

Academic administration in privately managed senior secondary schools in Delhi

Sakshi Sharma

Research Scholar (Ph. D) National University of Educational Planning and Administration New Delhi, India

Abstract

Over the years, education policy reforms have been exerting increased pressure on the senior secondary schools to improve teaching and learning process thereby expanding the duties and responsibilities of its administrators. Educational administrators now hold leadership positions with significant responsibility of coordinating and interacting with faculty, parents, students, community members, business leaders, and state and local policymakers which is stressful and demanding. Academic administration can be defined as the set up and the functions of the educational machinery for quality improvement in the schools. It involves the continuous assessment, guidance and support given to the teachers for their professional development and improvement in the teaching learning process. Keeping it in mind, a comparative study of the structure and the function of the academic administration in four private and four government schools in Delhi were carried out to get an insight into the efforts made by both the systems for the quality improvement for the achievement of higher academic outcome. The data was collected by administering the various tools on the principals, teachers, and parents of the children studying in the chosen schools. The findings of the research indicated that the academic administration in the private schools is better as compared to the government ones under several heads discussed the paper in detail.

Keywords: academic administration; private and government schools; senior secondary schools

1. Introduction

Administration as perceived by many scholars can be defined as the process of working with and through others to accomplish organizational goals efficiently. It is a social process in which the behavior of the social system gets the upper hand in operating an educational organization (Tyagi, 2009) ^[9]. Sapre (2001) defined administration as generally input oriented which is a major indicator of progress. Studies have shown that administration includes the functions like management of the affairs with the use of well thought out principles and practices like budgeting, staffing, evaluation along with the processes such as leadership, organization, communication and coordination etc. Within the educational framework, administration provides instructional leadership and manages the day-to-day activities in various educational institutions such as schools, pre schools, day care centers, colleges and universities. It directs the educational programs of businesses, correctional institutions, museums, job training and community service organizations. Education administrators set educational standards and establish the policies and procedures required to achieve them. They also supervise managers, support staff, teachers, counselors, librarians, coaches, and other employees. Their tasks also include developing academic programs, monitoring students' educational progress, training and motivating teachers and other staffs, managing career counseling and other student services, recordkeeping, prepare budgets, and performing other general duties. They are the ones responsible for handling relations with parents, prospective and current students, employers, and the community.

1.1. Academic Administration

Academic administration can be defined as the set up and the functions of the educational machinery for quality

improvement in the schools. It involves the continuous assessment, guidance and support given to the teachers for their professional development and improvement in the teaching learning process. Academic administration thus differs from the general administration in the sense that its main objective in an institution is to promote learning through the professional development of the teachers unlike the general administration which simply manages the day to day affairs of an institution. The Academic administration of an institution can be analyzed by the analysis of Professional development of the teachers; Academic supervision; Co curricular activities and their management; Involvement of the stakeholders and the Role of the head as an instructional leader

1.2 Schooling in Delhi

Delhi has a large number of schools managed by various different authorities. On the basis of management, the schools are classified as follows: Government; Local body; Private aided and Private unaided. Research has indicated that the share of private participation in the management of the education has been increasing significantly over the years. There has also been a significant change in the public opinion for the choice of the type of the school they want their child to be in. The choice over the period has gradually shifted from government to the private schools due to the better quality of education which the parents assume to find in the private schools.

2. Background of the Study

Over the years, the administration of secondary education has undergone tremendous changes as various education policy reforms have been exerting increased pressure on the schools to improve teaching and learning process. The duties and responsibilities of the administrators as a result have also

expanded further. Education administrators now hold leadership positions with significant responsibility. Coordinating and interacting with faculty, parents, students, community members, business leaders, and State and local policymakers can be fast paced and stimulating, but also stressful and demanding. (Occupational Outlook Handbook, 2010-2011).

Studies have found that high achieving schools are positively correlated with strong instructional leaders who emphasize more on the academic administration. The principal in such schools is considered as an instructional leader, who focuses less on doing things right and more on doing the right things. Studies have shown that more a principal knows about a teacher's abilities, intellect, teaching style, motivation and work goals, the more the chances increase for making a good supervisory match between the principal and the teacher. Susan Sullivan and Jeffery Glanz (2000)^[9] elaborated the role of principal as supervisor that a good supervisor is one who can relate to people, is flexible, and has an open mind. It is a supervisory job of a principal to facilitate instructional improvement.

Supervision only works when it leads to results that actually improve the teacher's effectiveness (Garubo & Rothstein, 1998). As Glickman (1998)^[4] noted, "The long-term goal of developmental supervision is teacher development toward a point in which teachers, facilitated by supervisors, can assume full responsibility for instructional improvement" (p.199). A supervisor should be a guide, facilitator or collaborator (Glanz & Sullivan, 2000)^[9] engaging a teacher in reflective practice. The instructional supervision of teachers should be an important component of an effective and comprehensive professional development program (Wanzare & da Costa, 2000)^[11].

