

## CHAPTER - II

### QUALITY ISSUES IN EDUCATION: CONCEPT AND PROVISIONS IN RMSA

#### 2.0 INTRODUCTION

Quality in education and quality in school education is a subject which has seized a number of scholars, academicians, administrators, journalists and general observers the world throughout, including India. In the recent years, the subject has grabbed headlines. Ministers and Governments have been called to answer in the Parliament on the status of quality in school education, especially around the time the survey results on the achievement of learning outcomes of school children are released.

The present study has focussed on the literature and relevant writings on the subject of quality in secondary education in India, with emphasis on the reports and documents related to RMSA. However, as mentioned before, not much has been done on the specific study implementation of quality interventions in schools under RMSA.

The principal purpose of a literature review is to establish the academic and research areas which are of relevance to the subject of the research.<sup>15</sup> A research review is also a source of data in its own right.<sup>16</sup> Review of related literature implies locating, tracing and evaluating reports of research findings as well as reports of casual observations and opinions that are related to the individuals, and planned research projects. The collection of available literature helps to uncover a number of studies related to the problem under study. Unless the areas of work that others have completed are ascertained and the areas left unexplored are identified to focus the light on those areas by the researchers.

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<sup>15</sup> Paul Oliver, *Writing Your Thesis*, (2008), Sage, Delhi.

<sup>16</sup> David E. McNabb: *Research Methods in Public Administration and Non-Profit Management- Quantitative and Qualitative Approaches*; PHI Learning Pvt. Ltd, New Delhi, 2012.

Review of researches is very essential for an investigator to know the area in which research work is needed and for determining and describing the different dimensions of problems. This may provide scope for drawing a base for the conceptual frame work for the proposed study.

This chapter presents the review of the related literature for the present study and the interpretation of concept of quality as understood from the available literature on RMSA. The chapter has been arranged in four sections, dealing with studies related to the themes as stated below:

- Concept of Quality in Secondary Schools: An Overview
- Studies related to teacher training and its impact on quality education
- Understanding of Quality in RMSA
- Other Studies

## **2.1 CONCEPT OF QUALITY IN SECONDARY SCHOOLS: AN OVERVIEW**

Education which includes outcomes that encompass knowledge, skills and attitudes that are linked to national goals for education and positive participation in society, content that is reflected in relevant curricula and materials for the acquisition of basic skills, especially in the areas of literacy, numeracy and skills for life, processes through which trained teachers use child-centred teaching approaches in well-managed classrooms and skilful assessment to facilitate learning and reduce disparities, is what defines quality in education, according to UNICEF.<sup>17</sup> This supports the view that there is no single factor but a host of factors that influence the quality of education in schools.

A school is only as good as its teachers, said Charles Weber (1956), in ‘An Overview of Secondary Education in India’. Like-wise, the type of training that the teacher has had will be constantly reflected in the quality of teaching and the general progressiveness of the school. He spoke about the outstanding shortages in India in

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<sup>17</sup>Sadig Rasheed, in the preface to the UNICEF Working paper ‘Defining Quality in Education’ presented at the meeting of The International Working Group on Education, Florence, Italy, June 2000 (<https://www.unicef.org/education/files/QualityEducation.PDF>)

the teaching field and the shift from the over emphasis on exam to have a promotion based on a wider range rather than just tests. He also commented that the problem was that the focus of secondary school in India has been preparation for higher education rather than for life and spoke of the need for modernizing the curriculum of teacher training courses. What he said of teacher training in 1956 still holds true now. The pertinent question that we should be asking of the teacher training courses, the content and design of teacher training short term training courses, especially now since they are being widely organized under such government programmes like RMSA and under SSA too. The training colleges have failed to develop techniques and methods that fulfil the needs of the present-day Indian schools and there is still too much emphasis on subject matter and less stress given to technique and purposes.

Continuing on the same lines, William Van Til<sup>18</sup> in his work “Crucial issues in Secondary Education” talks about social realities, environment and setting, content, organization, teaching strategies, administering and supervising .He mentions that in the new social reality, with globalization, rapid and fluid changes characterizing the economic landscape, more emphasis will be needed on skills which will help students adapt to a new reality and equip them with the ability for self-discovery and consequent development of a wholesome self-image.

This is the concern that most parents have. Are our children equipped with the skills needed for life out of school? Are our children learning in schools, the knowledge and skills that will help them live useful, productive and successful lives? Isn't it the concern that their children should not be disadvantaged that spurs most parents to send their children to expensive private schools in the pursuit of what is perceived to be better quality education in the private schools would help their children get an advantage in life with the skills and capacities they develop or pick up in a good schooling environment.

