

5. GOVERNMENT SCHOOL AT A GLANCE

5.1 INTRODUCTION

Today there is a great divide in the education sector. This divide just like economic divide consist of haves and have nots. The category of haves can choose between the most modern schools that cater to elite group. The have nots however, can only depend on whatever is offered to them by the authorities or the government. The universalization of elementary education or universalization of primary education has been adopted as a national goal only because of this reason so that the weaker strata of the society which has equal right towards education can not be deprived of education which is the basic building block for further social development. This is the only way, government can bring in social equality amongst the people. Education for all has now been regarded as the international target and the national challenge for India for true empowerment and democratization. To fulfil the above goals the following measures are required.

1. Provision of primary school education to all children between the age group of 6 to 14 years.
2. Retention of the children in school.

With this view, many schools run by the municipal corporation of vadodara, were started. There are about 120 primary schools governed by Municipal Corporation of vadodara, spread out in different corners of the city to impart education to the deprived section of the society so that the children get quality education at affordable cost. Basically the government's policy to bring in social and economic equality amongst all has paved the way towards the state government run or the municipal run schools. The school no. 17 (the school run by municipal government taken for the purpose of comparative study for the research) is thus the outcome of the government's education for all projects to eliminate the educational backwardness in some pockets of the city, the population of which cannot afford costly education. Thus many schools like school no. 17 have taken major stride forward to eradicate the mass literacy existing in the country.

5.2 SCHOOL NO. 17 – THE JOURNEY...

The school no.17 which is a municipal run school is known by its number and not by the name came into being in the year 1973. The facts reveal that during the early years, the number of schools was very limited in Vadodara as very few philanthropists other than the royal family namely The Gaekwards took keen interest in education. This was the reason why the government had to shoulder the responsibility of carrying forward the agenda of education as framed by the planning commissions.

The school no. 17's basic objective was to cater to the lower most strata of the society residing in the nearby areas. Accordingly, the first and foremost task before the school was to bring in the students from the slum areas. However the block was ignorance prevailing in the people residing there. Many of them were indulged in work starting from dawn to dusk. They didn't have time to attend to the primary and the secondary needs of their children. They were not even literate enough or knowledgeable to understand the benefits of education. The female members also went out for manual labour work taking their children along or keeping the older ones to take care of other siblings. The families were caught in a dilemma that if they send their wards to school, the income hands will become less. In addition to that there will be less number of persons to attend to the daily course at home.

That's why the reluctance on the part of the parents and their lack of convincing ability forced the children of these areas to remain confined at home. However the school authorities had an up hill task to get in the enrolments. Gradually, the head of the community called the *mukhya* had to be involved in the process of generating awareness about the merits of education and literacy, first to the adults. In this program, many NGOs and the government officials also initiated and through their massive campaign for literacy, generated awareness amongst the people that only education and literacy can uplift the economic and the social status of the entire lot. Its only through education, the job security can be imparted and when monetary independence is acquired, social upliftment is possible.

Through continuous canvassing, good sense prevailed amongst the heads of the individual families that if not them, at least if their children, get schooling, they can bring a considerable change in terms of betterment and financial condition. This was a very big achievement for the municipal corporation, NGOs, community and the residents in general. As the school authorities had a very clear objective of spreading education by lessening the black clouds of illiteracy. Their motto was not to earn money or make it a profitable enterprise. In the very inception, enrolment of about 100 students was considered to be a very big achievement of theirs. In the beginning years, the dropout and stagnation ratio was less. Even though there was a paucity of funds, building was not reasonably good, nor were infrastructure facilities according to the expectations, still the very notion that the children are able to read and write generated a huge expectations amongst the parents. They were very contented by the fact that their children have taken long step in the right direction towards the betterment of their future. Moreover, as the number of schools was less, the parents were not at all aware about the comforts of education; the expectation in terms of education was not at all in the agenda of the parents. Thus there was no comparison, or any kind of choice or dissatisfaction amongst the parents.

With the growing years, the city also expanded, population increased, enterprises added, infrastructure expanded. With the growing expansion of the city and increasing economic activities, people from other states started settling in the city. Circulation of money also gradually increased which segmented the society into various economic classes. Thus the demands of various classes increased and the society also prepared itself to cater to the variety of demands. And thus came, various schools run by trusts or private organizations or by different philanthropists. It's an inherent nature of human beings that if options are available, people will exercise their options to choose amongst the best. This is how many private schools started in the city.

