

Social Sector Development in Uttarakhand: A Gap between Policy Formulation and On-ground Implementation in Education

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ABSTRACT

Uttarakhand state was the second fastest growing state in India from financial year 2005 to financial year 2012. As per a report, it is the 6th richest state of India in terms of per capita income, but those living in the hilly areas of the state benefit less from the development than those in the plains. The state also has highly ambitious education policies in place which has provisions for affordable education to all. However, implementation of these policies on education is far from satisfactory.

There is no doubt, majority of the people even in hilly areas of Uttarakhand prefer private education facilities due to poor management of government schools, however, unaffordability of cost of private education particularly by the people residing in hilly terrain of Uttarakhand, deprive them off availing these facilities. This has in fact created a situation wherein people of these remotely located hill districts and other people from lower income group seek education at village level through poorly managed government schools. Lack of skill development opportunities for the youngsters, further make majority of them unemployable. The above factors are in fact becoming major causes for out migration of the people besides contributing to impoverishment. Mismanagement in implementation of education policies by authorities coupled with large scale corrupt practices in nexus with the village level governance structure has further degraded education system at the village level.

The paper is intended to highlight the gap in the existing education policies and its implementation. Efforts have also been made to highlight the challenges and suggest a way ahead in ensuring better education facilities to every citizen even in the remotely located villages of Uttarakhand.

Keywords: - Implementation, Universilation of Education, Lack of Skill Development in Hilly Area, Unemployable, Gender literacy

1. Introduction

Social sector development in Uttarakhand is a complex issue as it faces a lot of challenges specially in terms of creating credible mechanism to bridge inequality, reduce the gap between policy formulation and implementation, lack of sustainable model for education and its implementation, particularly in hilly areas. Creation of more jobs, improving the standard of education at village level, fulfilling the aspirations of young people will not only help in improving the overall situation, including their skills and capabilities but will also reduce the out migration from the hilly areas which presently is the area of concern for the state. Major focus on social sector development should be on society and people and what they cherish and value in life. Considerable gap in terms of social sector development could be witnessed in hilly and plains areas of Uttarakhand.

Eighty-five percent of the state's geographical area is mountainous region and nearly half of the state's population reside in these hills. These hilly areas are predominantly rural. 10 districts of Uttarakhand out of total 13 districts, largely make up for hill districts (Almora, Pithoragarh, Nainital, Champawat, Bageshwar, Chamoli Garhwal, Pauri Garhwal, Tehri Garhwal, Uttarkashi and Rudraprayag). Plain Districts of Uttarakhand mainly consist of Dehradun, Udham Singh Nagar and Haridwar. Dehradun district also encompasses entire geographical hilly area of Jaunsar Bawar region. Uttarakhand human development report of 2018, has observed considerable disparity on human development indicators in the plains and hilly districts and observed that plains

districts, fare much better. One of the major causes of concern is sharp decline observed in proportion of the people working in the farm sector between 1994 and 2012, the proportion of people working in the farm sector has dropped from 75 percent to 49 percent in the above period. Most of the people moving away from the farm sector are moving to casual wage / temporary job, which also reflect absence of alternative remunerative non-farm self-employment opportunities in the state. This decline in farming activity particularly in the hilly region of the state also has its roots in the lack of credible medical and educational facilities in the hilly areas of the state. This paper is intended to bring out the existing education policies of the state of Uttarakhand, extent of implementation of these policies, factors impeding the progress of implementation and will conclude with some ideas which could perhaps contribute in revisiting and promoting better implementation of the education policy in the state.

