

CHAPTER VI

MAJOR FINDINGS AND DISCUSSIONS

6.1 Major Findings

In this chapter the major findings are highlighted based on the Access, Quality intervention, Equity intervention and financial patten under RMSA for Secondary schools. The findings are arranged based on the objectives of the dimension of RMSA. It has discussed the contribution of RMSA, its implication strategies and outcomes.

6.2 Major findings on Access in Secondary Education under RMSA

Access in Secondary Education under RMSA refers to all the construction and repairing work of infrastructure consisting recurring and non-recurring. It was found that the RMSA has significant role in development of infrastructure in the schools of Sikkim

Disable Friendly infrastructure in the school

It was found that majority 73% of schools had disability-friendly infrastructure, including wheelchairs and ramps, vital for students with physical challenges. Notably, 60% of schools featured ramp facilities, aiding mobility-impaired students, and 20% provided wheelchairs, essential for those with illnesses or injuries. 70.97% of the teachers responded that they perceive some level of effort being directed towards eliminating physical barriers for CWSN. It was also found that 54.84% of teachers, agreed that they provide escort facilities for Children with Special Needs to some extent.

Rain harvesting system in the school

It was found that majority 73% of the school do not rain harvesting system and only 27% of the schools have adopted the Rain Harvesting System.

Classroom pupil ratio

The data revealed that 90% of schools maintain a 1:40 classroom pupil ratio, signifying that a single classroom has the capacity for 40 students simultaneously and 33% of schools adhere to a 1:25 classroom pupil ratio. According to the RMSA framework, the recommended classroom pupil ratio is 1:40, with a minimum ratio of 1:25. It was also found that 93% of schools possessed an adequate number of classrooms. 50% of teachers agreed that they are adequately equipped with an appropriate number of additional classrooms as facilitated by the RMSA. 48.39% of teachers expressed a sentiment of inadequacy, stating that they have fewer additional classrooms provided by the RMSA within their school.

Classroom construction and community contribution

20% of the schools has additional classrooms to accommodate students of the ninth and tenth grades. Merely 10% of schools received community contribution. It is found that in few schools some local members donated funds and offered physical support for classroom construction, others mention limited community involvement in infrastructure development.

Availability of Science Laboratory

It was found that 80% of schools are equipped with science labs, among this all the school has integrated science lab for Physics, Chemistry, Mathematics and Biology. Majority of head teachers mentioned that schools have well-equipped science laboratories, using funds from RMSA (Rashtriya Madhyamik Shiksha Abhiyan) and government support for equipment replacement. Others head teachers expressed the need for more equipped libraries and laboratories, mentioning specific subjects like math and geography. It was also found that majority of the school with 87%, 85%, 80% and 79% schools have Physics, Chemistry, Biology and Mathematics lab equipment

respectively. It was also revealed that 72.58% of the teachers, indicated that they find the lab equipment provided by the RMSA to be satisfactory.

Separate Rooms for Head Teacher and staff in the school

The findings revealed that the majority 93% of schools have provisioned separate room for head teachers. Within this cohort of schools, a majority 60% of schools used principal's room for conducting meetings for issues related to school. It was also found that 100% schools have separate room for the staff in which 30% of them have aligned their infrastructure with officially prescribed norms. Only 10% schools have received community contribution in making and maintaining the staffroom.

Girls' activity room in the school

It was found that the majority 95% of the secondary schools are without the important facility for girls. Head teachers acknowledged the absence of separate activity rooms exclusively for girl students. However, they highlighted various ways in which the needs of girl students are addressed. A head Teacher explained the way they have established a changing room for girls, including a sanitary napkin vending machine, to address menstrual needs. While dedicated recreational and activity spaces are lacking, efforts have been made to cater to the specific requirements of girl students.

Toilet facilities in the school

It was found that 100% schools have separate toilet facilities for girls and boys students as well as for male and female staff in the school. Further, the majority of schools with 54% schools do not have sufficient toilet facilities for girl students and 60% have insufficient toilet facilities for boy students. However, there are sufficient toilet facilities for male and female faculties in the school. It was mentioned that they have sufficient toilets, however, lacking water facility connected to them. It was also acknowledged separate toilets for boys, girls, and teaching staff, but highlighted their

insufficiency and the submitted demand for improvement. It was also noted the presence of separate toilets for boys and girls, but mentioned their need for repair.

Drinking water facilities in the school

In contrast, an almost equal proportion, accounting for 46% of the schools, reported a satisfactory level of drinking water infrastructure. However, 46% of head teachers expressed dissatisfaction with the adequacy of the drinking water facilities accessible within their respective schools. It was mentioned that the impact of a power grid project damaging their water facility, however they have done alternative arrangements from the private sources. It was also noted the absence of safe drinking water, relying on running water instead, and suggest that students bring boiled water from home. The importance of immediate water connections, especially for toilets, is highlighted. Some head teachers highlighted their efforts to collaborate with local authorities like panchayats and SMCs to address the water scarcity issue.

Proper drainage system in the school

It was found that majority 62% of the schools, lacked a drainage system that could be classified as suitable, only 38% of the schools have appropriate drainage system.

Repairing of physical infrastructure-Recurring

It was found that 58% schools have done repairing and renovation within their school premises which signified a majority accomplishment in terms of maintenance of infrastructure. Among this 40% school buildings, 20% Toilets, 13% Tanks, 20% Play Ground, 20% Campus and 40% electrical Fittings were done as a repairing work under Recurring. Among this only 30% schools has involvement of community in the repairing work in the school, remaining 70% schools has no any involvement of community in the repairing work. Some head teachers among these 30% mentioned that the community, including panchayats, parents, and SMCs, played an active role by

offering strong support and sponsoring specific initiatives such as installing floor tiles on the school grounds in the previous year.

Conclusion

In conclusion, the RMSA has played a significant role in the development of infrastructure in secondary schools in Sikkim. While there have been notable strides in creating disability-friendly infrastructure and ensuring separate toilet facilities for students and staff, certain areas such as rainwater harvesting systems, adequate classroom pupil ratios, and a proper drainage system still require attention. Despite efforts, the involvement of the community in infrastructure development remains limited. The provision of well-equipped science laboratories and the ongoing repairing and maintenance of school infrastructure signified positive steps towards a more conducive learning environment. Addressing these remaining challenges will be crucial for further improving the overall educational infrastructure in Sikkim's secondary schools under the RMSA.

6.3 Major findings on Quality Intervention in Secondary Education under RMSA

Quality intervention in secondary education through RMSA has significantly positive outcomes. Quality intervention includes the facilities like appointment of quality teachers and other teaching learning materials. It was also mentioned that secondary schools should be within the radius of 5 km from the residency of the students.

