

Automatic Promotion Policy at Primary Level and MDG-2

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Abstract: This study explores the impact of automatic promotion policy in primary schools on the quality of education by employing qualitative method of research. The basic aim of this study was to determine the effect of this policy on the quality of primary education in accordance with the teachers' perceptions. The qualitative data was collected through a selected sample of teachers (N=42) teaching at primary level in the public primary and elementary schools of Rawalpindi city. Semi-structured, open-ended interviews were conducted with teachers during school hours. The findings of the study revealed that majority of the teachers did not consider automatic promotion policy as an effective educational practice. Moreover, it was discovered that the government do not arrange orientation programs for teachers before initiating any new policy. The teachers are just compelled to implement official orders. The participants proposed some useful reform measures for improvement of the quality of primary education and increase the efficiency of automatic promotion policy which in turn can be helpful in achieving the target of universal primary education (MDG-2).

Keywords: Millennium Development Goal-2, universal primary education, automatic promotion policy, grade retention

Introduction

Automatic promotion is a widespread and controversial educational practice both in developed and developing countries. Dictionary of Education (2000) defines automatic promotion as "the practice in primary and secondary schooling of advancing pupils from one grade to the next higher grade at the end of the school year regardless of the educational attainment of the pupils" (Mehndiratta, 2000, p.38). Moreover, Hong and Raudenbush (2005) acknowledged automatic promotion as that "educational practice under which all students are promoted to maintain homogeneity of age within classrooms" (p.206).

The decision to promote the students to the next grade depends partly on promotion policies in the education system of a country. Some countries systematically

promote students to the next grade by automatic promotion policy, while others apply strict achievement criteria for promotion. The policy of automatic promotion is considered as most appropriate and cost effective alternative of grade retention. It is the simplest way to reduce repetition of students and is beneficial for children to carry their studies with their age fellows.

Advocates of this practice affirmed it as more cost effective whereas; the opponents believe that it affects quality of education by eliminating competition and motivation for students and teachers as well.

A number of research studies examined the impact of automatic promotion policy as well as the contradictory policy of grade retention on students' learning. Motala (1995) stated that "critics of repetition suggest automatic promotion, whereas advocates of repetition oppose this policy on the basis that it lowers academic standards, destroys incentives for pupils and teachers, and creates pedagogical problems by increasing the ability range in the classroom" (p.172). While criticizing automatic promotion policy, Gomes-Neto and Hanushek (1994) argued that "it would produce lower achievement in later grades because there is learning that goes on through repetition" (p.130).

In the mid-1990s, "the Chicago Public Schools declared an end to social promotion and instituted promotional requirements based on standardized test scores in the third, sixth, and eighth grades" (Roderick & Nagaoka, 2005, p.309). In this regard, the study by Roderick and Nagaoka (2005) examined the short-term effects of retention on reading achievement of third and sixth graders who were retained under Chicago's policy from 1997 to 2000. The findings of this study revealed that

Students who were retained under Chicago's high-stakes testing policy continued to struggle during their retained year and faced significantly increased rates of special education placement. Among third graders, there is no evidence that retention led to greater achievement growth 2 years after the promotional gate. Among sixth graders, there is evidence that retention was associated with lower achievement growth (p.309).

On the other hand, the contradictory findings were revealed by Roderick, Jacob and Bryk, (2002) in this regard. The authors estimated the impact of High-Stakes Testing in Chicago on student achievement in promotional gate grades. The findings of the study

showed that

Test scores in these grades increased substantially following the introduction of high-stakes testing. The effects are larger in the 6th and 8th grades and smaller in the 3rd grade in reading. Effects are also larger in previously low-achieving schools. In reading, students with low skills experienced the largest improvement in learning gains in the year prior to testing, while students with skills closer to their grade level experienced the greatest benefits in mathematics (p.333).

Palafox, Prawda, and Velez (1994) argued that “repeating a grade does not necessarily help learning, an automatic promotion policy for the first two or three grades of the primary cycle and a pass-fail evaluation thereafter are recommended to reduce repetition and dropout rates” (p.179). Similar views were revealed by Mehrotra (1998) who favored automatic promotion policy and argued that “it increases the number of years low achieving students spend in school, and thus may increase learning” (p.474).

