



Perceptions of Young Teachers on the Issues Associated with Bringing Out Model Schools in Tribal Areas of Paschim Medinipur

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Abstract: *The tribal-heavy Paschim Medinipur district is recognized as one of the academically underdeveloped regions in West Bengal. The scholastic performance of the district remains significantly below both state and national benchmarks. Similarly, the rate of students leaving school prematurely is higher than the national average. Recognizing the needs of tribal youth, the government (both central and state) has introduced various ambitious programs and initiatives to elevate the district's educational standards. Ultimately, however, we recognize that the effectiveness of these government mandates rests heavily on the contributions of the educators working within the district's schools. This research aims to understand how newly recruited junior teachers in the tribal zones of Paschim Medinipur view their schools and students. Specifically, this investigation seeks to pinpoint the challenges and complications within these institutions that hinder the development of model schools. Furthermore, the author aims to gather practical suggestions directly from the educators to transform their institutions into ideal, exemplary centres of learning for tribal children.*

Keywords: *Model School, Cluster Sampling Method, DIET, Holistic Growth.*

Introduction: Every dedicated educator aspires to work in a model school. An ideal institution is defined by a supportive atmosphere, sufficient infrastructure, committed and trained staff, engaged support personnel, motivated students, community involvement, and outstanding results in both academic and extracurricular domains. Yet, who is responsible for creating such an environment? The answer lies with the teachers, supported by the administration, the community, and helpful staff. It is often observed that high-achieving youths today are less likely to choose teaching as a career. However, average students frequently show a strong interest in the pedagogical profession. Therefore, it is the administration's duty, in partnership with teacher training institutes (TTIs), to cultivate their skills, competence, and dedication. To achieve this, the School and Mass Education Department of West Bengal organizes various pre-service and in-service training sessions and workshops through teacher education centres.

During an in-service training program for novice teachers at a DIET in Paschim Medinipur, a workshop was held to capture the perspectives of young, untrained educators working in these tribal-dominated regions. This paper is derived from the insights gained during that session. The article addresses the following inquiries:

- ❖ What are the views of junior teachers regarding a model school?
- ❖ What obstacles impede the creation of model schools in tribal-dominated territories?

- ❖ What strategic actions should be taken to transform schools into model institutions within these regions?

Objectives of the Study: The primary goals of this research were:

- To examine the attitudes of young teachers toward the concept of a model school.
- To compile the perspectives of educators concerning the essential components of a model school.
- To isolate the hurdles and issues present in current schools that prevent them from becoming model institutions in tribal areas.
- To gather remedial advice from teachers for establishing their schools as benchmarks for others.

Population and Sample of the Study: The entire elementary school teaching force of the Paschim Medinipur district comprised the population for this study. From this group, 120 junior, untrained teachers from various blocks were selected as the sample. A cluster sampling method was employed for selection. The participants ranged in age from 20 to 40 years, representing various social backgrounds.

Key Terms Defined: The following essential terms within the study title are defined below:

Young Untrained Teachers: The study involved newly recruited, untrained educators in elementary schools across various blocks of the tribal-dominated Paschim Medinipur district. These teachers fell within the 25 to 40-year age bracket. Based on their age and limited experience (ranging from 1 to 5 years), they were categorized as young teachers.

Model School: Participants were asked to conceptualize a model school capable of delivering quality education for the holistic growth of their students. Most defined a model school as an institution with a pleasant learning environment and all the necessary amenities required to foster high-quality education.

Collection of Data: Data for this research was gathered during an in-service training session at a DIET in Paschim Medinipur. The workshop, which occurred in two stages at the DIET conference hall, focused on the views of junior teachers regarding ideal school standards. Fifty-eight educators participated in the first phase, and 62 in the second. The information was acquired through open group discussions facilitated by experts. Teachers were divided into three groups based on age and gender. Prior to the discussion, they were asked to document their individual thoughts on the definition of a model school, the major barriers within their own schools, and recommendations for improvement.