Quality has been defined in the Oxford Dictionary as “the standard of something when it is compared to other things like it”.<sup>19</sup> Locating the term quality in

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<sup>18</sup> Van Til, William, (1976), “Crucial Issues in Secondary Education”, in *Theory Into Practice*, Vol. 15, No. 3, The High School: Promises to Keep, Jun.,1976, pp. 183-190

<sup>19</sup> [https://www.oxfordlearnersdictionaries.com/definition/english/quality\\_1](https://www.oxfordlearnersdictionaries.com/definition/english/quality_1)

educational discourse is a universal concern today. Education of good quality should be available to all, irrespective of whether it is in private schools or government schools.

In the Final Report on ‘Quality in School Education’, a study conducted by the Institute for Studies in Industrial Development for Quality Council of India on the role played by various School Education boards, the inputs such as curriculum, syllabus, pedagogy, examination and evaluation, accreditation and affiliation were examined and compared. The study also seeks to find good practices in the schools in an attempt to document the practices associated with consistent quality and high performance of schools.

While it is a common practice and an aspiration amongst most parents to ensure their children get quality education, it is a general expectation that education of good quality should be available to all. This report reiterates that “the belief that quality goes with privilege is clearly irreconcilable with vision of participatory democracy that India upholds and practises in the political sphere. Thus, its practice in the sphere of education demands that the education available to all children in different regions and sections of society has a comparable quality”.<sup>20</sup> This report includes a comparative study of four education Boards in India - CBSE, CISCE, Delhi Government Schools and IBO taking into consideration broad aspects such as curriculum, syllabus, pedagogy, examination and evaluation, accreditation and affiliation and to find out some of the good practices in the schools. The study highlights the differences in the curriculum, syllabus, and pedagogy in these schools and how the affiliating bodies carry out inspection, the kinds of evaluation and examination patterns that are used and conducted by affiliating bodies and their actual operational status in these schools. The report lists some good practices in each of these categories of schools and a comparative assessment as well as the measure of the quality percentage achievement of studied schools on the basis of quality indicators.<sup>21</sup>

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<sup>20</sup> Institute for Studies in Industrial Development, ‘Final Report on Quality in School Education’ for Quality Council of India, New Delhi, <http://www.qcin.org/PDF/Comman/Quality-in-School-Education.pdf>

<sup>21</sup> *ibid*

The importance of good teacher training has also been explicitly stated in the National Policy on Education. ‘The National Policy on Education (NPE), 1986 revised in 1992 (along with the Programme of Action), reiterated the urgency to address the quality concerns in school education on priority basis. Quality cannot improve by itself. It requires reforms in teacher training; improvements in the facilities and infrastructure in schools; teachers’ motivation; and a change in the style of teaching to make it attractive to the students. However, in actual practice, there has always been a trade-off between quality and quantity, in favour of the latter. This not only affected the internal efficiency of the educational system but also resulted in a situation where only a few graduates of the school and higher education system could attain the expected skills and competencies’, as mentioned by Prasanthi Kokkeragadda in ‘Quality in School Education: Conceptual Understanding’.<sup>22</sup>

Asserting that learning outcomes in schools, especially government schools in India remain poor and that there is a need to focus and devote more resources and energies on improving quality, ASER’s report ‘Middle Schools in India: Access and Quality’ sought to generate new evidence regarding access and quality of post primary education in India and questions if our educational policy is equipped to cope with the realities of adolescent children and their context. The opinion was held out that policy making and planning should be informed by an in-depth stock taking exercise that reviews where we are today and identifies key challenges that need to be addressed if quality secondary education for all is to be achieved. It is true that for a number of years, the primary thrust of education policy in India has been on achieving universal access and retention at the elementary level. According to the Annual Status of Education Report (ASER 2014)<sup>23</sup>, the percentage of in-school children in the age group of 6-14 is over 96 percent. Further, under the Right of Children to Free and Compulsory Education Act, 2009 (RTE), all children in this age group are now guaranteed education until grade 8.

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<sup>22</sup> Kokkeragadda, Prasanthi, Quality in School Education: A Conceptual Understanding, *International Journal of Advanced Research in Education & Technology (IJARET)* Vol. 4, Issue 1 (Jan. - Mar. 2017) , pages 71-73, <http://ijaret.com/wp-content/themes/felicity/issues/vol4issue1>

<sup>23</sup> Pratham, Annual Status of Education Report 2014, New Delhi

Important questions are still pressing with regard to access to as well as quality and relevance of the education children receive at the post primary level. The available evidence on learning outcomes indicates that while school enrolment has expanded and retention has been ensured at the elementary level, learning levels remain poor.

