

Defining Quality of Education

Among the ways of measuring quality in education, the concept of quality is linked to the effectiveness of teaching-learning processes. Quality is a relative concept and not something that is absolute. One useful approach could be to select a range of educational indicators that are explicit and measurable representing various facets of quality.

The National Policy on Education, 1986 (revised in 1920) reiterated the urgency to address the quality concerns in schools on priority basis. Among the studies on quality of education, one conducted in Kerala in late 1990s reveal that management of the school is not an influencing factor for improving quality, while infrastructure, availability of teaching-learning materials are sufficient catalyst.

Quality Issues in Elementary Education

CUTS Centre for Human Development (CUTS CHD), with support from Save the Children, UK, is implementing 'Improving the Quality of Elementary Education Project (IQEEP)' in 27 government schools in 25 villages of Chittorgarh district of Rajasthan. The project aims to improve the quality of education in 27 schools and ensure increased participation of stakeholders including children in education planning, implementation, monitoring and evaluation.



Amit with School Teachers during the Teacher's Training

Parents Meeting

Parents meetings was one of the prime activities of IQEEP. The meetings were held in project villages to discuss problems of child education and bring parents on the same dais to discuss the problem of quality education and find a way to address it. It was found that parents are not concerned about their child's education and their role in school education development plan has been found missing. Parents barely follow up the progress of their child's education and hardly visit schools. However, they assured to take care of their children's education.

School Development & Monitoring Committee (SDMC) meeting

CUTS CHD has taken initiative to strengthen School Development & Monitoring Committee (SDMC) of all 27 project schools. These committees have been formed by the administration to administer the progress of education in schools but are inactive. In order to revive the SDMCs, meetings were held in IQEEP villages to interact with the SDMC members and discuss the problem of quality education. The intension was to make SDMC members accountable towards their responsibilities so that level of education could be enhanced.

Teachers' Training

Under the project, CUTS CHD organised a one-day Orientation-cum-Training Workshop for school headmasters and teachers of the target schools at the Centre's premises on November 21, 2008, with an aim to orient about the quality education and request them to cooperate in successful implementation of the project. Narmada Bhawe, Additional District Education Officer (Primary), attended the programme and urged the participants to extend their cooperation with CUTS.

During the programme, sessions were held on 'Behavioural Change Communication and Attitude'. Amit Chowdhury of CUTS CHD delivered a lecture on human attitude and behavioural change communication. Kiran Acharya, Secretary-Helping Hand Society, Nimbahera took a session on 'Need for Quality Education'. Abha Mehta, Senior Lecturer, District Institute of Education and Training (DIET), Chittorgarh delivered a lecture on teaching techniques. In the end, there was an open session during which participants shared their problems and actively participated in the discussion on quality education. Participants agreed that teachers are also responsible for continuous deterioration of quality education. However, it was found that because of heavy non-school related workload that has been asked by the government departments, teachers have limited time to spend with students.

Animators Training

A two-day Training-cum-Monthly Meeting was held on November 27-28, 2009, in which 23 out of 25 animators participated. The purpose of the programme was to review the progress of the project and provide more inputs on child-related issues. A session on HIV/AIDS was also held.

INSIDE

- 'Powered to Grow'
- Improving Hand Hygiene
- CHD Representations

Role of Micro Credit in Poverty Alleviation

CUTS CHD is implementing two projects in Bhilwara and Chittorgarh districts on micro credit for poverty alleviation to ensure socio-economic development and enhance livelihood security in rural areas. The projects are being funded by the National Bank for Agriculture and Rural Development (NABARD).

Under the project, Self Help Groups (SHGs) meetings were regularly held at Gangrar, Nimbaheera & Chittor blocks of Chittorgarh district and Mandalgarh, Banera & Suwana blocks of Bhilwara district. Local banks were contacted and assistance was sought in opening SHG bank accounts. Problems related to some banks of Bhilwara were sorted after consulting higher authorities.



Project Implementation and Monitoring Committee meeting

Discussion was held in detail on problems related to account opening of loan recovery. During the meeting, DDM, NABARD and LDM, Bhilwara requested CUTS to help banks in recovering the loan amount, while requesting banks to help CUTS in its work.

Chittorgarh NABARD PIMC Meeting

NABARD, Chittorgarh PIMC meeting was held at CUTS CHD on December 22, 2009. Sudhanshu Kumar, DDM-NABARD, Chittorgarh; NK Sanidhya, LDM, Bank of Baroda, Chittorgarh; Mathura Prasad, Managing Director, Cooperative Bank, Chittorgarh; and AK Surana, Manager, State Bank of Bikaner and Jaipur, Chittorgarh attended the meeting.

The purpose of the meeting was to review the progress of NABARD funded SHG project in which CUTS CHD staff updated committee members about the project. The committee suggested to start inter-loaning among group members and assured full cooperation in opening bank accounts. The committee members also suggested drawing a plan for livelihood opportunities for SHG members.

Bhilwara NABARD PIMC Meeting

NABARD, Bhilwara Project Implementation and Monitoring Committee (PIMC) meeting was held at Panchayat Samiti Hall, Mandalgarh, Bhilwara on December 18, 2009 in which HS Shekhawat, District Development Manager (DDM)-NABARD, Bhilwara; JL Suthar, Lead District Manager (LDM), Bank of Baroda, Bhilwara; GS Johari, Chief Manager, Bank of Rajasthan; MK Gupta, Bank of Rajasthan; AK Kathuria, Manager, Baroda Rajasthan Grameen Bank, Barundni; and ML Rathore, Manager, Baroda Rajasthan Grameen Bank attended the meeting.

The purpose of the meeting was to review the progress of NABARD funded SHG project. Amit Chowdhury, CUTS Coordinator updated the committee representatives about the project. Shekhawat explained participants about NABARD SHGs work and appreciated CUTS' initiative.