Mapping of School

An overwhelming 86% of these dedicated head teachers stated that their schools covers the area of 5 km radius, stressing a definite commitment to accessibility. Among these education stewards, a mere 14% head teachers expressed reservations, indicating that the school are not located in 5 km radius. As a majority 73% of head teachers enthusiastically confirmed that the children were indeed satisfied with the distance

between the school and their habitation. This indicated a strong connection between the children's comfort and the school's accessibility.

Number of Teachers in secondary schools

Notably, a majority 56% of teachers are dedicated to nurturing primary and senior secondary education, underlining the commitment to building a strong foundation for students. Equally noteworthy is the allocation of 44% of teachers to the secondary level, a figure that clearly demonstrates a well-considered and adequate distribution to cater to this crucial stage of learning. Meanwhile, an impressive 55% of schools maintain a teacher count ranging from 11 to 20, ensuring a healthy teacher-student ratio conducive to effective education. Moreover, 38% of schools are efficiently managed with a compact faculty of 1 to 10 teachers, showcasing a dedicated effort towards tailored and focused instruction for secondary students. The findings showed an encouraging data that 38% of the teachers are recruited to teach language, 15% recruited for mathematics, 19% are recruited for teaching science, and 28% are teachers of social science.

Teachers based on appointment

Among the categories, regular teachers constitute the majority at 51%. These teachers are a cornerstone of the educational system, providing stability and continuity to students' learning journeys, 40%, comprised of ad-hoc teachers. The presence of teachers under the RMSA (Rashtriya Madhyamik Shiksha Abhiyan) category stands at 5%.

Trained and untrained teachers in the school

It was found that majority 90% of the teaching staff have successfully undergone training, leaving only a mere 10% yet to be trained. Furthermore, a majority 92% of teachers have wholeheartedly applauded the in-service teacher-training program, expressing their satisfaction. The interview revealed teacher orientation's vital role,

with initiatives like NISHTHA equipping teachers with key skills and student-centred methods. Embracing technology was highlighted, though some teachers may be less familiar. Specialized training, observed learning, and a proactive government approach were praised. NISHTHA's child-centric training was praised, while bridging technological gaps was recognized. Tech-savviness considered vital. Universal training support was strongly endorsed, reflecting a collective drive for quality education and adapting to evolving contexts, including new technologies.

Learning Resource Centre in the School

It was found that majority 60% schools does not have Learning Resource Centre in the School, however, 40% schools has covered with Learning Resource Centre. This signified a positive trend in the integration of such valuable facilities within the secondary educational. It was also revealed that majority 86% of schools have computer rooms, showing the growing significance of this technology in educational settings. However, merely 18% of schools possessed 11 to 20 computers. 64% of schools possess a moderate range of 6 to 10 computers, while a further 18% schools have mere 1 to 5 computers. The availability of adequate number of computer is also important so that computers are used by students and integrated in their learning. Further majority 70.97% of teachers, showcase a positive inclination towards the availability of computer facilities within the school premises as facilitated by RMSA.

ICT facilities in the schools

In the initial period from 2008 to 2013, the scheme witnessed a robust uptake, with the coverage extending to a notable 35.25% of schools, which equates to 103 schools. This phase marked a significant high point in terms of coverage since the scheme's initiation in 2008.

As time progressed, there were fluctuations in the extent of coverage. In the period from 2013 to 2018, the scheme's reach saw a dip, with only 15.86% (46 schools) being covered during this interval. However, the subsequent span from 2018 to 2023 exhibited a slight rebound, encompassing 28.28% (82 schools) of schools under the scheme.

Interestingly, in the most recent year 2021-22, witnessed the lowest coverage percentage, with just 1.39% (4 schools) participating in the ICT @ School scheme. The later years have exhibited less no of schools were covered under ICT as majority of schools were already covered.

Resource Lab in the school

The finding revealed a significant 80% of schools lack the essential resource lab that would facilitate the vital domain of art and craft education. 58.06% of the teachers expressed discontent with the current provisions of art and craft facilities within their schools. In contrast, 41.94% of the teachers reported a level of satisfaction with the existing facilities.

Library facilities in the school

The findings revealed that 58% of secondary schools have collection of books and reading materials, while the remaining 42% schools had scarcity of books. It was also found that 62.20% of the teachers, expressed a view of "satisfactory," indicating their contentment with the library facilities made available through the RMSA program. It was mentioned that the presence of a library room with books but expresses the need for a better-equipped library, as well as the absence of specific subject-related books. It was also mentioned having library rooms but admitted to insufficient resources, with occasional government book supplies and contributions for book purchases. Schools recently upgraded to secondary level highlighted limitations in terms of facilities,

equipment, and resources. Despite the shortcomings, the schools are opening library with whatever available resources.

Art and Craft facilities in the school

It was found that 46% of head teachers acknowledged the incorporation of knitting instruction as part of their pedagogical repertoire. Similarly, the prominence of stitching activities is emphasised by 26% of schools incorporating such pursuits into their educational approach. Furthermore, the table revealed a less prevalent engagement with carving activities, with 7% of schools offering this intricate and skill-enhancing endeavour to their students. It was noted that while most teachers are not professionally trained in art, they still manage to teach students. It was also mentioned that art and craft education isn't formally included but teachers assist students in pursuing it. Further it was pointed out the absence of dedicated art and craft teachers so far.

Participation of schools in science exhibition

It was found that 40% of schools consistently participate in these science exhibition events. Moreover, 53% of schools engage in science exhibitions on occasion, showcasing a widespread interest in promoting innovative learning experiences. This effort of majority of schools signified a positive step towards nurturing a generation of inquisitive minds through the platform of science exhibitions.

Achievement of the students

It was found that 13% of the secondary schools have demonstrated the ability in the Music, an equivalent 13% have gathered successes in the domain of Dance, and also 7% have earned achievement in Visual Arts/Painting.

Award received by the schools

It was found that majority 86% school has not received awards. Only 14% schools has received awards at the district level.

Health and Physical activities in the school

It was found that majority 80% of the secondary schools are equipped with volleyball facilities, emphasised the popularity of this sport. Furthermore, the prominence of football is emphasised, with an impressive 95% of the schools having football facilities. The sport of cricket also maintains a significant presence, as 66% of the schools extend cricket facilities to their students. In contrast, the availability of basketball facilities appears to be comparatively limited, with a mere 7% of schools providing access to this particular sport. 100% of the secondary schools are reported to conduct vaccination drives, reflecting a commendable commitment to public health. Additionally, the research identified that 85% of the schools prioritized the well-being of their students by arranging for regular medical check-ups. It was mentioned that the regular organization of cultural and sports activities on Saturdays, as well as their success in national-level science exhibitions. They also encourage the students in singing, dancing, and other activities, along with award distribution to motivate them. It was further emphasized the importance of student participation and noted the support received from a local district official.