According to ASER 2014, the proportion of children in rural India in Class Five who can read a Class Two level text is 48.1 percent and only 26.1 percent can solve a 3-digit by 1-digit division problem. In other words, half of the children entering middle schools cannot read a Class Two level text and only one out of four children can solve an arithmetic sum usually taught in Classes 3-4. Other data on learning achievement, from Education Initiatives (EI) or Government of India's own assessments (using different methodologies and indicators) also demonstrate that learning outcomes at the primary stage are far from satisfactory.<sup>24</sup>

It was pointed out that “low-quality education is associated with poor student performance, higher levels of repetition, and increased dropout rates. In particular, when parents are aware their child's school is underperforming, they may prefer to send him or her into the workforce or keep their child at home, as there will be little return on investment”.<sup>25</sup> The authors quote Glewwe and Kremer from their paper titled “Schools, Teachers, and Educational Outcomes in Developing Countries”, in which they had reviewed a wide number of retrospective studies measuring the impact of school and teacher characteristics on learning .One interpretation of these results of the review is that in many developing countries, “the most effective means of improving school quality may be through addressing the problem of weak teaching”.<sup>26</sup> Quality secondary education has the potential to deliver enormous benefits. Beyond the direct impact of improving the employment prospects of individuals, post primary education can also produce huge gains at the societal level. In addition to improving economic growth and reducing poverty, there exist a raft of positive externalities that come with educational attainment including improved health, lower maternal and

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<sup>24</sup> Pratham, ‘Middle Schools in India: Access and Quality’, March 2016, ASER, New Delhi,

<sup>25</sup> Ibid, Page 15

<sup>26</sup> ibid, pages 15-16

child mortality, lower population growth, and increased gender equality (World Bank, 2009).<sup>27</sup>

## **2.2 STUDIES RELATED TO TEACHER TRAINING AND ITS IMPACT ON QUALITY EDUCATION**

The study ‘Relationship between Teacher Training and its impact on Quality Education’ carried out by Fazalur Rahman, Nabi Bux Jumani, Yasmin Akhter, Saeed-ul-Hasan Chisthi, Muhammad Ajmal, in schools in Islamabad, examined the ways in which teacher training was related to effective teaching in terms of student achievement where the study made a link associating teacher training and effectiveness in classroom situation affecting actual instruction/academic work, classroom management, evaluation procedures, assignments and developing relationships with students, principal, and society in general. The study concluded that teacher training was positively related to effective teaching. The results of the study also indicated that there is a significant co-relation between teachers training and student test result. It was recommended that quality training programs for teachers be introduced as it has significant co-relation with student performance.

‘Teacher education is the foundation of entire education system’, says Anita Deswal in her article ‘The Business of Teacher Education in Haryana’.<sup>28</sup> A good education system prepares good citizens according to the need of the society. The success of the education system depends to a significant extent on the characteristics and ability of the teacher who is the cornerstone of the system of education. Teachers deal with the invaluable raw material of human resources (children) of the nation. If teachers do not possess the capabilities and are unable to fulfil the requirements of teaching-learning process, they cannot contribute to build a good, healthy and constructive society. Therefore, a proper education of teachers is not only essential to improve the quality of school education but is a sine qua non of human development.’ She also comments on the defects that ails teacher education not only in Haryana, but also in the whole country.

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<sup>27</sup> *ibid*, page 22.

<sup>28</sup> Anita Deswal, ‘The Business of Teacher Education in Haryana’, *Economic & Political Weekly*, Vol. 52, Issue No. 11, 18 Mar, 2017

‘There is widespread acknowledgement that the quality of teachers is the single-most important determinant of the quality of an education system,’ say Hisako Akai and Padma M. Sarangapani in their article on Elementary Teacher Education<sup>29</sup>. They concluded that the present system cares little about quality teacher education, and by implication, quality teachers. Reforming the sector must include curricular changes to strengthen the programme of teacher preparation - a move that has already been initiated by the NCTE and followed by the states.’ This study draws attention to the vulnerability of institutions to state action and to the inability of the programme to live up to the student-teachers’ and teacher-educators’ expectations who were giving it their time and best effort.

### **2.3 UNDERSTANDING OF QUALITY UNDER RMSA**

In order to achieve good quality education, it is important that there is a broad agreement on aspirations, processes and outcomes. Traditionally, using test results as a method to judge the quality of education has been common, likely because results are obtainable at a very low cost and satisfy simple notions of 'accountability' and 'performance management.' However, over the past two decades, countries around the world have been successful in their efforts to improve education by focusing on improving schools. Schools are where the learning happens. A lot of emphasis is also given to learning outcomes.