2. Uttarakhand Education Policy

New Education Policy (NEP) 2020 which was approved on 29 July 2020 by Union Cabinet of India is being implemented in phases and it is expected that NEP will be fully implemented in Uttarakhand by 2030. The beginning of NEP was made in Uttarakhand on 12th July 2020 by launching Bal Vatika (Class before Primary). NEP 2020 is expected to usher in several changes in Indian education system from school to college level. NEP 2020, is the third revamp of the framework of education post 1968 and 1986 reforms. The aim of the NEP is to make India a global knowledge super power, ensure standardisation and universalisation of education from pre-school to secondary level with 100% gross enrolment ratio (GER) in school education policy by 2030. Open schooling will bring back 2 Crore out-of-school children back into the mainstream through an open schooling system. The current 10+2 system will be replaced by the new 5+3+3+4 circular structure corresponding to ages 3-8, 8-11, 11-14 and 14-18 years respectively. In order to regulate both public and private schools new accreditation framework and envisaged appointment of an independent authority is set to change the existing school governance and raise current gross enrolment ratio (GER) of 26.3% in higher education to 50% by 2035. Institution of multidisciplinary education and research universities (MERU) at par with IITS, IIMS are envisaged to be setup as model multidisciplinary education of global standard in the country. Best part of the NEP is to have an autonomous body and the national educational technology forum (NETF) to provide platform for free exchange of ideas on the use of technology to enhance learning, assessment, planning and administration. It will also be paving the way for foreign universities to set up Campuses in India. Increase of public investment in education sector from existing 4.6% to 6% of the present GDP is envisaged. Additionally, gender inclusion fund and special education zones for disadvantaged regions and groups are also envisaged. As such, right to education (RTE) Act 2009 aims to provide primary education to all children aged 6-14 years and enforces education as a fundamental right. It also stipulates 25% reservation for disadvantaged sector of society. Constitution of India under Part IV of Indian Constitution, Article 45 and Article 39(f) of Directive Principal of State Policy (DPSP), has provision for state funded as well as equitable and accessible education. 42nd amendment to the constitution in 1976 moved education from the state to concurrent list. The 86th amendment in 2002 made education an enforceable right under Article 21(a). The period of transition from existing education policy to NEP 2020 has already commenced, however, for any policy to be successful it is important to understand the ground mechanism for its effective implementation.

3. Status of Implementation of Educational Policy

New Education Policy 2020 envisages a paradigm shift in our education system and this policy besides bringing in universalisation of education is expected to be inclusive and equitable which would inspire and encourage learning opportunities to all by the end of this decade.

3.1 Poor Enrolment in Higher Education

As per the Uttarakhand Human Development Report 2018 (UKHDR 2018) survey on education related indicators, only 56.6% of 15 years and above population in the state were educated till secondary level and above. Economic survey 2017 to 2018, Government of Uttarakhand, indicates 42.5% (15-59 years) of population having education till secondary level and above. However, 43.4% of population either illiterate (15.3%) or have completed only primary level (28%). Tables below give district wise proportion of population (aged 15 years and above).

Table 1: District wise Proportion of Population (aged 15years and above) by education Level

	Primary and Upper Primary	Secondary	Higher Secondary	Higher Education (Graduation, Post-Graduation, Professional)	Diploma	Illiterate
Hill						
Almora	25.86	23.14	21.76	12.93	0.99	15.31
Bageshwar	21.69	21.1	28.71	15.39	0.4	12.71
Chamoli	24.13	21.09	22.65	16.75	0.24	15.18
Champawat	34.09	19.31	18.36	11.47	0.35	16.43
PauriGarhwal	23.23	19.5	25.8	16.78	2.56	12.12
Nainital	28.11	19.02	19.35	19.94	0.45	13.10
Pithoragarh	28.7	21.49	22.95	16.27	0.09	10.46
Rudraprayag	23.83	20.96	24.83	15.37	0.41	14.57
TehriGarhwal	22.85	19.1	27.22	12.31	2.23	16.30
Uttarkashi	20.59	15.59	22.67	21.56	1.02	18.53
Plain						
Dehradun	25.5	17.87	19.06	20.67	3.31	13.55
Haridwar	36.44	19.04	15.46	11.26	1.29	16.28
UdhamSinghNagar	28.77	18.93	13.98	16.65	1.46	20.05
Uttarakhand	27.92	19.29	19.52	16.24	1.53	15.38

Source: HDR Survey, 2017

Tehri Garhwal has the highest number of adults completing higher secondary (27.22%), whereas, Uttarkashi District has the highest proportion of adults completing higher education. Maximum illiterate among hill district also are from Uttarkashi (18.53%), whereas, Udham Singh Nagar District topped the illiteracy figures (20.5%). Overall proportion are higher in rural areas (16.99%) compared to urban areas (12.22%).