It was explained that while the school frequently organizes yoga activities, there isn't a dedicated yoga teacher. Instead, they have a yoga instructor or a designated person in charge who oversees and conducts yoga-related activities. It was confirmed that the organization of co-curricular activities every Saturday, including yoga, which takes place in the auditorium. Students who are interested are encouraged to participate.

Residential facilities for the teachers in the school

It was found that majority 95% schools do not have residential facilities for the teachers in the school. It was also revealed that 98% of the teachers express a stand of "not at all" in relation to the availability of transport and residential facilities within the school.

This response reflected a resounding sentiment that these essential provisions are absent.

Adolescent education programme in the school

It was found that majority with 93% of the schools have diligently undertaken the initiative of incorporating the Adolescent Education Programme into their educational milieu. Precisely, 50% of these schools have demonstrated a commendable commitment by hosting the programme at least twice annually, whereas the remaining 50% have opted for an annual occurrence. Majority with 90% of the schools have proactively engaged in partnerships with different organizing entities to ensure the success of the Adolescent Education Programme. 100% head teachers responded that they organised awareness programme specially focussing on girl students in the school. Among the collaborative endeavours, it is found that a certain partners consistently emerge as prominent contributors to the programme's implementation. The Red Ribbon Club, PHCs and PHSCs, State Council for Educational Research and Training, and BACs have emerged as main agencies in this educational undertaking, fostering an environment conducive for the holistic development of both male and girl students.

Guidance and counselling programme

Schools engage expert practitioners from diverse organizations as resource persons, notably SAATHII and the Red Ribbon Club, for HIV/AIDS counselling and health awareness. A new initiative, Health and Wellness Ambassadors, selects exceptional teachers for in-depth training by Population Education Cell-SCERT and Rashtriya Kishore Swasthya Karyakram (RKSK) unit. Two teachers from each school collaborate under Ayushman Bharat Scheme to provide comprehensive knowledge and psychological support. Guidance programs involve varied stakeholders including external experts and dedicated teachers, shaping holistic education. This nurtures

informed decision-making and future career development alongside immediate academic needs.

Excursion tour for the students

It was found that the involvement of head teachers in planning and conducting educational excursions, showcasing a range of experiences. One successfully implemented trips within Sikkim, emphasizing experiential learning. Integrating hands-on learning, a school organized trips, including visits to a science centre. Past and present commitment to practical learning was highlighted by another school. Diverse locations, such as G.P. Panth Institute and river dams, were emphasized by one head Teacher. Recognition of excursions enhancing classroom education and acknowledging high-achieving students was noted. Overall, it was showcased many aspects of educational trips, acknowledging the enrichment real-world experiences bring to formal education. A holistic approach to learning was embraced by the head teachers.

Impact of excursion tour in quality education

It was found that nature's influence on children's learning, advocating exposure to nature. It was agreed by another head teacher but noted COVID-19 challenges, halting tours for two years; they intend to resume this year. It was supported that tours is essential for enhancing student learning. The study showed general head Teacher support for tours enhancing education by connecting students with nature and experiential learning. Despite the pandemic's impact, optimism about future resumption was evident. This aligned with the belief that hands-on experiences and varied environments contribute to comprehensive education.

Quality education in the school

It was found that collaborative learning through observation, feedback, and student-centred practices enhanced the quality of education. It was coined that diverse learning

paces with remedial classes, bridging gaps in the learning of the students. Personal engagement with parents and holistic education was showcased by the head teachers. Remedial classes, parental involvement, and comprehensive support were underlined. Teacher motivation, training, and community awareness were also discussed and overall portrayed a holistic approach to enhancing education quality.

Support of parents with regard to the quality of education of their children

It was found from the study that the head teachers recognized the crucial role of parental involvement in enhancing the quality of education. Strategies such as parent-teacher meetings, awareness programs, and involving parents in school activities are used to foster collaboration. The study found that challenges include socio-economic factors affecting parental engagement and misconceptions about parental roles in education. The insights provided by the head teachers highlighted the complexities of promoting effective parent-teacher-student partnerships, particularly in contexts where educational backgrounds and social dynamics vary. This indicated the importance of targeted efforts to bridge gaps and ensure a well-rounded educational experience for students. Especially the counselling for the parents of CWSN is needed and it was revealed that majority 61.29% of teachers acknowledged the provision of counselling services to parents of CWSN children, though to varying extents, reflects a recognition of the significance of parent support in addressing challenges faced by differently abled children.

Quality of Evaluation System in School

The finding revealed that exams should be approached with a more relaxed attitude, suggests an attempt to reshape students' perceptions of assessments. Encouraging students to view exams in a positive light might help reduce the negative psychological impacts associated with high-stakes evaluations. Furthermore, argued that

examinations helps students to work hard and acquire knowledge is a common viewpoint shared by teachers and policymakers. Assessments can serve as motivational drivers for students to engage with their studies seriously, leading to a potential enhancement in the quality of education. The study found that there is a need of introducing more holistic and less stressful assessment methods while still maintaining the element of motivation to learn.

Conclusion

In conclusion, the RMSA's quality intervention in secondary education has yielded positive results, evidenced by improved accessibility through schools within a 5 km radius, adequate teacher-student ratios, and a focus on quality teacher recruitment and training. While significant efforts have been made to incorporate ICT facilities, learning resource centres, and adolescent education programs, there remains room for improvement, particularly in the provision of adequate art and craft facilities and the establishment of residential facilities for teachers. The impact of excursions on students' holistic learning experiences has been widely acknowledged, underscoring the importance of hands-on education. Parental involvement has been recognized as pivotal for enhancing education quality, underscoring the need for targeted support and engagement strategies. Efforts for a more relaxed approach to examinations reflect a shift toward holistic and less stressful assessment methods, aligning with the aim of promoting comprehensive learning experiences. Despite the progress made, continued efforts are required to further enhance the overall quality of education under the RMSA.

6.4 Major findings on Equity Intervention in Secondary Education under RMSA

RMSA focus on facilitating of secondary education to SC, ST, OBC and Educationally Backward minority. Providing of financial assistance and hostel facilities to the girl child and was the main concern under Equity Intervention.

Financial assistance for SC/ST/OBC and Educationally Backward Minority

It was found that the financial assistance to SC/ST/OBC and Educationally Backward Minority student were distributed with an extensive screening test in 2015 assessed eligibility for the Chief Minister's Merit Scholarship. 96 students succeeded, 77 within Sikkim and 19 outside. The National Means-Cum-Merit Scholarship Scheme (NMMSS) provided Rs. 6000/- per year to economically disadvantaged students in classes IX to XII; 56 students were chosen adhering to NMMS guidelines. 54 students annually received the general merit-based and Prerna scholarships. In 2016-17, 50 students in class V were selected for the Chief Minister's Merit Scholarship. A competitive exam in 2017 identified 54 talented students eligible for Merit and Prerna scholarships. Prerna scholarships for classes VI to X were Rs. 1500, Rs. 1200, and Rs. 900 per annum, based on district-level rankings.