The unique observation about Vadodara in the context of education is very interesting. With the growing number of years, the private schools added up catering to the elite section of the society. Each school tried to be different than the rest by giving some extra facility to attract the upper most section of the

society. The lower middle class and the lower strata of the society however also got an option to exercise regarding the schools. The reason was more number of schools also came into being with low to very low fee structures. Even this section which was during the 70's had no other option but to go to a single school could now get the forms from many schools and could finally decide where they want their wards to get admission. Thus it can be concluded that in Vadodara, the expansion of education was fairly uniform with all the segments of the society irrespective of their financial condition could avail education because there were many primary schools. Those who chose not to send their wards to school were solely because of their own individual reasons. Thus it could not be said that there was any kind of shortage of facilities as far as the education is considered either from the state government or from the private individuals.

The parents of the school no 17 who had by now totally kept a close eye towards the other incremental facilities which are very much needed for education could now easily compare the school no.17 along with other schools. By this time, they realized the importance of play grounds, the vicinity of the school, well ventilated classrooms, libraries, good quality books, computers, play facilities etc. Some of the parents who had improved themselves in terms of financial well being started thinking in terms of other options.

This was the main reason that after 3 years of inception, there was some change in terms of student's strength every year. The table below gives the strength of the students enrolled from the year 2002 to 2006 in the school no. 17.

Student's strength starting from 2002 to 2006

Years	Student's strength (In heads)
2002	334
2003	337
2004	321
2005	312
2006	305

Source: General register book of school no. 17

The strength of the students in the first 3 years remained almost same. However, with the fourth year till early 90's the strength of the students did increase but at a diminishing rate. The reason was wide range of choice available with the parents with the growing number of schools. From the year 1995 to 2006 the student's strength almost remained stagnant as the figure reached to 305 in the year 2006.

The reason behind the increase in the student's strength at a very slow rate i.e. 100 in the year 1973 to 305 in the year 2006, that is only an increase of 205 students in 33 years, remains the inability of the school authorities to keep up with the rapid pace of change. Due to inadequate fund, the school was not able to expand in terms of play ground, quality classrooms, infrastructure, libraries, computer labs, etc. The parents in those years got a variety of schools some of which were offering better infrastructure, better quality and better facilities, at an affordable rate. Thus many parents shifted to other schools.

5.3 GEOGRAPHICAL LOCATION AND INFRASTRUCTURE

The school no. 17 is situated in the interiors of Jyotipark, at Kareli Baug which is considered to be a residential area. The location of the school is such that the students from different areas near Karelibaug can easily access the school. In 1973 when the school was started, they were mostly inhabited by slums. However, with growing years, with increasing number of housing localities being built, the number of slum receded. Thus presently the students who attend the school no 17 come from comparatively distant slum areas. The approach road to the school no. 17 is a *pakka* road which is painted using the money donated by some NGOs.

The school is located in the accessible area of Karelibaug. The school is C shaped and dotted with green trees and plants and has a huge play ground. The building though was small in 1973, has expanded in such a way that now there are two schools housed in the same building. One is school no. 17 which runs in noon shift from 12.20 pm to 5.50 pm and another school no. 25 which runs in the morning shift from 7.00 am to 12.10 pm. The classrooms of the school are well ventilated and spacious. There are corridors linking the classrooms and the

administrative block. In addition to the classrooms and play ground, there are libraries, dinning hall, computer room and sanitary facilities for the students.

The library is big enough to accommodate one single class at a time. Though the dimension of the library is quite big, there are less number of books and there is a lack of bifurcation of books in terms of fiction, non-fiction, subject wise books, books on education, journals etc. This can be accounted because of the lack of annual fund or grant for the purpose of procurement of books. The library system is still manual as there is no software available for maintaining the records of the library and for the issuance of books. However, the students when attend the library period, are given the books according to the age groups. The books mainly consist of Gujarati magazines. At times, the education office also contributes various books on values written by various authors. A startling fact is that there is no librarian appointed in the school. The regular teachers only take the library classes. This extra work load is shared by the existing teachers.

Similar to that of library, there is a computer hall where computer periods are held. Government normally installs 4 computers in all the municipal schools. This school in particular could get 10 computers on account of the fact that the school has shown outstanding services and worked according to the expectations of the government. As nearly 50 students comprise of a single class, the total number of 5 students can avail one computer. The computer section doesn't have any software package which is now very much in demand to administer the functions of the school. Since the school is directly under the supervision of the education office, the school also takes the responsibility of doing the documentation of board or education office. The technology aided learning is very much missing in the curriculum of the school no.17. The school lacks the educational CDs which contain the chapter wise capsules meant to give a practical exposure and added information pertaining to the chapters. This again can be attributed to lack of funds. Another interesting information is that there was no computer instructor to take the computer periods. However, some trainees from EME School took the training of operating computer system on their own. In between one NGO took interest to teach computers. Lately, the school has recruited one computer teacher.

