
Language barrier	20.4	51.6	15.6	07	5.4
Learning through activities	75.8	17.7	6.5	-	-
Inclusion of co-curricular activities	23.1	36	8.1	5.9	26.3

*SA=Strongly Agree A=Agree DK=Don't Know DA=Disagree SDA=Strongly Disagree

Table 04 shows that 43% of the teachers strongly agreed that the curriculum being taught demanded the use of critical thinking strategy. However, 9.1 % of the teachers strongly disagreed with the demand of critical thinking in existing curriculum. All the teachers (100%) in the study, agreed with the curriculum's content for developing the problem solving

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skills among students. 96.8% of the teachers agreed that this curriculum develops critical thinking in students. 97.9 % teachers agreed that the ability to attempt unseen question is developed by the curriculum being taught. In response to whether the curriculum is found interesting by the students or not, 85.8% of the teachers were agreed. Language is a barrier in learning: 76 % of the teachers agreed with it 93.5% of the teachers agreed that the curriculum involved learning through activities. 32.2% of the teachers disagreed that the curriculum has the scope of inclusion of co-curricular activities.

Table 05

Quality of teaching

Sub-constructs	Yes (%)	No (%)
Practicing lesson planning	34	66
Inclusion of activities	00	100
Explanation in easy way	86	14
Use of different methodologies	04	96
Use of Audio-Visual aids	00	100
Student centered learning	04.	96
Facilitating learners	22.	78
Creative work	00	100
Student feedback	13.	87
Frequent tests	90	10
In time marking of tests	96	04
Quality homework	44	56
Careful marking and remarks on H.W	69	31

Checklist was administered personally by the researcher during the class lessons and observation reports were made and the findings are stated above in table 05. Lesson planning was not a common practice amongst the teachers here. Only 34% of the teachers had planned their lessons before teaching. Teachers were unaware of the notion that learning can be made interesting through activities. Not a single teacher was seen including activities in their lesson. Teachers were found reluctant in applying different methodologies of teaching in the class. Only 04% of the teachers were seen experimenting in the class with different methodologies. The teachers did not use special audio video aids in the classroom according to the content and student based learning was rare as only 04% of the teachers were observed giving importance to the notion of student-centered learning. Creative work was not encouraged and all (100%) teachers followed the conventional teacher centered methods. Thirteen percent (13%) teachers were seen seeking feedback from the students. The notebooks of the students revealed that tests were conducted frequently by 90% teachers and 96% teachers marked the tests in time. Forty-four percent (44%) teachers assigned quality homework to students and 69 % teachers marked the homework by carefully highlighting the mistakes.

Table 06

Role of management in improving quality of education

Sub-constructs	SA	A	DK	DA	SDA
Encouragement from principal	88.4	11.6	-	-	-

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Regular monitoring	92.6	5.3	-	2.1	-
Regular training	69.3	23.3	2.1	3.7	1.6
Staffs inclusion in decision making	66.1	26.5	7.4	-	-
Opinion sharing	62.4	35.4	2.1	-	-
Cooperation not competition	47.6	31.2	10.1	1.6	9.5
Partiality from head teacher	17.5	29.6	8.5	13.8	30.7
Welcoming disagreements	40.7	37	9.5	1.6	11.1
Acceptance of staff's suggestions	68.3	31.7	-	-	-
Act upon staff's suggestions	60.8	39.2	-	-	-

Table 06 shows the data on the role of management in improving the quality of education. All teachers agreed that school principals encouraged them. All the teachers (100%) in the study agreed that monitoring was done on regular basis. Ninety two percent (92.4%) of the respondents in the study agreed that the teacher trainings were conducted on a regular basis. All the teachers also agreed that the staff were included in the decision making process and they had the space to share their opinions. Eleven percent (11%) of the teachers disagreed with the idea that cooperation is promoted in place of competition among the staff. Forty five percent (45%) of the teachers disagreed that head teachers showed partiality towards staff. While seventy eight percent (78%) of the teachers agreed that the management welcomed disagreement from teachers. All (100%) of the teachers agreed that the suggestions from staff are accepted by the management and strongly endorsed the view that the management also acts upon the suggestions of staff.