Emergency medical room in the school

It was found that a majority of schools, with 53% have taken proactive measures to introduce emergency medical facilities. This provision has undoubtedly proven beneficial, safeguarding the health and well-being of the student population. In contrast, the remaining 47% responded negatively to the presence of such facilities within their respective schools.

Hostel facility for girl students in the school

The finding revealed that majority 95% of schools remain devoid of hostel facility for girl students. It was also found that the Residential Hostel in North District, operating

since 2015, accommodates 55 children, addressing challenges posed by inclement weather and road blockages. To counter supply chain issues, the hostel collaborated with three secondary schools. Recognizing the need for expansion, the state government granted approval in 2020-21 to increase capacity to 100 students. A significant amount of Rs. 30.65 Lakh was allocated to support this expansion, enhancing the hostel's operational capabilities and providing an improved environment for students.

Activities in the enrolment, retention and achievement in the school

From the findings it was revealed that there's a significant focus on gender-sensitive recruitment, with 33% women teachers in secondary schools to support female students. 60% of schools actively conducted enrolment drives involving staff and leadership to motivate students. 20% prioritized community collaboration, effectively mobilizing students through school-community cooperation. 67% involved local leaders for community mobilization. Gender distribution among students is balanced, with 50.3% male and 49.7% female. Among teachers, 61.64% are female and 38.36% are male, indicating schools' role in promoting gender equality and societal progress.

Monitoring attendance of students in the school

The finding showed that 60% schools monitor the attendance in weekly basis, 33% opted for monthly, and 7% monitor the attendance of the students yearly. Frequent monitoring is crucial for educational success, curbing absenteeism by addressing its causes promptly. This practice aids in timely interventions and understanding reasons for absences, creating an environment for continuous student attendance and dropout prevention in the school.

Awards, grades and incentives for the better performing students

It was found that majority of 85% of head teachers, as ascertained from their responses, confirmed the implementation of a novel approach by bestowing awards, assigning grades, and offering incentives to student on the basis of their attendance.

Appreciation of the students for good academic excellence

The finding revealed that overwhelming 70% of head teachers expressed the existence of a structured framework for public appreciation of students for their academic achievement. However, the remaining 30% of head teachers reported a lack of such provisions in their respective schools, the study showed a more diverse way of recognition practices in schools of Sikkim.

Retention drive for the parents to ensure regularity of students

The findings revealed that 42% of the head teachers have embraced the practice of monthly retention drives, effectively engaging parents to prioritize and facilitate their children's regular attendance. 25%, organized retention drives in every six months, reflecting a structured yet less frequent strategy of engagement of parents. However, 25% of head teachers mentioned for a more annual retention drive, a practice where engagement were applied on both parents and the school system, ensuring a comprehensive commitment to regular attendance.

Special coaching classes and remedial classes for educationally backward children in the school

It was found that majority with 91% indicated the existence of programs encompassing special coaching and remedial classes for students in need. Head teachers mentioned an unbiased approach to assistance, providing special coaching and remedial classes for slow learners regardless of class or caste. The remedial classes were given for Class X and XII students, especially before board exams, addressing their unique challenges.

Science subjects received emphasis, with specialized instruction from subject-expert teachers, highlighting special support for struggling students in these areas.

Programme and schemes for out of school children

It was found that majority 80% indicated a lack of specialized programs and schemes for out of school children in their schools, showing more prevalent gap in addressing the educational needs of this vulnerable demographic. In contrast only 20% of head teachers acknowledged the existence of specialized programs and schemes tailored for out-of-school children. One noteworthy strategy involved the organization of awareness programs in collaboration with non-governmental organizations (NGOs). These programs served as pivotal platforms for disseminating information and raising awareness about the educational opportunities available for out-of-school children.

Further, the emphasis on providing alternative pathways for education is evident in the rearrangement of the National Institute of Open Schooling (NIOS) for those who are unable to continue in formal schools.

Reason for dropout

Head teachers identified diverse reasons for dropout influenced by socio-economic, familial, and educational factors. Parental unawareness, financial needs, disinterest, broken families, illiteracy, poverty, migration and disparities in school facilities were found as the reason for dropout from the school. Further, Parental behaviour, societal stigma, academic struggles, and age-related challenges were also factors. Dropouts arise from economic challenges, family disruptions, resource scarcity, disinterest, and societal dynamics. Addressing this requires a holistic approach involving parental education, awareness campaigns, infrastructure improvement, psychological support, and engagement strategies. Collaboration between schools, families, communities, and policymakers is vital for sustained educational participation.

Gender equality and disparity

The interview discussed gender equality in a specific area. One head teacher noted girls' active participation in education, culture, and sports. Another believed the region progressed without significant biases. These perspectives indicated contrasting views on gender equality. The first view suggests positive empowerment of girls with opportunities in diverse fields, possibly due to efforts promoting gender parity. The findings showed majority 90.33% teachers expressed that there have been effort towards eradicating gender disparity in the school. This consolidated endorsement by the majority of teachers indicated a collective recognition of the importance of these efforts in promoting a more equitable educational environment.

Conclusion

In conclusion, the RMSA's equity interventions in secondary education have demonstrated a concerted effort to promote inclusivity and provide necessary support to marginalized students. Initiatives such as financial assistance, emergency medical facilities, and special coaching classes have been instrumental in addressing the needs of SC, ST, OBC, and educationally backward minority students. However, challenges persist, particularly in providing adequate hostel facilities for girls and implementing programs for out-of-school children. Understanding and addressing the diverse reasons for student dropouts, along with a continued focus on gender equality, will be crucial for fostering a more equitable educational environment in Sikkim's secondary schools under the RMSA.

6.5 Financial assistance in Secondary Education under RMSA

RMSA provides funds on 90:10 basis, where Sikkim and other North East State of India has to bear only 10% of funds for the secondary education remaining 90% bear by the

RMSA scheme. In Sikkim, schools get funds on the basis of the level of schools and enrolment of the students.

Financial assistance and utilization of funds in the school under RMSA

The interview discussed fund utilization in secondary schools through initiatives like RMSA and SSA. Head teachers detailed annual funds and allocations, covering maintenance, stationery, infrastructure, exams, sports, and more. Insufficient funds led to seeking community help from the school. The findings highlighted challenges:

1. **Insufficiency:** Funds often fell short of school needs, indicating a potential gap.
2. **Diverse Use:** Funds served varied needs, revealing schools' multifaceted requirements.
3. **Community Role:** Collaboration with communities addressed financial shortfalls.
4. **Accountability:** Lack of documentation raised transparency and accountability concerns.
5. **Supplementary Support:** Schools received extra materials alongside funds.

Problem in implementation of RMSA in the schools

It was found that the majority with 90% head teachers responded that they faced problems in the implementation of RMSA in the school and only 10% head teachers responded that they do not face any problem with regard to the implementation of RMSA in the school.