3.2 Worrying Gender Literacy Gap particularly among hill districts

As far as adult literacy ratio is concerned, the gender literacy gap among the hill districts was almost double compared to plains district. As far as adult literacy rate is concerned, Pithoragarh district (89.54%) was highest followed by Pauri Garhwal (87.89%) and Bageshwar (87.29%). Yet another area of concern is almost 15% gender literacy gap, with males (91.81%) and females (77%). This calls for concerted efforts by the state government to further encourage female literacy rate so as to ensure holistic development.

Table 2: Annexure 6.5 : Adult literacy rate (%)

	Male	Female	Total	Gender gap
Hill				
Almora	93.44	75.22	84.69	18.22
Bageshwar	96.32	77.62	87.29	18.7
Chamoli	94.55	74.41	84.86	20.14
Champawat	93.79	71.88	83.58	21.91
PauriGarhwal	96.89	79.2	87.89	17.69

Nainital	91.61	81.87	86.91	9.74
Pithoragarh	96.95	82.09	89.54	14.86
Rudraprayag	95.35	75.15	85.43	20.2
TehriGarhwal	94.55	72.93	83.71	21.62
Uttarkashi	93.54	68.26	81.47	25.28
Plain				
Dehradun	92.03	80.78	86.45	11.25
Haridwar	89.95	76.95	83.73	13
UdhamSinghNagar	86.39	72.83	79.95	13.56
Uttarakhand	91.81	77	84.61	14.81

Source: HDR Survey, 2017

3.3 High Share of out of School Children among Hill Districts

Another area of concern is, proportion of dropouts among the out of school children. Of the total children in 6 to 17 yrs age group, 5.25 percent were found to be out of school as per HDR Survey 2017. Out of these 5.25 percent, highest were in the hill districts of Chamoli (90.95%) and in the plain districts of Dehradun (89.87%). The share of never enrolled among the out of school children is alarmingly high in hill districts particularly in Uttarkashi, Rudraprayag, Tehri Garhwal, Almora & Pauri Garhwal. The reason for this perhaps lies in lack of government efforts in ensuring school access and encouraging villagers through existing government machinery to ensure higher level of enrolment.

Table 3: Distribution of Out of School Children by District

	Left after enrolment	Enrolled but not attending	Never Enrolled	Go to informal institution
Hill				
Almora	62.23		37.77	
Bageshwar	79.08	18.62	2.30	
Chamoli	90.95	9.05		
Champawat	82.13	7.14	7.14	3.59
Pauri Garhwal	63.48		36.52	
Nainital	79.52	2.39	15.70	2.39
Pithoragarh	82.42		17.58	
Rudraprayag	44.44		55.56	
TehriGarhwal,	49.87		50.13	
Uttarkashi	55.67		44.33	
Plain				
Dehradun	89.87		10.13	
Haridwar	77.76	1.07	16.88	4.29
UdhamSinghNagar	82.10	1.26	15.38	1.26
Uttarakhand	79.11	1.41	17.20	2.29

Source: HDR Survey,2017

It could also be seen from the table below that in class IX to X “not interested” in studies is the most important factor for dropping out, which with better counselling and good teaching staff could be eliminated.

Table 4: A Reason for Dropout at Class IX-X

Work At Home	11.18
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Need to support earnings	16.93
School to far distance	2.3
Abuse from teachers	0.9
Failed in exam	2.96
Fees/expenses unaffordable	12.77
Not interested in studying	27.82
Childrearing	1.76
Household work	9.69
Work outside home	1.12
Others	12.55

Source: HDR Survey, 2017

4. Trends of Public and Private Schools in Uttarakhand

4.1 Uttarakhand shows more faith in private schools

Annual Status of Education report 2021 (ASER 2021)[1] shows that in the age group of 6-14 years enrolment in government schools across India has increased from, 64.3% in 2018 to 70.3% in 2021. However, in Uttarakhand the above national trend is not valid as the state has shown about 3.3% point shift from Government to private schools.