In the same way, a number of research studies have revealed that automatic promotion policy alone could not produce desired results, unless it is accompanied by other reform measures. Mehrotra (1998) explored that “Panama and Puerto Rico, which once had automatic promotion, reversed that policy when faced with increasing numbers of illiterate primary school graduates” (p.473). He further explained the reason of ending this policy that “if automatic promotion is implemented, with no attempt to eliminate the factors associated with school failure; problems of learning in the early grades may be passed on” (p.474). Consistent with this view, Lewin (cited in Motala, 1995, p.173) suggested that automatic promotion is only practicable if it is accompanied by other reform measures such as curriculum-development activities and reorganization of teaching.

Hong and Raudenbush (2005) expressed the effectiveness of automatic promotion policy in their study and proposed that “remedial instruction in a later grade could possibly be designed to overcome the deficiencies in academic growth exhibited in early grades” (p.206).

Similarly, the results of the Fall River study by Roderick (1994) lend additional support to the conclusion that “promotion with remediation is the appropriate alternative”

(p.749).

Lorence, Dworkin, Toenjes, Hill, Rotherham and Shepard (2002) examined the academic achievement of low-performing promoted students while comparing with the educational performance of similar low-performing repeaters, “by utilizing data based on a cohort of all low-achieving elementary students in the state of Texas over a number of years” (p.16). The study found that

Neither generic grade retention nor generic social promotion practices by themselves were optimal solutions for the learning problems of children not meeting educational achievement standards. Both strategies represent systemic failures to aid children, while retention may lead to improved educational performance, social promotion reaches the same end in the same amount of time (p.48).

Automatic Promotion Policy and Primary Education in Pakistan

The concept of Universal Primary Education (UPE) is not new for Pakistan. Since Independence, UPE has been the priority of all education policies and development plans. All education policies recognized, high dropout rate at primary level as a major limitation that obstructed universalization of primary education, but these documents did not reveal the root causes of these high dropout rates. However, the report of the Commission on National Education (1959) realized this fact and stated on page 171 “one of the major contributing factors in the dropping out of children from school is the practice of forcing them to repeat classes”. The Commission recommended the promotion of children to the next class by age rather than by results in the end of year. It is further stated a very comprehensive strategy:

Unless such a measure (automatic promotion) is adopted progressively in our schools (with the rare exception for the very retarded child), we risk clogging the first two classes with backward and overage children We strongly recommend that this matter should be seriously studied by departments. Applied with intelligence, it will be found that such a promotion policy will go far to reduce the number of withdrawal from schools and make the introduction of compulsory attendance a reality. A headmaster should reserve the power, however to hold back up to say four children out of a class of forty. Any greater number should be held back only with the agreement of the inspector. This will

be sufficient power to enforce continued work by the children (Government of Pakistan, 1959, p. 171).

Pakistan has several national and international commitments to achieve UPE and is a signatory of Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) thus, aims to achieve universal primary education by 2015. For achieving the target, the Ministry of Education in collaboration with provincial departments has taken a number of initiatives both on macro and micro level. Automatic promotion policy for primary grade students is a significant initiative taken by the government at micro level in all provinces along with federal territories. Through this policy, the students of first three or four grades (depending on internal policies of provinces) at the primary level in all public schools are promoted without examinations to next grade at the end of academic session.

The Practice of Automatic Promotion in the Punjab

Like all other provinces, the Government of the Punjab issued an order¹ in 2003, to all public schools, according to that, the schools were compelled to promote all the children till grade three for achieving the target of universal primary education and reduce dropout rate at primary level. This policy is still practicing in all public schools of the Punjab. The students of first three grades are being promoted without any internal or external assessment, although there are some special cases where retention is considered very necessary and allowed such as serious illness or immaturity etc, but there is no child repeating the early three grades due to slow learning. It is worth mentioning that there is no arrangement of extra coaching or other helping programs for poor performers. It is evident by the research studies that, the countries have taken other reform measures for poor performers along with implementation of automatic promotion policy at primary

¹ Despite numerous requests to headmistresses of public primary and elementary schools, and concerned officers of Directorate of Education, Rawalpindi, the copy of this order could not be provided by these officials. Although, every person had acknowledged that the order of automatic promotion for first three primary grades was circulated in 2003 by the Primary Education department, Government of Punjab, Lahore.

level, (Roderick, 1994; Mehrotra, 1998).