The significant challenges of school were outlined in the interview, with RMSA execution facing obstacles due to delayed grants and perceived fund insufficiency. The core issue was that the schools having to manage multiple expenses with insufficient RMSA funds, hindering smooth operation. Allocation linked to enrolment caused financial constraints, impacting operational capacity. Apart from financial challenges,

RMSA implementation had minimal issues reported. Critical aspects like building construction and equipment provision were handled directly by the Education department, easing head teachers' responsibilities. They acted as intermediaries, conveying needs and overseeing project progress, showcasing their pivotal role.

Conclusion

In conclusion, the RMSA's funding model has been instrumental in providing financial assistance to secondary schools in Sikkim, with a 90:10 ratio wherein the RMSA scheme bears 90% of the funds. Despite this support, challenges persist in the effective utilization of funds, with schools often facing issues related to fund insufficiency, diverse fund usage, community collaboration, accountability, and supplementary support. The implementation of the RMSA has encountered hurdles, primarily attributed to delayed grants and perceived fund inadequacy, which have impeded smooth operations in schools. Notably, while RMSA implementation has faced challenges, the direct involvement of the Education department in critical aspects has streamlined certain processes, underscoring the importance of their intermediary role.

6.6 Perception of head teachers for the help catered by RMSA in the development of infrastructure in the school

The findings revealed that the majority with 90% of the head teachers responded affirmatively. This overwhelming consensus indicated the widespread acknowledgment of RMSA's consistent role in fostering infrastructural improvements within the secondary schools. The study showed that the program's widespread positive impact, suggesting that it has become an instrumental factor in continually enhancing school infrastructure.

6.7 Teachers' opinion on the implication of RMSA in the Schools

It was evident that every teacher held a strongly positive viewpoint regarding RMSA, noting its careful adherence to the specified benchmarks. This unanimous consensus indicated a prevalent optimistic outlook among teachers regarding RMSA's endeavours in upholding a stringent adherence to the prescribed criteria. In totality, the results underscore a shared endorsement and harmonization between RMSA's initiatives and the predefined standards. This affirmative reception serves as evidence of the program's effective implementation and its perceived influence on the educational sphere as perceived by the teaching community.

6.8 DISCUSSION

Discussion is made on the basis of the findings of the study and the review of related literature.

Access in Secondary Education under RMSA

Discussion on the findings of Access on RMSA in the state of Sikkim.

Regarding additional classroom

It was found that majority 87.10% of the teachers, agreed with the notion that RMSA has played a pivotal role in bolstering the quality of education within the school. Interpreting findings revealed a spectrum of perspectives among teachers regarding the availability of additional classrooms. The prevalence of teachers expressing satisfaction with their provided facilities reflects the successful efforts of the RMSA in certain educational institutions. Simultaneously, the cases of perceived surplus or insufficiency provide critical feedback on resource allocation. The data prompts a call for balanced resource distribution, wherein institutions with surplus classrooms could potentially offer assistance to those facing shortages, ensuring optimal and equitable learning environments across the educational landscape. This analysis encapsulates the

importance of considering diverse viewpoints to refine educational policies and practices for the betterment of students and teachers alike.

Disable friendly infrastructure

The findings indicated a positive trend in disabled-friendly infrastructure in schools. A majority of schools have incorporated vital elements like wheelchairs and ramps. Notably, schools have implemented ramp facilities for disable students and provided wheelchairs for those with illnesses or injuries, showcasing commitment to an inclusive environment. Teacher perceptions highlighted efforts to eliminate physical barriers for Children with Special Needs (CWSN), reflecting awareness of inclusivity and accessibility. The provision of escort facilities further supports inclusivity, with teachers actively assisting special-needs students. A study by Nouskit (2017) focusing on Rashtriya Madhyamik Shiksha Abhiyan (RMSA) in the Kargil District showing parallels in educational enhancements. However, the study emphasised the need for disable-friendly infrastructure and inclusivity to establish a comprehensive and equitable educational environment.

Rain Harvesting System

The study uncovered a notable gap in rainwater harvesting adoption among schools. A majority lacked such systems, while a minority have implemented them. This highlighted the urgency to promote sustainable water management in schools, bridging this adoption disparity and encouraging environmental responsibility.

Classroom Pupil and teacher pupil ratio

Classroom pupil ratio and teacher pupil ratio was found to be as per the recommended ratios (1:40 and 1:25) aligned with RMSA guidelines. Positive infrastructure development is evident, with 93% having sufficient classrooms for effective teaching. Teacher views vary, emphasizing policy-practice alignment needs. Consistency with

Kumar's (2017) findings signals positive education infrastructure trends. Pupil-teacher ratios (PTR) also stand out: 1:25 at secondary, 1:14 at senior secondary, reflecting dedication to quality education.

Additional classroom

The findings indicated a significant allocation of funds for classroom furniture under RMSA. Very less schools have extra classrooms for ninth and tenth grades, with some community contributions. Kumar (2017) and Nouskit (2017) studies echoed this commitment. Kumar emphasized funds for classroom construction, enhancing the learning environment. In Kargil District, Nouskit found teachers mentioned the lack of classrooms, which has hindered student accommodation and activities. This stressed the ongoing need for infrastructure development in the schools.

Science Laboratory

Majority of the schools have science lab with integrated Physics, Chemistry, Mathematics, and Biology facilities. Well-equipped labs, often funded by RMSA and government, are reported by most Head Teachers. Some mention the need for better math and geography labs. Moreover, a majority have dedicated equipment for Physics, Chemistry, Biology, and Mathematics. RMSA-provided lab equipment satisfied majority of teachers, enhancing practical teaching. Kumar's (2017) studied in Kullu District shows grants supporting equipment and library materials, displaying commitment. In Kargil District, Nouskit's (2017) study notes science lab benefited majority of the teachers. Yet, Khajuria et al. (2016) studied in Udhampur District revealed a challenges in the availability of science lab infrastructure in the school of the district.

Separate Rooms for Head Teacher and staff in the school

The findings revealed that the majority of schools provided separate rooms for Head Teachers. Among these, a significant portion of schools used principal's room for meetings, reflecting the use of efficient resources of school. Availability of Head Teachers' rooms indicated administrative recognition. The presence of separate staff rooms is common, but adherence to norms is needed. Community involvement for the maintenance of principal and staff rooms was very low. Collaborative efforts can enhance infrastructure quality. While positive room provisions are seen, aligning with norms and community engagement can enhance functional education environments.

Girls' activity room in the school

The findings highlighted a significant gap, with majority of secondary schools lacking essential facilities for girls. Head Teachers acknowledged the absence of separate activity rooms for female students. Despite this, they've addressed girls' needs creatively, such as establishing changing rooms with sanitary napkin vending machines. While dedicated spaces are missing, efforts are being made to cater to specific requirements of girl students, reflecting a proactive approach in ensuring their well-being.