Since school no.17 is under the direct supervision of the state government and run by the municipal corporation and since the students come from the slum areas, state government has undertaken a detailed research and concluded that these children are malnourished. Based on the report the government has started Madhyan Bhojan Yojna in all the municipal schools and the school no.17 is also a part of this program. The government started the mid day meal program in order to ensure more enrolment in the slum and the rural areas so that the students get attracted by the mid day meal and come to the school leaving their manual work. This scheme successfully achieved two things at a time, the number of child labours decreased on one side and the more number of children got enrolled in the schools on the other side. In addition to that, the nourishing food that was provided to them ensured good health of the children who were otherwise suffering from mal nutrition. The menu at school no.17 includes *dal, rices, khichdi, dal dhokli and vegetables*. Once in a week, the students are given a lavish feast. The dinning hall that accommodates the students of school no. 17 is also sufficiently big. The dinning area is kept clean and is continuously under the surveillance of the education office. The students sit on *daris* for taking meals. The students are taught to say a prayer before having their meal.

The sanitation facility is provided by the school. A corner of the school segment is being utilized for the toilets. However, there is a common wash area for both the students as well as the teaching fraternity. Regular cleaning is done by the ancillary staff. Occasionally the government gives the tablets and capsules to the school authorities to be put in water to make it safe for drinking purposes. The school however has to submit a report regarding the usage of these tablets. During the routine inspection checking is done on the sanitary facilities and specially the cleaning of the same.

If a comparative study is done between school no.17 and other private run schools, it is clearly evident that in addition to the basic amenities which is required to impart quality education and the same time can generate interest of the students as well as the teachers is very much lacking in school no. 17. For instance, today's education demands more of participation of students, i.e. student oriented teaching where the teachers become facilitators and students participate

jointly in any learning endeavour. That is the reason why, the school should have toy room, science laboratories, social science laboratories, language labs, indoor sports room, dance and music rooms, auditorium with good acoustics which strengthen and enhances various skills of the students. These facilities are however not present in school no.17.

5.4 ACADEMICS

5.4.1 Teaching Learning Process

The academic curriculum is confined to mere text book pages approved by the Gujarat board of secondary education. The transaction which is very important in academics, however, is only limited to jug and mug theory wherein the teachers pours gallons of information which is given in the text books to the child's head. In turn, the student is expected to parrot all these information and write again in the test. Since there is a lack of practical exposures to the theories dealt in the class, students are heavily dependent on the teachers and the notes given by the teachers. The subjects like science and social science need a variety of teaching aids, practical kit, educational excursions to give the feel of the subject are only taught with the text books. There is a lack of the laboratories, and the methodology that is used to teach science and social science remains lecture method and not demonstration method. This is the reason why the students do not develop the various skill of these subjects, they are also not updated according to the changing society. For example, the text books which are printed in a particular year, contains the information about Madhya Pradesh which includes Chattisgarh. Now after the division of the state into two, i.e. Madhya Pradesh and Chattisgarh, the information is found lacking in the text books. The teachers go by the text books and keep on teaching the same information and thus the students are not updated. In the subject English, as the teachers are heavily dependent on text books, and teach the grammar, which is given in the grammar book, through lecture method and then give the practice exercises, the students are not able to follow the basic communication because the innovative teaching methods like role plays are not put into practice. That is the reason why English remains an alien

language throughout despite the fact that the students learn all the grammar lessons.

The government and the educational authorities conduct the in-house orientation program for the teachers and also invite various resource persons who are experts in their field to impart training to the teachers so that they can enhance themselves and update themselves. These trainings are mandatory for the teachers to attend. Such orientation programs are very useful for the teachers of these schools. Recently *karm yogi taalim* was launched by the state government and proved to be very useful for the individual subject teachers who took the training.