In ‘Secondary Education: Planning and Appraisal Manual’, one of the earliest documents developed by NUEPA to help in the planning and implementation of RMSA , factors such as suitable infrastructure, curriculum, learning resources, teachers, academic support, teaching-learning process, monitoring evaluating and supervision, are said to be influencing the quality of secondary education and thus planning for the interventions of the above factors under RMSA should be so that their cumulative effect leads to the quality secondary education.<sup>30</sup>

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<sup>29</sup> Hisako Akai and Padma M. Sarangapani in their article ‘Preparing to Teach Elementary Teacher Education at a District Institute’ *Economic & Political Weekly*, Vol. 52, Issue No. 34, 26 Aug, 2017

<sup>30</sup>Zaidi, Biswal, Mohanty and Lal, *Secondary Education: Planning and Appraisal Manual*, (2012), NUEPA



The Framework for the Implementation of RMSA (MHRD, 2009) cites quality provisions such as (i) infrastructure including Black Board, Furniture, Library Science & Mathematics Laboratories, Computer Labs, Toilets, (ii) appointment of additional teachers and in-service training of teachers, (iii) Bridge courses for enhancing learning ability for students passing out of class VIII, (iv) Reviewing curriculum to meet the NCF 2005 norms as strategies for improvement of quality in secondary schools.<sup>31</sup>

The RMSA framework stresses on provision of required infrastructure - Class rooms according to the recommended classroom-student ratio, Principal's room cum office, library, integrated Science and Mathematics laboratories with Maths and Science kits ,computer labs and instructors<sup>32</sup>, vocational education labs, toilets and drinking water facilities, sports equipment and quality inputs such as providing teachers in all the subjects – English, Language, Social Science, Mathematics and Science, use of ICTs in teaching and learning, etc.

The component of teacher training, both in-service subject teachers training and induction training for newly appointed secondary school teachers training was provided for and availed of by most of the states, including Haryana, from the start of the programme. The component for training of Head-Masters and Principals in School Leadership and administration was added later on. Remedial courses to identified students was also implemented with the objective of enabling students with learning gaps to bring them to Class 9 readiness level. The RMSA framework also listed review of the curriculum to meet the National Curriculum Framework (NCF 2005) norms as an important activity for quality improvement inputs in RMSA. The states also implemented School Excursions, Science Fairs, Science Exhibition at district level, Self-defence classes for girl students, yoga training as part of the quality interventions which was permitted under the Framework.

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<sup>31</sup> *Framework for the Implementation of RMSA*, MHRD (2009)

<sup>32</sup> In 2013-14, four previously existing schemes of the Govt of India, ICT @ Schools, IEDSS, Girls Hostel Scheme and Vocational Education were subsumed into the RMSA, thus automatically extending coverage of RMSA into Higher Secondary section.

The RMSA framework called for reform of the examination system to move away from rote learning, ensure adolescent education programme, school-level counselling for secondary school students and sensitization of the school head and teachers, activities for which for which the State Education Boards need to be involved. But is this happening at all?

The RMSA framework emphasizes the importance of learning assessment in the school and periodic state level assessment to get an understanding of student learning levels so that it can feed into research on where students make mistakes, thereby influencing teacher support material and continuing professional development of teachers.

The framework highlights quality-planning process which requires institutional reforms and involvement of local communities to participate effectively in the affairs of the school through School Management Committees. The involvement of the teaching community in the planning process would also be necessary to ensure that the school system emerges as the principal institution for community partnership.<sup>33</sup>

The RMSA Framework mentions the necessity to equip schools with a Learning Resource Center which includes Library inputs, ICT support and Edusat to improve education in Secondary and Higher Secondary schools.<sup>34</sup>

Thus, the understanding and the approach of quality under RMSA as per the RMSA Framework is comprehensive and covers all dimensions – inputs, processes and outcomes.

The NCERT in its RMSA Quality Vision document mentions a set of three dimensions that are to be improved within each school:

- (i) students' learning outcomes (what students learn);
- (ii) governance of schools (how schools are run) and
- (iii) school provisioning (providing the resources the school needs to improve).

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<sup>33</sup> *Framework for the Implementation of RMSA* (MHRD,2009) page 15

<sup>34</sup> *ibid*, page 32

The NCERT also developed a Quality Assessment Tool in which it identified eight indicators for Quality Assessment in schools which are (i) Infrastructural Facilities, (ii) School Environment-safe, healthy and inclusive (iii) Learning Resources, including curriculum and teaching-learning materials, (iv) Classroom and laboratory processes, (v) Leadership and school management, (vi) Teaching and non-teaching staff, (vii) Teacher development and (viii) Learners' assessment.<sup>35</sup>

The reports of the JRMs are very illuminating on the implementation of the RMSA.