With regard to the effect of teachers' professional development on students' learning, a number of studies report that the more professional knowledge teachers have, the higher the levels of student achievement (National Commission on Teaching and America's Future, 1996^[8], 1997; Falk, 2001^[2]; Educational Testing Service, 1998^[1]; Grosso de Leon, 2001^[5]; Guzman, 1995^[6]; McGinn and Borden, 1995)^[7]

In government senior secondary schools, the local administrators, inspectors or education officers play a significant role in reviewing school performance with varying combinations of audit and support, feedback and advice. Recent researches have shown there is a considerable decline in such external supervision practices in government and private aided schools by the educational administrators particularly in the academic supervision, which has a direct bearing on improvement in the teaching-learning practices and the overall quality of school. It has also been observed that there is hardly any emphasis on academic supervision by heads of government institutions as compared to the private schools. On the other hand, the education officers do not have the required skills and expertise to guide and help the heads of institutions in improving teaching-learning process. This is not in the case of private schools as the studies suggest. It is therefore necessary that the academic administrative systems and procedures should be given a rethinking so that they respond to the quality concerns of school education.

The comparative study of the structure and the function of the academic administration in both the types of the schools thus seemed to be imperative to get an insight into the efforts made

by both the systems for the quality improvement to achieve the higher academic outcome.

3. Plan and Procedure of the Study

3.1 Objectives of the Study

The following were the objectives of the study.

- To study the set up of administration in general, and academic administration in particular in private and government senior secondary schools in Delhi.
- To study the functions of academic administration in private and government senior secondary schools in Delhi.
- To study the techniques of academic supervision and the professional development of teachers in private and government senior secondary schools in Delhi.
- To study the kind of co curricular activities conducted in private and government senior secondary schools in Delhi.
- To study the involvement of the stakeholders in enhancing the quality of education in private and government senior secondary schools in Delhi.
- To study the role of the head as an instructional leader in the private and the government schools of Delhi

3.2 Procedure of the Study

The study conducted was a descriptive study with the purpose of obtaining comparative information concerning the academic administration in the private and government senior secondary schools in Delhi. Keeping in mind the objectives of the study, the questionnaires were developed by the researcher for the principals, teachers and the parents of the children studying in the selected schools. Apart from these, informal observations and the informal interviews were also conducted with the concerned educational officers. The efforts were made by the investigator to validate the questionnaires so framed by conducting a pilot study taking one private and one government school in Delhi.

In order to minimize the influence of moderator variables like social class, income, infrastructural facilities etc. the sampled schools were chosen from Delhi, having similar infrastructural and other facilities. The sample of 2 schools (1 private and 1 government) was chosen by the way of incidental sampling, from each of the North, South, East and West districts of Delhi making the sample size of total 8 schools including 4 private and the 4 government ones. Therefore, in the entire sample consisted of 8 Principals (one of each school), 80 Teachers (10 from each school), 80 Parents (of any 10 students studying in each of the selected school) and DEOs of the district where the selected school lies. Among the 4 government schools it was decided to have 1 Kendriya Vidyalaya, 1 Navyug school and 2 state government schools to have a comparative view within the government schools also. The data so obtained was analyzed both qualitatively and quantitatively.

4. Major Findings of the Study

The findings of the study can be discussed under five different domains namely the academic supervision, professional development of the teacher, co curricular activities, involvement of the stakeholders and role played by the principal as an instructional leader.

- Academic Supervision is a formative process that focuses upon professional development of the teachers and the improvement of instruction. Neither of the government or

the private schools taken in the sample was academically supervising in a perfect manner yet the private schools seemed to be performing better in this area. The analysis of the responses given by the principals highlight that the academic supervision is being done in a better manner in the private schools compared to the government ones.

- Promoting teachers' professional development involves enhancing teaching effectiveness (to teach all students in increasingly diverse contexts and at high levels), and supporting professional growth – that is, permitting the transition to roles of higher status and responsibility within the teaching profession (mentor teacher, experienced teacher). It involves several activities such as sending the teachers to different educational seminars, providing innovative programmes for the instructional support to the teachers etc. the results indicated that private schools are carrying out these activities with much more intensity as compared to the government schools. The table given below highlights the various professional development techniques and the data clearly reveals that in the case of private schools almost all the techniques are being practiced which is clearly not the case with the government schools thus providing explanation for the observable differences.
- Co curricular activities are being carried out systematically, with proper allotment of the time to the teachers for it though in the government schools the facilities available are nowhere close to those being given in the private ones. The government schools have confined themselves to the traditional sports such as kho-kho, kabbaddi etc whereas the privates are having swimming, horse ridding etc. as the activities.
- As far as the involvement of the stakeholders (parents) is concerned, parents of the government school children seem to be more satisfied than the private school children's parents. The reason may be the high level of expectation of the private school children's parents due to the high fee of the school and good education background of the families the children belong to.
- Principal plays a better role as an instructional leader in the private schools. They seem to be proceeding more cautiously and systematically as far as the academic administration is concerned.

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