However as the elaborate planning goes in the pre-teaching phase before a teacher takes up the lesson, she has to study the entry behaviour of the students, introduce the lesson according to the entry behaviour of the students, gauge the students existing knowledge, recap the previous topic, link the previous topic with the current topic, ask some questions to arouse the interest of the students, then proceed to the explanation. This is found lacking in the teachers of the school no.17 because they go according to the pre conceived notion that all students are alike and they have to transact the lessons formally. Moreover, there is no accountability in terms of the management of the classroom during the lesson transacted, management of time, the skills imparted to the students, effective explanation, use of teaching aids, black board work and generating the interest of the students in the content. This is the reason many a times the students are not able to grasp whatever is taught in the class as the students find the lesson very insipid.

Since the entire years planning is submitted by the teachers, it is also being observed that the teachers strictly stick to the planning, thereby completing a particular chapter within 10 periods (as per the planning) even if the maximum number of students remains absent or fail to understand. Thus as per the planning he/she goes ahead with the content but the major fall out of this is when the child goes to the next standards, he is not able to cope up with the advanced contents as his basics are not clear.

The evaluation system is not taken in terms of face value and reports are made as per the requirements. However, it is not seen which area in particular a child has to work to enhance or improve himself in any subject. For example, the test if focuses that the child's map pointing skills are lacking in social science, the teacher does not bother to take the remedial class for the same and her duty gets over simply by correcting the notebook and entering the marks in the report card.

The teachers of school no. 17 fulfil the government's criteria of minimum education along with a professional degree. There are in total 7 teachers including the principal for classes from std. I to std. VII, giving rise to a ratio of 1:1. All the teachers are adequately qualified. They are either PTC or CD or Bed. The teachers also get orientation from time to time in the form of work shops or seminars which adds to their existing knowledge.

5.4.2 Co-Curricular Activities

In school no.17, the co-curricular activities are organized much in accordance with the other granted Gujarat board schools receiving the annual Gujarat board planner issued from Gandhinagar. In terms of planning, nothing much goes into it as the clear cut instructions are given to the teachers to just follow the planner and to organize whatever is written accordingly. The Gujarat board planner is well spread out in terms of activities that are to be conducted throughout the academic session. The planner has many days to be observed like world health day, world environment day, children's day, teacher's day, etc. In addition to that, Gujarat board planner expects the schools to celebrate the birthdays of renowned personalities like famous poets, scientists, freedom fighters etc. The board has also given the clear cut directives to all the schools that after the celebrations get over, they have to file the report of the proceedings.

The co-curricular activities are conducted in the school no.17 but since not much of flexibility is given to the school authorities and the teachers, they try to implement these given activities without introducing the element of creativity. Thus it becomes more of a formal exercise. Since the ready made planner is handed over to the schools by the Gujarat board, the schools are only expected to

implement the activities as per the given schedule, localized objectives or the needs of the students of that particular school are not catered to. For example, after minute observation, if the school feels that the communication is lacking amongst the students, the teachers not only concentrate on the language in particular in academics but also design various co-curricular activities to facilitate and encourage communication amongst the students. This is only possible because the teachers first observe the ongoing development of the students, then analyze the same, pick out the problems and then try to solve the problems by designing various academic and co-curricular activities. Thus there is a perfect synchronization between the two. This way the growth of the students is very much ascertained. However, all this is possible only because flexibility is given to the school not only in terms of organizing the activities but also, right from the planning part. This is lacking in all the government schools and the school no.17 happens to be one amongst those. However the activities in the government school are bifurcated into various heads like cultural activities, social activities, sports activities, outdoor activities like picnics and excursions, observation of days, etc. But because of the resource crunch, the school no. 17 has chosen to concentrate more on sports activities and social activities.

The sports activities basically require separate rooms, wide open fields, sports equipments and instruments. School no.17 has consciously chosen to give more exposure towards developing athletics and group games like kho-kho, kabbadi, cricket etc. The school has big play ground which is utilized for well marked grounds for kho-kho and kabbadi. Though more of sports gadgets are not available, the school has the basic set of cricket which includes a cricket bat, ball, and 3 stumps. Due to the unavailability of the indoor sports zone, the games like, table tennis, carom, chess, are not practiced. The school does not have any games instructor so the academic teachers only take up the games period and leaves the students to play as they want. Thus due to the lack of proper coaching, the students inherent sports skills are not much developed. However, the students enrolled in the school no.17 are physically well built. The schools having observed this encourage the students to excel in athletics like sprints, hurdles, high jump, long jump etc. The school no.17 in these years have achieved well in the field of sports as they have taken initiative to encourage the students in the field of

athletics. Though they don't have any sports coach like other private schools to develop a sport but they make it up by their play ground which is big enough to accommodate athletics and some of the group games.

