

## **Minor Research Project**

### **PRIVATE UNAIDED SCHOOLS IN KERALA: SOCIO-ECONOMIC DIMENSIONS**

#### **Summary of Findings**

Kerala has witnessed a phenomenal growth in the number of unaided schools. The reduction in the share of public expenditure on school education, inefficient and the deteriorating quality of education in the government schools, growth of disposable household income, changing economic policies and preference of parents towards unaided private schools offering CBSE and ICSE syllabuses etc. have resulted in their growth since the early 1980s. The socio-economic conditions of the private unaided schools run by private individuals or agencies are heterogeneous in nature and entirely different from that of the government run and unaided schools. The present study endeavors to analyse the socio-economic dimensions of unaided private schools in Kerala.

The chief objective of the study was to analyse the socio-economic dimensions of private unaided schools in Kerala. The study used both primary and secondary sources

#### **Major Findings**

- 1) Educational developments in Kerala have originated mainly due to the unprecedented support of the private agencies in the educational sector organised under different caste and community basis.
- 2) In Kerala while the total private schools constitute 72.2 per cent in 2014-15, including aided and unaided-(both recognised and unrecognised) it is only 24.6 per cent at all India level. With

regard to the number of unaided schools (both recognised & unrecognised) the figures are 30.5 and 20.2 for Kerala and India respectively.

3) In Kerala, over the four year period from 2010-11 to 2014-15, when the number of government schools registered a negative growth, private schools rose by 454.4 per cent. In terms of enrollment, when government school fell by 20 per cent, private school rose by 292 per cent during the same period.

4) Most of the unaided private schools in Kerala are affiliated to CBSE and ICSE boards. During 2014-15, Ernakulam district has the largest number of CBSE schools in Kerala followed by Thiruvananthapuram and Malappuram districts.

5) With regard to unaided higher secondary schools in Kerala, when government and aided private higher secondary schools registered a growth in their number, the number of unaided higher secondary schools observed a decline of 16 per cent during the period between 2011 and 2015.

6) Unaided schools in Kerala is serving as a temporary shelter to the educated unemployed youths. Out of the total number of teachers working in unaided private schools, more than 82 per cent are females.

7) As against the directions of the RTE Act 2009, seats are not reserved for 'disadvantaged groups' and 'weaker sections'. The proportion of SC and ST students in the private unaided schools of Kerala constitutes 4.1 and 0.46 per cent respectively as against 13.85 per cent and 3.85 per cent in government schools.

8) The dropout rate is below 1 per cent among the ST students of unaided schools in Kerala. But this rate is relatively high in government and aided schools.

9) Private unaided schools in Kerala are established and functioning with better infrastructure facilities compared to government and aided schools. All the sample schools selected for the study are functioning within compound walls ensuring security and protection to students. 85 per cent private unaided schools have three or more than three acres of land. 90 per cent of the buildings have concrete roofs. 85 per cent of the schools have sufficient class rooms with adequate number of tables and chairs for teachers and sufficient number of desks and benches/chairs for students in class rooms. Class rooms are well furnished and fitted with lights and fans. 60 per cent of the schools have one or two smart class and 88 percent have better laboratory facilities. 90 per cent have libraries with librarians keeping sufficient number of books. All the schools have water purifiers that ensure pure and safe drinking water.

10) More than 50 per cent of the capital expenditure is spent on the acquisition of land. The second major item in the capital expenditure is the cost incurred for the construction of buildings (35.5 per cent). It is followed by expenditure for the purchase of furniture (4 per cent), Library (2.4 per cent) and Computers (1.5 percent).

11) Majority of students enrolled are from the middle income group. 45 per cent of the students belonged to the average monthly income category between Rs 30,000/- and Rs 40000/-

12) Academic costs constitute a major share in the private cost. It is more than 60 per cent in unaided schools. It is estimated that school tuition fees constitute 50 per cent of academic costs. Travel expense is the only single major item in the incidental expenditure at the primary and secondary level.