Output of PSSP Schools

The output of the schools was evaluated on the basis of the results produced by them. In this regard, the researcher relied on the results of QAT and PEC exams. Results were analyzed separately and findings were as follows:

Quality Assessment Test

Quality assessment test is conducted by PEF itself. The class taking the test is notified on the day of the test and the school management had no prior information regarding which class will be taking the test. From invigilation to checking, everything is done by the teams from PEF and schools had no role in the entire process. Test includes four subjects, namely Urdu, English, Science and Mathematics. The passing percentage for the school is 40. The results for the session 2017-18 were acquired from PSSP website and were analyzed for the pass percentage.

Table 07

Pass Percentage of schools

Passed	Failed	Pass %
36	09	80

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(www.pef.edu.pk)

As mentioned above, the passing criterion for a school in QAT exams is 40% of its students passing the exams. According to the results acquired, out of 45 schools, 36 schools passed the QAT exams whereas 9 schools did not acquire the pass hence 80% of the schools that participated passed the QAT exams.

Punjab Education Commission (PEC) Results

The results for PEC exams for Primary Standards were obtained from PEC website. The summary of results is shown in table 08.

Table 08

Students result

Total students	Passed	Failed	Pass %
549	522	27	95.08

(Source: www.pec.edu.pk data retrieved on Sep 2018)

The table shows that total of 549 students from the selected 45 schools appeared in PEC exams. 522 students passed these exams and hence the passing percentage of students was 95.08 %.

Table 09

School Results

Below 50%	51-60%	61-70%	71-80%	81-90%	91-100%	Overall %
-	02	-	-	03	40	96.26

(Source: www.pec.edu.pk data retrieved on Sep 2018)

The table shows the percentage of pass in the selected 45 schools. The percentage depended on the number of student passing the exams. No school had a percentage of less than 50% pass. 2 schools had a passing rate between 51-60%. None of the schools fell into the category of 61-80 % pass. 3 schools had results between 81-90% and 40 schools had more than 90% pass in PEC exams.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Data analysis revealed the various aspects based on the key features stated in the CIPP Model, namely context, input, process and output in PSSP schools.

Context

Document analysis helped to understand the context of PSSP schools and their relevance. Low enrolment in some schools led to the initiative of Public School Support Program. It was revealed through different studies that increased enrolment and quality of education were interrelated and the objectives of PSSP were relevant to the prevailing conditions of the education setup in Punjab.

Input

As far as the financial resources were concerned, schools had received the funding from PEF. The funds were not provided on time and is not sufficient to meet the needs of the schools as expressed by the research participants. Schools had to fund the expenditures by themselves.

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Majority of the schools had two rooms (just as they had before when enrollment was low). Physical facilities such as play grounds, canteens, office, laboratories, libraries and staff room were not available in the schools. These schools were providing educational and employment opportunities to the locals.

Process

The teachers teaching in the schools were required to attend mentoring sessions to practice the latest teaching methodology to achieve the quality of education.

Output

As far as the results were concerned, both QAT and PEC results are good. Despite a lack of facilities and trained teachers, students performed well in exams but it can be attributed to some other factors, such as extra coaching given by parents besides, the examination format that focused on measuring the memory of students.

The findings of the study indicated that availability of resources was not up the need of the number of students and existing infrastructure and facilities were not ready to manage the increased enrolment in schools. School management was found facing difficulties to run the matters smoothly because of the delay in provision of funds. Teachers require relevant training and frequent monitoring to improve on their quality of

teaching. As far as the results were concerned, majority of the schools passed both QAT and PEC exams.

Recommendations

In the light of the findings, the following recommendations are made:

The monetary allocation for   per student should be increased   so that the schools   can provide better facilities so that   there will be an increase in the   academic   performance of the students.

The schools need new   buildings. Therefore, the construction of new blocks   should be financially   supported, fully or partially by PEIMA. This is crucial as   the school managements are not   financially stable to manage   both academic and   non- academic facilities.

A better system of monitoring   and evaluating should be introduced to measure the   ability of the learners as per required by the curriculum.

Timely allocation of funds   should be administered so that all activities planned in schools can be carried as planned.

Teachers should be provided with relevant short-term training and its follow up   through mentoring. This is crucial especially when new curriculum is introduced.

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