The first Joint Review Mission (JRM) of RMSA which was held from 14th to 28th January 2013 in New Delhi to review the progress in the implementation of RMSA with respect to RMSA Goals. Here, they raised the issue of learning outcomes and tried to identify the main constraints to learning outcomes. Finding effective strategies to overcome these constraints would help teachers respond to the multiple learning needs of their students and assist states to develop strategies which feed into their RMSA proposals. It also found that each state visited was concerned about improving the learning levels of children, especially the influx of less educationally-prepared children now leaving elementary education, due to the advent of non-retention as per RTE. The states were also concerned that the current model of student examinations in secondary education is not helpful for teachers trying to diagnose student strengths and weaknesses and develop effective strategies to respond to children's different learning needs. The lack of comparability over time, also affects States' ability to make informed decisions; and the lack of comparability across states means it is not possible to get a national picture. Thus, right from the first JRM, there was a link made between learning outcomes and teachers and teaching strategies.

Linking teacher training, assessments of learning levels and remedial teaching, the Second JRM report points out some of the States have initiated learning enhancement programme or bridge courses under RMSA quality initiatives by surveying of children who have just entered class IX, administering a test to assess learning deficit and then conducting coaching classes or remedial courses as a follow

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<sup>35</sup> NCERT, *Quality Assessment Tools*, August 2015, New Delhi, Page 8

on. Modules are then prepared specially for these bridge courses and teachers are given orientation for these capsule programmes. Some States intend to make this kind of assessment a regular practice and conduct such tests every year to improve learning levels of children. The results of these tests were also made available to SCERTs to be incorporated as inputs for teacher training.

A considerable proportion of children enter the secondary stage without acquiring the competency level expected to be acquired at the level of the upper primary stage, the 3<sup>rd</sup> RMSA JRM, which was held from 13th to 27th January 2014, reports and thus it is desirable to conduct a formative baseline assessment of the reading, writing and arithmetic skills of every student and of remediating the inadequacies and preparing every student for secondary education. It opined that it is desirable to lay down the levels of reading, writing and arithmetic required to be achieved in class 9 and class 10 (Learning Indicator) and to conduct surveys each year. This particular step would have helped Secondary school teachers to identify the learning gaps in students without any large-scale assessments. It would also help to take steps to remedy this learning gap in individual students in the class itself, without waiting for the full-scale government programme. A few States have laid down competency levels and have begun to conduct learning achievement surveys. A national frame which specifies the minimum learning indicators as well as the levels of competencies for each of the classes at secondary stage will need to be developed to assist in generation all India data on the achievement of basic competencies .It also noted that quality improvement measures like curriculum and syllabi revision, teacher training, development and use of teaching aids, and new methods of class room transaction are being introduced in some states. A warning bell was sounded by the JRM when it said, “It is essential that the relevance, adequacy and effectiveness of these measures be subjected to ex-ante assessment and ex-post evaluation by experts lest programme managers should harbour the illusion that quality is being enhanced. This is all the more important as States are being provided freedom to develop various quality improvement measures.”

The fourth JRM of RMSA that was held from 4th to 12th August 2014 looked at In-Service Training for teachers. However, insufficient information on a wide range of aspects of in-service programmes prevented the JRM from making an informed

opinion. Thus, the issue of a need for a study and evaluation of this aspect of RMSA implementation was raised. It recommended that States should prepare 3-year plans for quality improvement. This re-affirms the approach that NUEPA advocated in its 'Secondary Education: Planning and Appraisal Manual'. Till then, the overall coverage of in-service training was poor, with States not being able to complete the trainings they have planned and got funds for. However, this was a comment on the numbers and even then, there was no qualitative examination of how teacher trainings were implemented.

The fifth JRM Report which was held from 27<sup>th</sup> January to 9<sup>th</sup> February 2014 and included field observations from the states of Assam, Gujarat, Haryana, Tamil Nadu and Uttarakhand, mentioned that a common concern expressed by teachers to all state missions was that the majority of Grade 8 elementary school graduates enter secondary school without the foundational knowledge to cope with the Grade 9 syllabus and that this is a major concern which warrants urgent and targeted remedial action. The JRM found that in some States, 'bridging camps' were being held during the vacation prior to graduation to Junior Secondary. It recommended other complementary co-ordinated strategies and actions as well as institutionalizing the separate and unconnected between SSA and RMSA. It was also observed summarily that a field observation and analysis of NAS data indicates that considerably more than 20 percent of students (the current RMSA funding norm for financing remedial education) require remedial support to bring them to a level of learning where they can cope with the secondary school curriculum and recommended a range of strategies to address this challenge. Some of the suggestions include review/revision of the 2005 NCF curriculum, closer elementary/secondary collaboration and better preparation of students during elementary school.