Table 5: % Children aged 6-14 enrolled in Govt. schools: 2018, 2020 and 2021*

State	ASER 2018			ASER 2020			ASER 2021		
	Boys	Girls	All	Boys	Girls	All	Boys	Girls	All
Andhra Pradesh	59.0	65.1	62.2	64.4	69.5	66.9	63.7	77.2	70.6
Arunachal Pradesh	53.8	59.0	56.5	49.5	45.2	47.5	53.2	62.7	58.3
Assam	65.4	72.2	68.8	61.1	69.1	64.9	61.1	67.8	64.4
Bihar	73.4	82.0	77.7	73.2	80.9	76.9	78.2	82.9	80.5
Chhattisgarh	73.4	77.8	75.7	64.1	69.9	67.0	70.2	75.5	72.9
Gujarat	83.2	86.9	85.0	83.8	85.7	84.7	86.1	83.9	85.2
Haryana	36.5	47.9	41.8	43.9	50.5	46.9	43.6	53.9	48.3
Himachal Pradesh	55.5	61.8	58.6	49.4	59.6	54.1	55.6	66.7	60.9
Jammu & Kashmir	53.7	61.0	57.3	48.2	57.3	52.3	53.3	58.0	55.5
Jharkhand	72.8	79.5	76.1	69.7	74.7	72.1	75.6	81.8	78.6
Karnataka	65.0	73.7	69.4	66.4	71.1	68.6	76.8	78.6	77.7
Kerala	45.4	50.2	47.9	54.6	67.1	60.9	58.0	61.6	59.8
Madhya Pradesh	63.7	71.2	67.3	60.7	69.9	65.3	63.9	72.0	67.7
Maharashtra	57.8	63.3	60.5	66.5	69.2	67.8	67.1	72.8	69.7
Manipur	25.3	28.3	26.8	11.3	12.1	11.7	12.1	14.8	13.4
Meghalaya	33.4	34.5	34.0	40.8	35.6	37.9	33.3	34.5	33.9
Nagaland	44.8	47.6	46.2	30.3	30.6	30.4	33.6	36.3	34.8
Odisha	85.0	88.4	86.7	78.5	84.5	81.5	82.6	84.9	83.7
Punjab	43.0	49.3	46.0	43.7	49.6	46.4	49.1	57.0	52.8

Rajasthan	54.4	64.4	59.1	52.3	62.2	56.7	64.0	73.6	68.4
Tamil Nadu	63.3	70.0	66.7	58.7	71.1	64.6	73.7	78.8	76.3
Telangana	52.6	60.2	56.4	51.4	58.7	54.8	57.6	62.9	60.0
Uttarakhand	50.9	57.2	53.9	43.4	59.0	50.3	47.3	54.4	50.5
Uttar Pradesh	39.8	46.7	43.1	47.8	51.9	49.7	54.8	58.1	56.3
West Bengal	87.0	88.9	88.0	86.0	90.6	88.3	91.7	92.0	91.8
All India	60.7	68.0	64.3	62.6	69.4	65.8	67.9	73.0	70.3

Source: ASER 2021

The reasons for this reverse trend in Uttarakhand as per UKHDR survey report for Uttarakhand include quality of teachers, English medium instructions, good infrastructures, regularity of classes, student care and extra activities. The hill districts, in absence of private schools in remote locations, resorted to government run schools. However, in the plain district there was a clear preference for private schools with 66.1% children in Dehradun, 63.43% in Udham Singh Nagar and 58.9% in Haridwar attending private schools.

Table 6: Percentage Distribution of Children by type of Institutions Attended (Std I-VIII)

	Government	Private
Hill		
Almora	68.01	31.99
Bageshwar	55.50	44.5
Chamoli	71.37	28.63
Champawat	76.46	23.54
Pauri Garhwal	48.54	51.46
Nainital	54.23	45.77
Pithoragarh	55.64	44.36
Rudraprayag	64.16	35.84
Tehri Garhwal	55.94	44.06
Uttarkashi	51.00	49
Plain		
Dehradun	33.90	66.1
Haridwar	41.10	58.9
Udham Singh Nagar	36.57	63.43
Uttarakhand	47.39	52.61

4.2 Lack of Supervision by State Authorities

It is quite disturbing to note that in the schools located in the hilly terrain of the Jaunsar Bawar area, the number of teachers is far less than authorised. The funds which are meant to improve infrastructure are not utilised for the purpose and children in one of the villages, still defecate in the open despite insistence of the government to build toilets. Amount sanctioned for the toilets were withdrawn from the government as no functional toilets were constructed. Boundary walls etc. in school, for which money was sanctioned, surprisingly blew away in heavy winds. This lethargic attitude by the supervisory authorities and teaching staff in not overseeing the sanctioned work is perhaps turning out to be major reason for losing faith in government schools. On 15th August 2022 which was expected to be a grand event to commemorate the 75th year of our Independence Day celebration, a number of teachers in hill districts did not reach the schools. If weather was inclement considering monsoon season, they could have stayed in villages where the schools are located for few days rather than travelling from Dehradun and back every day. In some cases distance one way from Dehradun or other plain cities is 100 Km and even more which in hilly roads take about 3 hours to travel one way.