Toilet facilities in the school

Separate toilets for students and staff in all schools were found, yet there was no sufficiency in majority of the schools. Majority of schools lack adequate facilities for girls and boys. While staff toilets are sufficient, but water availability and the hygiene is an issue due to the shortage of water for students and staffs. Repairs and maintenance are consistently needed, aligning with Kumar's (2017) focus on infrastructure improvements. Nouskit's (2017) studied in Kargil District highlighted gender equity progress, with majority of teachers agreed that they have separate toilet for girls student

in the district. Further, accessibility and sufficiency of toilets are crucial for the school and repairing work and water supply challenges still exist in the schools.

Drinking water facilities in the school

Contrastingly, 46% of schools found their drinking water infrastructure satisfactory. However, 46% of Head Teachers expressed dissatisfaction. Some faced issues due to power grid projects damaging water facilities, leading to alternative arrangements from private sources. Safe drinking water was lacking, with reliance on running water and students bringing boiled water from home. Immediate water connections, particularly for toilets, were stressed. Very few school collaborated with local authorities like SMCs and parents to address the scarcity of water. Kumar (2017) studied RMSA in Kullu District, highlighting significant infrastructure developments. Rs. 4.5 lacs were allocated in 2017-18 for safe drinking water, prioritizing students' well-being. Nouskit (2017) studied RMSA's impact on Kargil District, where majority of teachers agreed that they have safe drinking water facilities in the school. Singh & Rani (2017) reflected on RMSA in Jammu District, citing improvements in infrastructure but faced significant drinking water challenges. Majority of schools faced shortages, demanding focused improvement in Jammu District.

Repairing of physical infrastructure-Recurring

Majority of schools conducted repairing and renovation work, indicating a majority's focus on infrastructure maintenance. Repairing were done for various components such as buildings, toilets, tanks, playgrounds, campus, and electrical fittings. Of these, 30% involved the community, with active support from panchayats, parents, and SMCs in initiatives like floor tile installation. Kumar (2017) studied RMSA in Kullu District, highlighted significant infrastructure developments. RMSA's commitment to

maintenance is evident with Rs. 304.50 lacs released up to 2017-18, ensuring conducive learning environments.

Quality Intervention in Secondary Education under RMSA

Discussion of the findings on quality intervention of RMSA in Sikkim.

Distance of Schools from the resident of student

An overwhelming majority of these dedicated head teachers emphasized their schools' commitment to accessibility by stating that their schools cover an area within a 5 km radius. A significant majority of Head Teachers confirmed that the children were satisfied with the distance between the school and their homes, highlighting a strong link between children's comfort and school accessibility. Khajuria, et al. (2016) stated that majority of the schools covers the area of 5 km.

Number of Teachers in secondary schools

Notably, a majority of teachers are dedicated to nurturing primary and senior secondary education, underlining the commitment to building a strong foundation for students. Meanwhile, a significant number of schools maintain a teacher count ranging from 11 to 20, ensuring a healthy teacher-student ratio conducive to effective education. Moreover, several schools are efficiently managed with a compact faculty of 1 to 10 teachers, showcasing a dedicated effort towards tailored and focused instruction for secondary students. Kumar (2017) uncovered significant developments in education infrastructure and facilities within Kullu District. It identified favourable pupil-teacher ratios at both secondary and senior secondary levels, emphasizing the commitment to providing quality education.

Teachers based on appointment

Among the categories, regular teachers constitute the majority and are a cornerstone of the educational system, providing stability and continuity to students' learning journeys.

A significant portion is comprised of ad-hoc teachers. The presence of teachers under the RMSA category is also revealed.

Trained and untrained teachers in the school

Majority of teaching staff having undergone training and expressing high levels of satisfaction with in-service programs. It was highlighted the crucial role of teacher orientation, particularly through initiatives like NISHTHA, which equip educators with essential skills and student-centred methodologies. While technology integration was recognized, some teachers may require further familiarity. NISHTHA's child-centric training and efforts to bridge technological gaps were praised, emphasizing the importance of tech-savviness. Universal training support was endorsed, reflecting a collective commitment to quality education and adapting to evolving contexts, including technology. Kumar (2017) stated that the Kullu District of Himachal Pradesh organized a comprehensive 10-day training program aimed at enhancing secondary education quality, which was divided into general and subject-specific segments. Singh & Rani (2017) examined Reflections on Rashtriya Madhyamik Shiksha Abhiyan in Jammu District, noting educators' favorable attitude toward in-service training programs and highlighting positive impacts on teaching strategies and skills. Nouskit (2017) investigated the Impact of Rashtriya Madhyamik Shiiksha Abhiyan (RMSA) on Secondary Education in Kargil District of Jammu and Kashmir State, revealing significant in-service training initiatives that aimed to enhance professional skills and knowledge among teachers. This emphasis on training signifies a commitment to continuous improvement and educators' capabilities.

Learning Resource Centre in the School

Learning Resource Centres were absent in a majority of schools, indicating a need for further integration, while 40% of schools had established these centres, showcasing a

positive trend. Computer rooms were present in the majority of schools, though the distribution of computers was not equal in all the schools. A positive inclination among teachers towards computer facilities facilitated by RMSA was evident. The analysis of the Rashtriya Madhyamik Shiksha Abhiyan's coverage over time demonstrated fluctuations. The initial phase (2008-2013) marked a significant coverage of schools, while subsequent periods showed variations in coverage, with a low in (2021-22) attributed to prior extensive coverage.

Concerning resources, a majority of schools lacked essential art and craft facilities, impacting students' creative development. Teachers' perspectives on art and craft facilities were divided. Additionally, the availability of books and reading materials varied, with majority of schools having collections of books and reading materials in the school. Majority of teachers agreed that the sufficiency of books and reading material with library facilities through RMSA. The integration of art-related activities was highlighted, including knitting, stitching, and carving. Although teachers lacked professional training, they assisted students in pursuing art and craft education. The absence of dedicated art and craft teachers was also revealed. Nouskit (2017) indicated that while art and craft rooms were lacking in many schools, majority of schools did not received adequate attention in ICT education, suggesting a need for enhanced integration and focus on digital skills.

Excursion tour and science exhibition

Substantially majority of the school participate in science exhibition indicating widespread interest in promoting innovative learning experiences. This collective effort signifies a positive step toward fostering curiosity and innovation among students through science exhibitions.

Head teachers' involvement in planning and conducting educational excursions was highlighted. Successful implementation of trips within Sikkim, emphasized experiential learning for the students. Various schools integrated hands-on learning, organizing visits to science centres and other locations such as nature spots. The importance of excursions for enhancing student learning and acknowledging high-achieving students was acknowledged, showcasing diverse aspects of educational trips and their enrichment of formal education.