The social activities involve literacy campaigns, cleanliness drive, school panchayats, community developmental programs, plantations, eco clubs etc. For example, in order to encourage plantation, the planner specifies 5th June as the World Environment Day. In the planner, 5th June is to be dedicated to plant the saplings in the school to keep the environment green. But when it comes to implementation of the project, the school no.17 does follow the activity in letters but not in spirit. 10 to 15 saplings are no doubt planted but the students are not given any kind of knowledge and information regarding the conservation of biodiversity. The teachers are also not creative enough to link this particular project with various other activities like organizing competitions, having group discussions in the school, organizing the nature camps etc. So the students are not able to get the significance of such kind of celebrations or observations. The ultimate purpose of making the students an informative citizen gets somewhere defeated.

The outdoor activities like picnics and excursions, cultural activities like fun-fair, annual concerts, inter school or district level competitions which involve more funding, resources and training personnel are rarely taken up in school no. 17.

5.5 ADMINISTRATION

5.5.1 Maintenance of records

Record maintenance is indispensable in government schools mainly because the government schools get financial aid from the state machinery. The utilization of this fund should be mainly for the growth and development of the children belonging to the economically backward strata of the society. National policy on education has a specific agenda where in the government expects the children of std.I to std.VII to be fully literate. In this view, it is very much required that the school which spends the aid provided by the government to fulfill the objectives

with which the government has taken this responsibility. That is why accountability becomes the key word in such schools. And if a school wants to be accountable, it has to maintain the records properly so that the system becomes transparent. School no.17, being a municipal run primary school, maintains all the records and documents which are duly inspected by the district education office. These records are also studied, analyzed and examined by the school authorities from time to time. Many a times, based on these school records, action taken report is asked by the education office.

The number and the kind of records which are maintained in the municipal run schools are the same as that of the private unaided or aided schools.

Thus the records that are maintained by the school no.17 are the same as that of GPS which includes general register, log book, staff meeting record, inward outward register, service book, attendance register, leave register, school leaving certificate, admission record, dead stock register, proxy book, cumulative record card, daily cash book, ledger etc.

The record maintenance is basically the responsibility of the principal who writes and makes necessary changes according to the requirement and the situation. Principal has the accountability and is finally answerable for the upkeep of the records and the statistical data entered in these records.

5.5.2 Human Resource

The human resources in school no.17 are not at all clearly defined because the objectives of the school are clearly different from the unaided school. In total there are 7 teachers. So a separate cell is not required to administer the human resource functions. The principal has the main responsibility to head the team of the teachers and staff and assure that the team works efficiently and toward the positive direction. So the undefined human resources functions are mainly carried out by the principal indirectly.

5.4.3 Finance

The entire amount needed for transacting the school operations efficiently is decided by the government authorities according to the planning. This decided amount is then handed over to the school head. Thus the school is not required to prepare a budget and submit it to the government but each and every head under which money is being spent is clearly directed. The accounts are to be maintained very diligently and very carefully because this account is then subjected to a strict inspection. Financial record maintenance is very important in such schools. The school can spend the said amount under the major heads like examination fee, salary to the staff and infrastructure and maintenance grant. For normal maintenance like tube lights, fan repairing, plumber work, the school no. 17 is given a grant of Rs.2000 per year since last 3 years. In addition to that every teacher is given an extra grant of Rs.500 per year for purchasing materials related to teaching aid. This grant is given by Sarva Siksha Abhyan. Again, certain amount is being kept aside for the expense towards salary of teaching and non-teaching staff and examination fee which is not being disclosed by the school. Annual audits are being carried out in the school by the government authorities where the school has to show the amount which is spent under various heads according to the government's directives.

Various NGOs contribute voluntarily for the development of the school by installing electronic items like music system, water coolers, uniforms, notebooks, writing material etc.

5.4.4 Marketing

Marketing is synonymous with competition. Whenever there is a competition, any product or services needs to be marketed because the information about the plus points of that product or service should reach the down end customers. It is then only the customer can choose between the various options. Since the municipal schools run as per the directive of the government also use the grants given by the government, the school does not need any kind of individual marketing. But the government has the single point agenda to promote universal literacy and this is

being carried out through these schools. Thus the ministry of human welfare and human resources from time to time try to reach out to the lowest strata of the society by promoting campaigns. These campaigns include newspaper ads, television commercials and radio ads issued in public interest. Basically marketing here is limited to spreading awareness amongst the people and not the game of unique selling proposition.