The tendency to commonly cite state average grade 10 board pass rates ranging between 60-80% as evidence that all is well with secondary schooling is misleading and erroneous since the State average pass rates are not a reliable indicator of secondary student performance. State averages hide significantly lower pass rates among small, rural and schools serving the most disadvantaged. It also cautions that depending on these State board exams pass percentage is very misleading due to the fact a majority of schools practice sending only those students who are likely to pass

for the Grade 10 board examinations students thereby ensuring that school pass rates are artificially high since these pass out rates do not take into consideration the number of students who have been held back. The use of State pass averages is therefore likely to mask important differentials in performance between subjects, school types and gender and social groups, when field visits and school wise data throw up cases where up-to 50% of students are failing their exams which indicate serious inefficiencies in the Secondary School system.

Another issue raised is the lack of subject teachers in Secondary Schools. The RMSA RFD reports that less than a quarter of all government schools have a full complement of specialist teachers. It was observed that shortage of subject teachers is a predictor of poor exam performance. Passing of the grade X board exam is determined by the composite score from all subjects a student takes which puts a student attending a school without a full complement of specialist teachers at a distinct disadvantage in the examination. Shortfall in specialist teachers (notably Science and Maths and Languages) is common across India. In many instances this may be further exacerbated by sub-optimal teacher deployment. In combination this is likely to be contributing to high levels of exam failure/under performance particularly of the most disadvantaged sections of the population.

It was noted that the objective to improve student performance for the most disadvantaged will require particular attention to subject specific teacher shortages, teacher preparation and teacher deployment and recognized that addressing these issues is politically challenging and not likely to happen overnight, which are however critical for the continuing evolution of India's education system. Some suggestions for further interventions under the programme include (i) greater disaggregated analysis of exam pass rate data by geography, school location / size, subject, gender, and disadvantaged group, (ii) closer attention to subject specific teacher shortage/recruitment, (iii) exploration of the potential for teacher workforce deployment to provide a better subject teacher coverage across schools, (iv) and improved teacher preparation and training particularly in Maths, Science and Languages.

One of the most pertinent observation the JRM made was that In-service training being conducted by the states is perceived to have no long-term improvement in the quality of teaching. It noted that the in-service training component has been revised to an integrated training of 10 days (from the funding point of view) for teachers – 5 days for subject training and 5 days for ICT, IE or any training module/for Gender Sensitization/Guidance and Counselling/Adolescent Education, etc. Teachers have little say about the content of the programs and the content and practices are often fragmented, lacking in intensity and with no follow-up. There are limited opportunities for collaborative and cooperative learning among teachers. It noted that even if teachers learn some ideas related to new pedagogies, the teachers' practice in classrooms has not changed in any significant manner.

Some states target their training at schools to improve Board examination pass percentage, thus undermining the significance of coordinated program of continuing professional development of teachers. The report critically points out that the mechanisms of quality control in the form of training evaluation, student assessment and follow-up of trained teachers are weak or absent and that to make the best use of this integrated training, there should be a systematic identification of training needs and teachers to be covered, and the training content to be delivered should be designed based on this. **The ultimate measure of education quality is whether students can learn what they need to learn and that a strong system is one in which all children can achieve their potential.**<sup>36</sup> One of the focus issues during this JRM was student learning assessments at the National and State levels. It also states that a key input into quality education is having adequate and well-trained teachers.

During the field visits as part of the JRM, it was observed that there is a heavy reliance on the subject and pedagogy oriented trainings in the training process. Considerable focus is being given for subject specific training, particularly in Science, Mathematics and Language. However, not much attention is given to integration topics such as ICT, life skills, inclusive education, gender sensitivity and hands on activity in the training content of pedagogical and subject training. Training models across States are limited to centralised design and quality of materials and logistic

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<sup>36</sup> 6<sup>th</sup> RMSA JRM, MHRD,2015

arrangements varied within and across the State. It has been observed that though there is a general belief amongst teachers that such trainings help them to integrate new knowledge, skills and attitudes into their classroom practice, the repetitiveness and stereotypes of such trainings are putting negative impact on the participation of teachers. It mentions that the quality of resource persons, interactive mode of training, use of ICT and multimedia are effective components of the training process and that in all such trainings, the teachers must be given the feeling that the exercise of feedback collection is an important activity, and on the basis of feedback, changes in training must be made accordingly. A proper follow-up mechanism has to be put into place and teachers need to be encouraged to undertake research projects to examine the impact of training on student performance and academic growth.

The overarching observation in report of the Seventh Joint Review Mission which was held on April 11-23, 2016 was that implementation of the quality framework could be done in a more coordinated and cohesive manner and all that aspects of quality should get equal attention and that while there are instances of good practices, the scale has been modest. It was observed that Telangana Government has implemented a comprehensive reform of curriculum, textbooks, continuous and comprehensive evaluation and examination system. However, its impact on learning is yet to be assessed. The report mentioned that teacher professional development remains a challenge in all the states visited.