Distributions of Samples

Sl. No.	Blocks	Gender		Educational Qualifications		Age	
		Male	Female	+2	Graduation	Below 25	From 25 to 40
1	Salboni	13	7	15	5	6	11
2	Keshpur	6	7	10	13	8	8
3	Garhbeta - I	10	6	12	4	6	10
4	Keshiari	5	6	8	3	8	3
5	Narayangarh	4	3	4	3	4	3

6	Ghatal	3	5	1	7	6	2
7	Chandrokona	4	4	3	5	5	3
8	Garhbeta - II	2	2	2	2	4	0
9	Medinipur Sadar	4	3	4	3	4	3
10	Dantan - I	4	3	6	1	2	5
11	Dantan - II	8	3	8	3	4	7
12	Kharagpur - I	6	2	5	3	1	7
Total	12	69	51	78	42	58	62
Grand Total	12	120		120		120	

Discussion and Findings

Objectives - 1 & 2

Perceptions of the Young Untrained Teachers about a Model School

Youth represent the foundation of the nation; their vision and commitment drive national development. To grasp the expectations of these new teachers, we sought their definition of a model school. Their views are summarized below:

- A model school should be situated in a safe, serene, and pollution-free area surrounded by nature.
- It should feature superior infrastructure, including well-decorated classrooms, an office, staff room, resource center, library, laboratories, a kitchen for midday meals, and teacher quarters. Additionally, it needs a multipurpose hall, playground, sports facilities, drinking water, and separate sanitary units for staff and students, all secured by a strong boundary wall and complemented by gardens.
- Classrooms ought to be adequately equipped with effective seating, proper ventilation, optimal lighting, and engaging displays.
- A model school must have an appropriate number of trained, committed staff per the student-teacher Ratio mandated by the Right to Education Act. Teachers require continuous orientation to remain current with pedagogical innovations.
- Libraries and laboratories are the "eyes" of the school and must be well-stocked with diverse resources.
- Teachers should be granted autonomy to adapt teaching aids and evaluation techniques to suit student needs.
- Sanitation is paramount; the campus must be clean with reliable access to water and private facilities.
- The institution should maintain strong community ties through parent-teacher associations and home visits.

- Beyond academics, the school should focus on social welfare and harmony.
- It must offer diverse extracurricular activities to uncover students' hidden talents.
- Inclusive education for physically and mentally challenged students should be a priority.

Objective - 3

Problems and Issues in the Working Schools that hinder in Making Model Schools

Being practitioners within various educational institutions, the active teachers highlighted several challenges and constraints in their current schools that obstruct the transition into ideal or model campuses. The difficulties and bottlenecks outlined by the educators are presented below:

- The educators pointed out that the positioning of schools within the tribal-heavy Paschim Medinipur district of West Bengal is frequently unfavourable. Isolation and poor transport infrastructure pose significant hurdles for the teaching staff. Furthermore, the lack of residential accommodations, such as official quarters or accessible rental properties close to the workplace in isolated areas, creates hardships for teachers and institutional personnel. Consequently, they are unable to invest extra time beyond standard instructional hours for the advancement of their institutions and pupils.
- A shortage of required subject-specific educators (particularly for instruction in Science Subjects and English) along with disproportionate student-teacher ratios represent major difficulties for institutions in rural and tribal sectors. They noted that a considerable number of schools are managed by a solitary instructor.
- The absence of essential structural amenities is likewise a prominent bottleneck in the schools of this district. In fact, within most institutions, dedicated rooms for individual classes, a distinct administrative office, safe drinking water provisions, operational and stocked libraries, science labs, secure perimeter walls, and similar facilities are completely missing.
- Idiomatic and linguistic barriers constitute a major problem in the classrooms of tribal-dominated sectors. Tribal youth struggle to comprehend the standard Bengali language utilized by educators, as they predominantly converse in their native dialects at home and among childhood peers. In a similar vein, the educators frequently lack the proficiency required to comprehend the dialects spoken by their pupils. Therefore, this interactive disconnect serves as a primary obstacle to making the instructional process high-quality and productive.
- Due to widespread illiteracy, lack of awareness, financial hardships, and minimal parental involvement, students frequently fail to maintain regular attendance at school. Quite often, school-age youth spend their hours assisting with family occupations or supervising younger siblings rather than attending classes. Accordingly, low student turnout is a major issue in tribal territories. Even following the midday meal, very few pupils show any interest in remaining at the facility.
- The lack of permanent, full-time principals complicates the orderly administration of these institutions. The teachers expressed that numerous schools in isolated sectors are directed by inexperienced, temporary, or contractual educators. Consequently, it becomes difficult for professionally unseasoned and developing instructors to elevate their campuses into model standards.
- The teaching staff brought up the challenge that they are frequently sidetracked by extraneous responsibilities, including overseeing midday meal logistics, supervising school structural repairs, handling census and survey assignments, and other tasks. This kind of involvement in non-instructional duties not only squanders valuable teaching time but leaves educators feeling excessively burdened.