'Powered to Grow'

CUTS with the support of the Norwegian Agency for Development Cooperation (NORAD) is undertaking an initiative over two years (2008-2010) in Nepal, Bangladesh, and two states of India (West Bengal and Rajasthan) to build capacity of consumer groups/civil society organisations (CSOs) to enable them to deal with the issues involved, take-up action research, share

experiences, and carryout advocacy with policymakers and regulatory agencies to effect pro-consumer changes in the electricity regulatory/policy processes. The project is being implemented in association with local partner organisations across project territories.

Under the project, Grassroots Interface Meetings (GIMs) were organised in each of the project territories. CUTS CHD organised a GIM at the Centre on December 11, 2008. The purpose of the meeting was to appreciate the role played by different stakeholders in electricity reforms and pass on the advocacy skills to them to enhance the efficiency to continue their good work.



A View of the RESA Workshop

Enhancing Environmental Awareness

CUTS CHD, in association with CUTS Centre for Consumer Action, Research & Training (CUTS CART) and with the support of Ministry of Environment & Forests (MoEF), Government of India is implementing a project entitled, 'National Environment Awareness Campaign' (NEAC) to create environmental awareness. The centre organised a workshop on November 15, 2008 at its premises in which representatives from 20 schools selected under NEAC project attended. The purpose of the workshop was to guide participants in completing the project plan and collect judicial stamp papers.

Assessing Learning Skills

Annual Status of Education Report (ASER) 2008 survey training was organised at CUTS CHD on October 17-21, 2008. The purpose of the ASER survey was to assess the learning level of school going students. CUTS CHD is one of partners in carrying out the survey for *Pratham*, Rajasthan in Chittorgarh. The survey was carried out in 30 villages of Chittorgarh district. In all, 30 volunteers participated for the survey work.

Improving Hand Hygiene

To mark the International Hand Wash Day, CUTS CHD organised a function at Government Primary School in Raghunathpura village of Chittor block of Chittorgarh district on October 15, 2008, in which children were told about the importance of washing hands with soap before eating and after using toilet.

As a pilot project under the *Sarwa Sikhsha Abhiyan*, United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) along with Government of India has taken initiative to sensitise community about the importance of hygienic life and washing hands before eating and after using toilet. UNICEF has declared October 15, 2008 as the 'International Hand Wash Day'.

An Aware Consumer is an Asset

To mark the National Consumer Day, a consultation workshop with the support of District Supply Office (DSO), Chittorgarh was organised at CUTS CHD on December 24, 2008. The theme for the consumer day was '*Sajag Upbhokta, Surakshit Upbhokta*'.

Samit Sharma, District Collector, Chittorgarh requested participants to support the consumer movement of CUTS. While speaking on the use of generic medicines, he laid stress on its



Sumit Sharma, District Collector, Chittorgarh during National Consumer Day

consumption. He shared his plan to develop Chittorgarh as model district. DSO gifted a sewing machine to Hussain Bibi, a physically challenged woman to start her own enterprise. Various consumer issues were discussed by other participants.

The District Supply Office awarded Bhagwan Lal Sharma and Vishnu Kumar Kumawat (Social workers), Ravi Jadhav (District Supply Office), Amit Chowdhury (CUTS) and Giriraj Prasad Gupta (Member, District Consumer Forum) for their valuable contribution in helping consumers to get justice.

Drive Against Alcohol Abuse

In an effort to create awareness among community about the ill effects of alcohol and for protecting youth from the consequences of consumption of alcohol, *Dainik Bhaskar* launched a statewide campaign warning the youth against the risks of abuse.



Campaign Against Liquor

The newspaper requested CUTS CHD to join hands in the advocacy campaign for Chittorgarh. Two campaigns against alcoholism were organised in Rithola village on December 20, 2008 and Ghatiawali village with women SHG on December 21, 2008 respectively. More than 100 women joined hands and vowed to work against alcoholism.

Polio Eradication Initiative

A campaign to support polio eradication was organised in Government Primary School, Rithola on December 20, 2008. The purpose of the campaign was to spread message of National Polio Vaccination Day scheduled for December 21, 2008 and request parents to visit polio booths with their kids for polio drops. A polio booth was opened at CUTS CHD premises on December 21, 2008. CUTS CHD staff helped government volunteers during the immunisation programme.

Successful Advocacy

Admission to School

In the parents meeting at Rithola village under Devri Panchayat, Sunita Kumari complained that although representatives from NGOs persuaded her to send her daughter to school, her daughter was denied admission in the school. In response, Neetu Joshi of CUTS met with the school principal in this regard, who, after listening to the complaint, informed that the daughter of Sunita Kumari did not attend school regularly, and if her parents ensure that she would go to school regularly, the school would admit her. CUTS CHD staff made contact with girls' parents and requested them to send her to school regularly. Sunita was taken back after her parents assured to send her to school regularly.

'No' to Child Marriage

What Durga Kumari, president of the *Bal Panchayat* of Ghaghsa village in Chittorgarh district did was an exemplary step. She defied the age-old tradition of child marriage plaguing Rajasthan, in general, and Chittorgarh, in particular. When one day, Durga came to know that her father has invited groom's relative for her marriage, she appeared before them and clearly said that she was not ready for marriage, as she did not attain the marriageable age. Durga Kumari also vowed not to allow any such marriage in her village. Along with guests, her father got angry with her open defiance, but after CUTS staff approached Durga's father, he relented and decided not to marry his daughter. Because of CUTS' effort, the life of the teenager has been saved from being ruined.

- ## VISITORS

- A team of nine people from *Apeksha Homoeo Society* visited CLITS CHD on November 17 & 23, 2008 respectively.