The JRM enumerated some critical aspects of quality and observed that Teacher availability, especially in Science, Mathematics and Language remain a formidable challenge- that State governments need to recognize the problem, come to grips with both supply and demand of teachers with respect to specific subjects and take action accordingly. States could also strategically use ICT to improve the quality of teaching, plan and manage pre-service teacher training with appropriate incentives for Science and Mathematics graduates to enroll in B. Ed, which would address teacher shortages in these areas to some extent.

The Eighth Joint Review Mission (JRM) of Rashtriya Madhyamik Shiksha Abhiyan that was held from September 20- 30th, 2016 focussed on the Quality interventions aspects of the programme especially on learning outcomes, specifically



the NAS Class 10, National and State reports of the NAS X, Secondary school readiness and remediation programs and Subject Teacher deployment for equitable distribution of subject teachers across schools. The JRM observed that under RMSA, teacher professional development is limited to in-service training and that there is a wide variation among States and UTs in the management and coverage of teacher training. The needs assessment before delivering training and the follow-up of the effect of training is limited. Moreover, the JRM is of the view that professional development should expand to cover more opportunities for teachers to enhance their knowledge and skills. It was noted that the findings of the NAS point to the need for immediate attention and remedial action and linking this to teachers' ability to match their teaching to the actual learning levels of their students to be the most effective way they can support student learning. School readiness/remediation programs can help teachers use this pedagogical approach to support individual student's learning needs and that some States are adopting this strategy and taking forward secondary school preparedness and remediation programmes.

Existing common approaches to tackle this problem frequently rely on extra classes or additional classes during zero hour and assembly sessions or during the vacations or school breaks. However, it is also a challenge to ensure regular student attendance in such classes. Furthermore, this strategy makes it compulsory for those students identified as weak to attend, thereby segregating weaker students may add a degree of stigma and runs contrary to the principles of inclusion.

## **2.4 OTHER STUDIES**

Dr Jayshree Oza, Brad Cousins and Parul Pandya in their report titled 'RMSA Teacher In-Service Training Evaluation', dated March 2016, documented that In-service training implementation has been started in most states and UTs actively from the year 2011-12. The report which resulted from a study of training in five states Assam, Bihar, Karnataka, Madhya Pradesh and Odisha, mentioned outputs as amount of professional development service provided as reflected in the number of training sessions offered, how many educators from various rolls are exposed to the training and the amount of funding provided to support the initiative. These outputs are understood to be necessary but not sufficient conditions for training to have expected

impact on states, districts, schools and classrooms. In terms of Outcomes, the study's approach is that the results of training are considered in terms of immediate effects at the site of training (satisfaction, learning) as well as intermediate effects associated with the transfer of knowledge and skill to schools and classrooms. The study was limited in that a longer term impact on student achievement and growth was beyond the scope of the study.

That RMSA teacher training needs are yet to be met is buttressed by the facts emerging from the RMSA -TCA report. Though the report cited the range of literature review as a basis for a series of key recommendations and lessons learned , such as (i) effective in-service teacher training involves teachers at all stages of the programs including the planning stage, (ii) is a process that includes planning, implementation and follow-up, and requires support structures within a school, (iii) starts with and builds on the existing local context, (iv) largely depends for its effectiveness on the availability of support at the school level, (v) must be practical, appropriate to the teacher audience and transferable to classrooms, (vi) is developmental and cyclical in nature, (vii) is led by personnel dedicated to professional development and (viii) has feedback mechanisms that inform ongoing training development and reform. The report states that some of the major weaknesses and challenges in developing country contexts that have been identified are that in-service programmes are often developed without consultation with teachers, delivered by unqualified instructors and delivered through inappropriate strategies that emphasize quantity (number of teachers trained) over quality (effective learning opportunities).<sup>37</sup>

With regard to the research question in the study 'To what extent is RMSA in – service teacher training being implemented as intended? The opinion stated is that from a planning perspective, good cooperation in the development of modules and resources is apparent and RMSA priorities appear to be finding their way into the training modules.<sup>38</sup> However, it does not appear that the RMSA quality guidelines were also adhered to as it was observed that in-service training continues to be highly

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<sup>37</sup>Jayshree Oza, Brad Cousins & Parul Pandya; RMSA-TCA Report No. 2.17, 'RMSA Teacher In-Service Training Evaluation', March 2016 (page 13)