4.3 Teachers forfeiting promotion to avoid posting to hill areas

Few of the teachers under condition of anonymity, during the course of fieldwork in the hilly region of Uttarakhand had confided that number of teachers have forfeited even their promotion to continue to remain in the plains districts of the state, causing consequential shortage of teachers across hilly regions of the state. The

state administration surely needs to be more assertive with such situations, if it is verified to be correct. Suitable amendments to recruitment/ promotion rules of teachers needs to be incorporated wherein teachers refusing their promotions, just to remain in the plain districts of the state are considered for more deterrent consequences including questioning the continuation of their government jobs and perhaps placing it under unsatisfactory behaviour.

4.4 Poor Dissemination of Government Directives

To add to forgoing, awareness about the scheme of free education for the girl child till class XII was very poor. As per UKHDR survey in majority of districts of the state, the proportions of households availing of such a benefit was one-third or lower. This bear testimony to the fact that there was a lack of creation of awareness by the state machinery. Similarly, only 7% households were aware about Uttarakhand skill development mission 2013.

Table 7: Awareness and Benefit Received on Free Education for Girl Child (%)

	Awareness	Benefit Received
Almora	21.9	39.1
Bageshwar	50.7	70.9
Chamoli	39.5	32.7
Champawat	28.1	20.9
Dehradun	22.5	9.6
PauriGarhwal	21.3	18.9
Haridwar	11.6	21.3
Nainital	39.3	22.4
Pithoragarh	31.8	24.1
Rudraprayag	66.1	36.4
TehriGarhwal	18.5	14.5
UdhamSinghNagar	22.4	21.7
Uttarkashi	58.0	50.2
Uttarakhand	26.0	29.1

Source: HDR Survey, 2017

4.5 Lack of Skill Development

Lack of skill development is yet another area of concern particularly among the hill districts of the state. The Uttarakhand skill development mission, 2013 (UKSDM), as per UKHDR report, has taken initiative to provide free skill development training to youth across the 13 districts of the state. However, it was revealed during UK HDR survey that household awareness about this programme is very poor with only 7% households reporting any information or awareness about the same. The skill levels of youths particularly in hill districts are not developed beyond agriculture, pastoral rearing and horticulture to some extent. Poor dissemination of information on skill development mission is an area of serious introspection by the state government. New avenues for skill development in construction work, banking and financial services, electronics, health care, IT, Hotel and Catering, Nursing, midwifery, apparel and textile related works are considered essential to ensure better employment opportunities to the youth. Lack of expertise in communication skills is yet another area of concern among the youth. Nisha Nayeem [2] in her article "Educated unemployment and the remedies" articulates that 60% of candidates were screened out due to lack of communication skills, 25% were screened out for analytical skills, and 5% for their lack of knowledge in their respective domain. Hence 90% of the educated youth were lacking in one of these three skills required for job or employment and only 10% of educated youth of India are employable. This demonstrates the mismatch between requirement of industries and education imparted by the educational institutions. Institution of Education should prepare the youth for challenges that real life offers and some of the teaching shops or factories of education simply miss out on appreciation of new ideas and encouragement of students on undertaking research on new path breaking areas. It is hoped with better dissemination of information on skill development mission and implementation of NEP 2020, these lacunae will be eradicated to some extent.

5. COVID effect on Education

As per UNESCO's recent data, schools were closed in India for over a year during COVID. The closure of school has no doubt impacted learning adversely. In 2020 when schools were closed, ASER 2021 found that barely one-third of all enrolled children were receiving learning material and activities from their schools (35.6%). This trend continued even after a year. We can easily assimilate from the above that the education system has not been able to place credible mechanisms in place to address this serious issue of not being able to reach out to children, who have spent one and half year without any learning material from their schools. Lack of smart phone ownership, has also had an impact among the children of poor families who could not afford smart phones to attend online classes. Resorting to loans by poor families during the pandemic to make both ends meet had indeed further worsened their economic situation as there were almost negligible opportunities for their employment. Even the households which had ownership of smartphones had very limited access especially to youngest children.