- The junior educators mentioned that granting professional autonomy to instructors in structuring academic routines is vital for delivering qualitative and impactful education. Instead, teachers operate under continuous strain due to structural and external interferences.
- Budgetary shortfalls or a lack of financial stability present a major hurdle that leaves educators mentally distracted and emotionally stressed. They noted that the indifferent approach of administrative bodies toward resolving the foundational difficulties of educators occasionally deals a severe blow to their professional performance.
- The instructors felt that despite being the actual boots on the ground within the classrooms, they are completely excluded during syllabus formulation and pedagogical redesigns. Flawed policies regarding reassignments and advancements also trigger dissatisfaction among the instructional workforce.
- Additionally, early student withdrawal remains a prominent challenge within primary and elementary schools in tribal regions.

Objective-4

Suggestions of the Teachers to make their Schools Model Schools: The educators operating in tribal zones do not view the creation of model schools as an insurmountable task, provided the following recommendations are put into practice:

- ◆ Deliver all structural amenities required to transform current campuses into model institutions. Facilities such as well-furnished and weather-resistant classrooms, a main office, a principal's office, a shared staff area, a resource center, a teaching-learning materials corner, a study alcove, an all-purpose hall, a kitchen area, proper sanitation systems, clean restrooms, an operational library and science lab, employee housing, and practical instructional tools must be supplied to every school to foster comprehensive student growth via quality learning.
- ◆ Permanent and seasoned headmasters possessing strong administrative capabilities and leadership acumen should be stationed at these facilities. A sufficient contingent of qualified instructors, including subject specialists, should be brought on board in accordance with Right to Education benchmarks.
- ◆ Uncertified or untrained instructors must receive proper professional preparation. Furthermore, routine developmental programs and capability-building workshops ought to be arranged to keep educators abreast of modern instructional strategies.
- ◆ Competent inspection committees should routinely assess the institutions, not merely to track operations but to gather active input from the teaching staff. This practice will help close the divide between policymakers and classroom practitioners. Additionally, localized institutional challenges can be resolved more swiftly.
- ◆ Serving as the academic core of the districts, teacher training organizations (such as DIETs and B.Ed. colleges) must remain continuously prepared to offer comprehensive educational backing to local schools.
- ◆ Student learning materials (including books, writing instruments, uniforms, etc.) must be distributed right at the launch of the school year so that learners can derive the maximum educational value.
- ◆ Employee housing (quarters) must be provided to instructors to bypass the transit hardships associated with isolated localities, thereby allowing them to dedicate greater energy to their campuses and pupils.

- ◆ Instructional independence is absolutely vital for fostering an engaging and competitive academic climate in classrooms. Instructors should not be coerced into following rigid templates or standardized approaches during teaching, testing, or other school projects.
- ◆ Teachers must be exempted from overseeing facility construction, handling midday meal execution, running surveys, and similar duties that disrupt their core pedagogical obligations.
- ◆ Instead of hiring a patchwork of temporary, contractual, or part-time educators, permanent teaching staff should be recruited in strict compliance with the rules and guidelines of the RTE 2009 framework.
- ◆ Dedicated efforts must be made to engage more community members by leveraging parent-teacher organizations, school committees, and inviting locals to campus celebrations. This approach will prove highly effective in boosting daily turnout and mitigating early school dropout tendencies among tribal youth.

Concluding Remarks: The junior educators in these tribal regions are highly motivated to transform their schools into model institutions. They possess a clear vision, but their success depends on guidance from academic experts and supportive district administration. The community, local intellectuals, and the government must collaborate to provide the necessary resources—such as qualified teachers and learning materials—to ensure tribal children can fully participate in mainstream education. Teachers must also remain continuously updated on evolving government policies, pedagogical trends, and frameworks like NCF-2005 and RTE-2009 to be effective agents of change.

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Citation: Manna. S., (2026) “Perceptions of Young Teachers on the Issues Associated with Bringing Out Model Schools in Tribal Areas of Paschim Medinipur”, *Bharati International Journal of Multidisciplinary Research & Development (BIJMRD)*, Vol-4, Issue-05, May-2026.