<sup>38</sup> Ibid, page 15

subject-oriented and pedagogical in focus<sup>39</sup>. It was also not clear as to what extent emphasis is being put toward RMSA priorities, including inclusive education, ICT, life skills and leadership. The issues that came up as problematic include timing, fund flow and the amount of funds approved and the release of teachers for training. Module preparation was based on workshop mode the resource persons came from the different government department such as Board of School Education, SCERT, etc.<sup>40</sup> The Subjects were divided amongst them according to their subject and based on the identified hard spots, preparation of module with group work and group interaction with each other (Odisha)<sup>41</sup> which also suggests that RMSA considerations were not always in the forefront in planning modules and training content. There was some indication, however, that the integration of RMSA priorities into training design is increasing over time. The RMSA priorities were not discussed at the initial stage but afterwards these issues were discussed and addressed in classes in short. The study mentions that equity was addressed and use of ICT was there. Again, it is not clear how this observation and conclusion was arrived at. Inclusion was discussed in limited form (Madhya Pradesh).<sup>42</sup>

The study also mentioned that although needs assessment to inform training development is clearly a concern of many of the states, it is questionable as to the extent whether it was being done systematically and also whether it is of any value to training development. It doubted that teachers may play only a limited role in this regard. The study reported and quoted the interview responses as illustrations to show variability in the extent to which needs assessment is valued and integrated into the training process. While in some States, teachers had no idea of a needs assessment, in some States, assessment of hard spots was done during training itself (Bihar).<sup>43</sup> The study mentions in an anecdotal way that in Kerala, one of the Key Resource Persons mentioned that some of the needs were identified on the basis of PISA report of the State, in Himachal Pradesh, some needs are usually assessed by the Resource Persons

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<sup>39</sup> Ibid

<sup>40</sup> In Odisha

<sup>41</sup> The study did not clarify or elaborate how was this observation arrived at.

<sup>42</sup> Ibid, page 15

<sup>43</sup> Ibid

through interacting with the teachers. In Odisha, it appeared as if there was no need assessment, except that Resource Persons sometimes informally discuss requirements and tough areas in curriculum.<sup>44</sup>

A World Bank conducted study<sup>45</sup> had linked time-on-task or time spent engaged in learning activities as significant predictor of student academic achievement. MHRD asked the World Bank to organize a time-on-task study in secondary school classrooms with the objective of better understanding teachers' use of pedagogical practices, their use of teaching-learning materials and their understanding of common errors made by students. The study was conducted in a total of 150 classrooms across 3 districts each in Tamil Nadu and Madhya Pradesh. Class 10 classrooms in Modern Indian Language and Math were observed and main findings from this study are, Instructional practice was mainly teacher-centric and that on an average, teachers spend about 60% of classroom time on lectures or instruction and assigning students class work in Math classes; in Language classes, about 60% of the time is spent on these activities including reading aloud from the blackboard or textbook. Evidence of the use of other learning aids was observed to a very small extent and was limited to a couple of districts; and the use of ICT was not found. Finally, teachers were able to correctly identify student errors only about a third of the time on questions, which ranged from Grade 5-9 materials.

The study highlights the need for further examination on the link between classroom practices and student outcomes. This study points out the incongruency that though teachers are spending substantial class time on instructional activities, results from the NAS indicate this is not leading to good enough student learning outcomes. Further, re-examining the content of teacher preparation and training programs to ensure content mastery among teachers will be crucial for teacher effectiveness and student learning. Finally, there were small but notable differences across districts in instructional practices; these differences could be the result of district-level processes for teacher recruitment and pre-service training and in-service training. It was also found that while textbooks have been revised in several states, the

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<sup>44</sup> Ibid, page 15

<sup>45</sup> World Bank, February 2014 'How much and what kind of teaching is there in elementary education in India? Evidence from three states'.

approach has not been comprehensive and holistic. The accent was on time-bound completion of topics with week-wise or month-wise regime of what should be taught and when.

## **2.5 IMPLICATIONS OF THE LITERATURE REVIEWED FOR THE PRESENT STUDY**

This review of the literature primarily focused upon the quality concern, the critical role of teacher education and teacher training and the various means to bring about quality in schools. One section, the JRM section, chiefly being reports on the implementation of RMSA.

A common theme running through all the above works is that teacher effectiveness is a major hinge on which student achievement and achieving quality in teaching learning processes swings, along with the underlying provision of school environment, curriculum design, learning resources, student support and guidance; quality management and enhancement are different, constituent elements of the overall provision shaping students' learning experiences in quality schools.

The literature review thus facilitated the researcher to put the present study in perspective with current knowledge and practices in this area. It was found that there is a need for more research in these areas as opportunities for more research will not only address concerns regarding the effective implementation of the programme but also if there is any need to change any of the provisions. Further research will also add to the knowledge in this area.

Owing to the ambiguity of the understanding of quality concepts, varying contexts and deeply embedded problems within the education system on the whole especially in the context of government sector schools, the present study is both timely and relevant and may perhaps make a contribution to understand how and what interventions are critical in the face of limited resources and time.