Table 8: % Enrolled children who have a smartphone available at home. 2018, 2020 and 2021

School type	ASER 2018	ASER 2020	ASER 2021
Government	29.6	56.4	63.7
Private	49.9	74.2	79.0
Government & Private	36.5	61.8	67.6

Source: ASER 2021

It is evident from the above table that only about 67% households have smartphone and subsequent survey has shown that only 27% of the children out of the households who have smartphone at home have access to smartphone. This percentage is even lower in junior classes. Added to above, learning support at home is more for the children whose parent are educated. This aspect has further increased the void between the children of households not being able to own a smartphone / less educated children versus households having a smartphone and parents being educated. This gap is likely to deprive children of less educated parents and without smartphone to have a level playing field in schools. Special efforts are therefore called for to assist these children in getting extra coaching / classes to be at par with their more fortunate peers.

6. Recommendations and Conclusion

In order to foster human development, education plays a significant role. Education besides equipping the people to make them more aware of their rights generates many positive externalities. The state of Uttarakhand with a number of good schools and colleges is considered to be an education destination. Various studies / survey conducted on the education system, however, indicate certain trends, which if not tackled effectively are sure to lead to far reaching negative consequences. It has come out clearly in this paper that Uttarakhand, against the national trend shows more faith in private schools than government schools (except in remote areas where the option of private schools is negligible). There is poor enrolment in higher education as only 56.6% of the population above 15 years were educated till secondary level and above. Gender literacy gap of 17.49% among hill districts and 9.59% among plains district of Uttarakhand is a worrying factor. Alarming high share of out-of-school children is yet another cause for concern. Lack of credible supervision and monitoring has further deteriorated the standard of education particularly in remote areas. Teachers' shortage, some of them forfeiting their promotion to remain in the 3 plains districts of the state are not adding to the cause of improving the education system. Non awareness of important policy initiatives of the government such as free education for girl child, wherein, only one-third or lower households are availing this facilities and only 7% awareness of UKSDM-2013 shows lethargic attitude of the people responsible. Lack of skill development opportunities particularly among the youth of the hill districts and overcoming the COVID effect on education requires unprecedented attention. . There is no doubt the state of Uttarakhand may already be looking into some of the grey areas in education covered above, However it is prudent to put up some recommendation to further improve the system of education in the state of Uttarakhand.

6.1 Commencement of Short Service Entry for Teachers

There is a huge pool of unemployed youths with B. Ed. or BTC qualifications. In order to rejuvenate the present system, it would perhaps be in order to give them opportunities to fill the vacant posts of teachers. Youths could initially be engaged for ten years and subsequent extension could be considered subject to their performances. This will ensure availability of adequate and young teachers for even remote hilly areas and would also help in getting rid of non-performers early. This has worked in the Indian Coast Guard and other defence forces wherein certain cadres such as in education, logistics, pilot etc. were inducted on short service basis and this has

led to keeping the profile young, ensuring less competition for promotion of retained individuals. Separate recruitment and promotion rules of such entry, if considered appropriate are to be framed.

6.2 Making Service in Remote Areas More Rewarding

It is a fact that there is lack of facilities such as accommodation, medical etc. in remote areas. In order to motivate the teachers working in remote areas, they should be provided accommodation in proximity of school premises. They should also be monetarily compensated for the duration of remote postings. Remote area service should be made inescapable requirement for the promotion. Conversely, the teachers who even forfeit their promotion to avoid remote area posting should be proceeded against and this be considered as unsatisfactory performance and rules should be amended as required to get rid of unsatisfactory performers.

6.3 Institution of a Mobile Team for Regulatory and Monitoring Mechanism

As described in the article earlier there is complete absence of on ground supervision and monitoring of schools, particularly in remote areas, which is leading to a number of discrepancies such non execution of sanctioned works but amount for the same having been consumed, late or no reporting of teachers, early departure of teachers from the schools, non-verification of knowledge level of the students and upkeep and maintenance of school premises etc. The proposed mobile team consisting of people with high integrity and knowledge could be deployed in hilly areas and each team could visit at least 5 to 8 schools in the hilly areas per day to improve the system of education. There could be separate teams for each district.

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