13) Majority of the unaided school teachers belonged to younger age group. Their chance of continuity in unaided schools would be decreased with their increasing age.

14) More than 70 per cent of the teachers have higher academic qualifications with Graduation/Post-Graduation with BEd. 10 per cent of the teachers possess more qualifications including State Eligibility Test (SET). All the unaided school teachers possess eligible qualification for recruitment in government schools.

15) More than 65 percent teachers possess 5 years teaching experience. Teaching experience was not given any preference for recruitment in these schools. Also, managers prefer fresh hands and youngsters as teachers to reduce the burden of salary cost and other benefits

16) Weekly working hours of the teachers range between 24 to 30. They are forced to take maximum duration of work because substitution works are also assigned to them when some other teachers are on casual leave.

17) Teachers are not even paid the basic pay that the primary government school teachers get. As per the information gathered, more than half of the teachers are receiving less than Rs 10000/-. Only more than 5 per cent of teachers are getting more than Rs 15,000/- as salary. These teachers are also engaged in higher secondary classes also.

18) With regard to the vocation salary, only 71 per cent of unaided school teachers receive full salary during summer vacation. 22 per cent receive half (or one month salary) and 7 per cent is denied summer vacation salary. Teachers receiving vocation salary are taking vocation classes and also doing other duties such as admission works, supply of uniforms, textbooks and stationery. Those who have only less than three years of service are not getting any vocation

salary. Thus, majority of unaided school teachers are availing vocation salary without enjoying vocation.

19) It is seen that 42 per cent of private unaided school teachers receive annual increment ranging between Rs 250/- to Rs 500/-. More than 50 per cent receive annual increment ranging between Rs 500/- to Rs 750/-. Only 8 per cent of the teachers receive between Rs 750/- to Rs 1000/-. A private unaided school teacher receives a maximum yearly increment of Rs 1000/- only.

20) Teachers of the unaided school have provision to start Employees Provident Fund Scheme (EPF) and ESI insurance scheme. All teachers are not enjoying EPF facility. 30 per cent have no EPF subscription.

21) The leave facility for teachers includes only casual leave and maternity leave. Regarding the casual leave facility, teachers are allowed to take 15 leave casual leaves annually. In certain schools teachers are permitted to surrender casual leave. At the end of the academic year teachers can surrender the remaining casual leaves in their credit. The casual leave surrendering system is implemented to discourage teachers from taking more casual leaves. It is observed that majority of the teachers are availing this facility and it is also a relief to them who are under-paid.

26) Unaided school lady teachers are not allowed to avail 180 days maternity leave. Majority of the teachers avail only short period of maternity leave in the anxiety that they will be fired. It is seen that more than half of the teachers (52%) avail 3 months leave. 25 per cent 4 months, and maximum leaves are sanctioned only to a very few teachers (4%).

27) 90 per cent of the teachers have no job satisfaction. Only 10 percent of teachers are satisfied with their present job. Identification of the determinants of their dissatisfaction reveals low

financial benefit as prime reason for their dissatisfaction. Their salary is lower than that of a last grade government servant. They are also concerned about their heavy work load and job insecurity.

Thus, under the unaided school system, school education in Kerala has witnessed a spectacular growth. While they provide good quality education, they also establish and operate different socio-economic set up. Though we have regulatory measures including state laws and RTE Act to control their operations, they are not at all effective in implementing certain regulations with regard to school fee payment and service conditions of the teachers. Strict provision should be activated to accommodate students from backward and under privileged sections. Law should be enacted to provide better service conditions for teachers. They are to be given training facilities and opportunities for carrier advancement. There should be better relationship with administrative authorities and they should give be given freedom for decision making. This will help them to attain job satisfaction. Effective enactment of the above provisions may help to operate the unaided schools in Kerala as the centres of excellence that provides quality education and a source of livelihood for the increasing number of highly educated youths.

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