The study also indicated a strong emphasis on nature's influence on children's learning, advocating for exposure to nature even amid challenges like COVID-19. The significance of tours for enhancing education, connecting students with nature, and providing experiential learning opportunities was supported. Despite the pandemic's impact, optimism about future resumption of educational tours was evident. This perspective aligns with the belief that hands-on experiences and diverse environments contribute to a comprehensive education.

Nouskit (2017) highlighted that a significant majority of teachers acknowledged the importance of excursion trips for students, emphasizing the recognized value of experiential learning and practical exposure in the educational process.

Health and Physical activities in the school

The secondary schools showcased a strong sports culture with volleyball and football facilities prevalent in the majority. Cricket also had significant presence, while basketball facilities were limited. All schools conducted vaccination drives, emphasizing public health commitment. Regular medical check-ups were prioritized the schools. Cultural and sports activities on Saturdays were common, leading to success in science exhibitions. Students were encouraged in various activities, and the role of local district officials' support was revealed. Yoga activities were frequently

organized, led by a yoga instructor or designated personnel. Co-curricular activities, including yoga, occurred every Saturday in the auditorium, motivating interested students to participate.

Residential facilities for the teachers in the school

Most schools lack residential facilities for teachers, similarly, majority of the teachers express strong dissatisfaction with the availability of transport and residential facilities within schools. This suggests a prevalent absence of these necessary provisions. Nouskit (2017) observed that majority of teachers in remote areas reported a lack of residential hostels for teachers. This scarcity could affect staffing and teachers' willingness to serve in such regions.

Adolescent education programme in the school

It revealed that the majority of schools has implemented the adolescent education programme in the school of Sikkim. About half of schools host the program twice annually, while the rest hold it once a year. Schools have actively formed partnerships with various organizing bodies for successful program execution. Additionally, all Head Teachers mentioned that they organized awareness programs for girl students. Prominent contributors to the program's implementation include the Red Ribbon Club, PHCs and PHSCs, State Council for Educational Research and Training, and BACs. These agencies played a crucial roles in fostering an environment for holistic development among girl and boy students.

Guidance and counselling programme

Expert practitioners from various organizations like SAATHII and the Red Ribbon Club contribute to HIV/AIDS counselling and health awareness in schools. The Health and Wellness Ambassadors initiative selects outstanding teachers for in-depth training by Population Education Cell-SCERT and Rashtriya Kishore Swasthya Karyakram

(RKSK) unit. Two teachers from each school collaborated under Ayushman Bharat Scheme to provide comprehensive knowledge and psychological support. Guidance programs involved external experts and dedicated teachers, fostering holistic education for informed decision-making and future career development, beyond academic needs.

Quality education in the school

Collaborative learning practices, including observation, feedback, and student-centred approaches, were found to enhance education quality. Diverse learning paces were addressed through remedial classes, and head teachers emphasized personal engagement with parents for holistic education. Strategies such as parent-teacher meetings and involvement in school activities fostered collaboration. Challenges included socio-economic factors affecting parental engagement and misconceptions about parental roles. Insights emphasized the complexities of effective parent-teacher-student partnerships, required targeted efforts for a well-rounded educational experience.

Notably, majority of teachers acknowledged providing counselling services to parents of children with special needs, recognizing the importance of parental support. Kumar's study focused on a 10-day training program, emphasizing quality improvement. Singh & Rani's findings indicated pedagogical advancements due to RMSA's impact, and Gehlot & Balya highlighted challenges in Rajasthan's educational landscape, showcasing RMSA's efforts for better quality education.

The discussion centred on the current education evaluation system's effects and potential improvements. The Head Teacher acknowledged its stress-inducing nature and the fear of poor grades. The Prime Minister's "Pariksha Pe Charcha" initiative was highlighted, promoting a relaxed mind set towards exams. This viewpoint aims to mitigate stress and anxiety, acknowledging mental health concerns. Shifting to a more

relaxed approach to exams might counteract negative psychological impacts. The assertion that exams encourage diligence and knowledge acquisition was noted, aligning with educators and policymakers. The study underscores the necessity for balanced assessments that reduce stress and maintain motivational aspects, thus enhancing education quality.

Equity Intervention in Secondary Education under RMSA

Discussion on the findings of Equity Intervention of RMSA in Sikkim.

Financial assistance for SC/ST/OBC and Educationally Backward Minority

The distribution of financial assistance to SC/ST/OBC and Educationally Backward Minority students through Chief Minister's Merit Scholarship had an extensive screening test for the students. The National Means-Cum-Merit Scholarship Scheme (NMMSS) also provide financial assistance per year to economically disadvantaged students in classes IX to XII. General merit-based and Prerna scholarships are receiving by students annually.

Hostel facility for students in the school

The majority of schools lacking hostel facilities for girl students. In the North District, a Residential Hostel accommodates 55 children since 2015, addressing challenges posed by weather and road blockages. To enhance capacity, the state government approved an expansion to accommodate 100 students in 2020-21, allocating Rs. 30.65 Lakh. This reflects efforts to improve the hostel environment and operational capabilities. In the study of Nouskit (2017), majority of teachers reported the absence of hostel facilities, which could impact students from distant areas requiring accommodations.

Activities in the enrolment, retention and achievement in the school

It was evident that the emphasised on gender-sensitive recruitment strategies, particularly evident through the inclusion of women teachers in secondary schools to provide support for female students was carried out by the government. A considerable portion of schools actively coordinated enrolment campaigns involving staff and leadership to foster student motivation. Additionally, some schools prioritized collaborative efforts with communities, resulting in effective student mobilization through school-community cooperation. Local leaders were also engaged in community mobilization in a significant number of instances. Gender distribution among students displayed equilibrium between male and female. Among teachers, a substantial representation of females contributed to a positive gender balance, reflecting the schools' commitment to advancing gender equality and societal progress. Gehlot & Balya (2015) highlighted gender and caste biases within Rajasthan's education system. Many teachers, mostly male and from higher castes, demonstrated insensitivity. Troubling instances included a scheduled caste student dissuaded by a teacher due to biased perceptions. The study also exposed that only 26% of girls aged 5 to 18 completed class 8, while boys' rates were relatively higher but still challenging. This gendered struggle for completion, particularly in higher classes, underscores systemic disparities. Khajuria, et al. (2016) noted a consistent increase in student enrolment in classes IX and X over the study period, with a notable 12.84% increase from 2010-11 to 2011-12. This positive trend indicated an encouraging rise in secondary education participation.

Insights from Nouskit (2017) revealed that a large portion of teachers expressed concerns about the insufficient emphasis on special enrolment drives for marginalized

communities. This observation stressed potential disparities in ensuring equitable education access.

Monitoring attendance of students in the school

A majority of schools emphasized a weekly attendance check, while others opted for monthly or yearly assessments. This frequent monitoring practice plays a pivotal role in promoting educational success by promptly addressing absenteeism triggers. Timely interventions and an in-depth understanding of absence causes foster a continuous attendance environment, effectively preventing dropouts and ensuring students' consistent presence in school. Majority of Head Teachers have embraced innovative methods such as awards, grades, and incentives to recognize and encourage student attendance, as confirmed by their responses.

Appreciation of the students for good academic excellence

Significant number of head teachers indicated the presence of an organized system for publicly recognizing students' academic accomplishments. However, very less reported the absence of such practices in their schools. This diversity in recognition approaches underscores the varied practices within Sikkim's schools.

Retention drive for the parents to ensure regularity of students

The diverse strategies adopted by head teachers to enhance student attendance. Several schools conducted monthly retention drives, involving parents to prioritize regular attendance. Some organized retention drives every six months, striking a balance between structure and frequency. Similarly, less number of school preferred annual retention drives, involving both parents and the school system for a comprehensive commitment to consistent attendance.

Special coaching classes and remedial classes for educationally backward children in the school

The significant majority head teachers acknowledged the presence of programs offering special coaching and remedial classes for students requiring assistance. Head teachers emphasized impartial support, extending remedial classes to slow learners irrespective of their class or caste. These classes, particularly for Class X and XII students before board exams, targeted their specific difficulties. Especially, science subjects received focused attention, featuring expert instruction to aid struggling students, showcasing specialized backing in these subject areas.

Programme and schemes for out of school children

The majority of head teachers conformed the absence of specialized programs for out-of-school children. In contrast, very few head teachers acknowledged that they conduct specialize programme. Particularly, awareness programs with NGOs were prominent, disseminating information and raising awareness about educational opportunities for these children. Additionally, an emphasis on alternative pathways was evident through the adaptation of the National Institute of Open Schooling (NIOS) for those unable to attend formal schools.

The head teachers identified multiple reasons for dropout influenced by socio-economic, and educational factors. These included parental unawareness, financial constraints, disinterest, family dynamics, illiteracy, poverty, migration, and school disparities. Additionally, factors like parental behaviour, societal stigma, academic struggles, and age-related issues were also highlighted. Dropouts stemmed from economic hardships, family challenges, limited resources, fading interest, and societal factors. Addressing this complex issue requires a holistic approach encompassing parental education, awareness campaigns, infrastructure enhancement, psychological

support, and engagement strategies. Effective collaboration among schools, families, communities, and policymakers is pivotal for sustaining educational participation.

Gender equality and disparity

The diverse perspectives on gender equality was emerged in the study. One head teacher highlighted girls' active involvement in education, culture, and sports, while another saw progress without significant biases, showcasing contrasting views. The majority of teachers acknowledged efforts to eliminate gender disparity in the school, reflecting collective recognition of these effort for a more equitable educational environment. Gehlot & Balya (2015) revealed the disheartening statistic that very less number of girls aged 5 to 18 completed class 8 in Rajasthan, with similarly low rates for boys. This gendered struggle in the education system is evident in the completion challenges. Gender and caste biases were entrenched in Rajasthan's educational fabric. Male teachers from upper castes often displayed insensitivity, as illustrated by disheartening instances. Nouskit (2017), found that majority of teachers perceived a higher presence of female teachers, implying potential efforts to promote gender diversity among educators.

Financial assistance and utilization of funds in the school under RMSA

The fund utilization in secondary schools under RMSA and SSA was discuss and head teachers detailed annual allocations for various needs. Insufficient funds led to community assistance, highlighting challenges:

Insufficiency: Funds often fell short, suggesting a gap.

Diverse Use: Funds served varied needs, reflecting multifaceted requirements.

Community Role: Collaboration with communities addressed financial shortfalls.

Accountability: Lack of documentation raised transparency and accountability concerns.

Supplementary Support: Schools received extra materials alongside funds.

Regarding RMSA, majority of head teachers faced implementation problems due to delayed grants and perceived insufficiency. Multiple expenses with limited funds strained schools, impacting operations. Critical aspects like construction were managed by the Education department, easing head teachers' responsibilities.

Gehlot & Balya (2015) revealed financial constraints in Rajasthan affecting education. Addressing biases, improving training, infrastructure, and mitigating financial barriers are crucial steps. The results call for collaborative efforts among policymakers, educators, and communities to enhance education in the state. Khajuria, et al. (2016) revealed varying fund utilization percentages over years. Kumar (2017) highlighted Rs. 57 lakhs for learning programs and provision of Science and Math Kits, showcasing RMSA's impact. Successful efforts in strengthening schools were evident with Rs. 1082.00 lacs allocation. Singh & Rani (2017) indicated proper RMSA grant utilization, enhancing the educational environment.

Quality assessment in secondary education through RMSA

Collaborative learning practices, encompassing observation, feedback, and student-centered methods, were identified as enhancers of educational quality. Addressing diverse learning speeds, remedial classes were employed, with head teachers underlining the significance of parent engagement for comprehensive education. Parent-teacher meetings and involvement in school activities were strategies that fostered cooperation. However, challenges included socio-economic factors affecting parental involvement and misconceptions about parental roles. The complexity of effective parent-teacher-student partnerships was underscored, requiring specific efforts for a holistic educational experience. Cecilia & Lillian (2022a) investigated preferences for holistic competency assessment, finding a favourable outlook on

qualitative assessment over quantitative scoring. Implementing a 'grade-free' system necessitates better competency assessment literacy for students and teachers alike.

Head teachers were found to recognize the importance of parental involvement in elevating assessment quality. Strategies such as meetings, awareness programs, and parent engagement in school activities were identified as means to foster collaboration. Socio-economic factors and parental roles posed challenges to engagement in assessment. Insights underscored the intricate nature of effective parent-teacher-student partnerships, particularly in diverse backgrounds, demanding targeted efforts for a comprehensive education. Notably, teachers acknowledged that parents of special needs children required counselling, reflecting 61.29% agreement. Parents demonstrated motivation to assess children at home, despite barriers, maintaining active communication with teachers regarding progress and habits. Maria & Vasquez-Colina (2023) explored Mayan parents' assessment knowledge, highlighting its importance in supporting children's education. Findings revealed basic assessment understandings and diverse experiences, shedding light on parental interactions and the delicate balance between child, family, and community needs. Implications encompass enhancing parents' assessment inquiries, knowledge, and informing teacher education for effective parent communication.

Acknowledging the stress associated with the current evaluation system, the Head Teacher noted the Prime Minister's initiatives to cultivate a positive outlook. Examinations were viewed as incentivizing diligent study and contributing to educational quality. Despite inducing stress, the Prime Minister's efforts addressed mental health concerns. Advocating a more relaxed approach to exams aimed to mitigate adverse psychological impacts. Exams were considered motivators for knowledge acquisition, a sentiment supported by educators and policymakers. The

study recommended the introduction of holistic, less stressful assessments while retaining motivational aspects.