Official statistics revealed that the automatic promotion policy in public schools of the Punjab has severely affected the quality of primary education (Government of Pakistan, 2006; AEPAM, 2008; and AEPAM, 2009). Through this policy, the pupils who have not acquired the desired learning standard for the next grade are also promoted (without any remedial instruction) along with normal students. When these poor performers reach at grade four as a result of automatic promotion policy, most of them are retained in the same grade, because at the end of primary level, all students of grade five must have to appear in final departmental examination for promoting to grade six. This examination increases the pressure especially on low-achieving schools to retain the low-scoring children at grade four. If the low performing students are also promoted to grade five, the probability of their failure will be much higher in the final departmental examination, which will negatively endorse school result and status at departmental level. But, nobody is concerned about these repeaters and what will happen to them in the class rooms throughout the “repeated year” as a consequence of poor implementing strategies of educational policies. Most of these repeaters have the tendency for dropping out from school as a result of continuous insulting behavior and unfair treatment by the teachers and their class fellows.

The national statistics of Primary Education in Pakistan presented by the Ministry of Education, Islamabad, also reveal that poorly implemented educational policies and other initiatives are the major causes of dropout and thus deteriorating the quality of education at primary level.

Table 1: Dropout Rates by Grade and Gender at Primary Level for Public Sector Institutions (2005)

Grades	Dropout Rates		
	Total	Male	Female
Between Grade I and II	14.1%	16.1%	11.2%
Between Grade II and III	3.7%	8.6%	-
Between Grade III and IV	5.0%	7.4%	1.5%
Between Grade IV and V	8.5%	9.9%	6.5%

Source: Government of Pakistan, 2006, p.32

According to the report of National Education Census, 2005 (as depicted in Table 1) the total dropout rate between grade four to five is 8.5 % that is much higher than grade two to four, i.e.3.7 % and 5.0 %. The current practice of automatic promotion policy in primary education system is said to be one of the possible causes of this high dropout rate at grade four. This fact is also depicted by the highest number of repeaters at primary level by the data taken from two latest consecutive reports of Pakistan Education Statistics as revealed in Table 2 and 3.

Table 2: Enrolment Statistics at primary level in public schools of the Punjab (2006-07)

Grade	Total Enrolment			No. of Repeaters			% of Repeaters compared to total Enrolment
	Boys	Girls	Total	Boys	Girls	Total	
1	787,338	717,569	1,504,907	34,918	33,675	68,593	4.5%
2	709,367	614,806	1,324,173	27,814	24,243	52,057	3.9%
3	630,368	521,230	1,151,598	23,899	21,086	44,985	3.9%
4	570,878	450,270	1,021,148	42,006	30,302	72,308	7%
5	458,557	365,159	823,716	7,226	4,212	11,438	1.3%

Source: Pakistan Education Statistics 2006-07 (AEPAM, 2008)

The Table 2 presented the statistics (2006-07) of repeaters at different grades and the total

enrolment at primary level of the public schools of the Punjab. It is well demonstrated that highest number of repeaters was present in grade four. Similar results are revealed by Table 3 that presents the statistics of the year 2007-08.

Table 3: Enrolment Statistics at primary level in the public schools of the Punjab (2007-08)

grade	Total Enrolment			Repeaters			% of Repeaters compared to total Enrolment
	Boys	Girls	Total	Boys	Girls	Total	
1	773,149	706,190	1,479,339	26,450	25,505	51,955	3.5
2	689,326	605,212	1,294,538	18,567	18,180	36,747	2.8
3	620,915	537,394	1,158,309	15,460	15,658	31,118	2.6
4	563,814	462,829	1,026,643	26,468	19,904	46,372	4.5
5	451,051	360,549	811,600	2,640	2,260	4,900	0.6

Source: Pakistan Education Statistics 2007-08 (AEPAM, 2009)

The tables 2 and 3 revealed that, the maximum number of students repeat grade four as compared to the other grades of primary level in the public schools of the Punjab. This huge difference is perhaps due to the policy of automatic promotion till grade three along with final departmental examinations at the end of grade five.

Keeping in view all the official statistics regarding total enrolment, repetition and dropout rate of the public schools, it is clearly evident that the existing governmental policy and attitude of the schools' administration towards slow learners are further deteriorating the quality of primary education. Therefore, the present study is designed to conduct a thorough investigation regarding automatic promotion policy in public schools of the Punjab province. Overall, this study would be helpful to identify issues related to this policy and to develop interventions to handle the problem effectively in the primary education system of a developing country like Pakistan where the problem of dropout is still a big obstacle on the way of achieving the goal of universal primary education.

Sample and Procedure

By employing purposive sampling technique (Lodico, Spaulding & Voegtle, 2006, p.266), 42 primary grade teachers were selected from 42 public primary or elementary schools of Rawalpindi city. Only one teacher was selected as study sample from each school. Semi-structured interviews were conducted with the sample teachers during the months of January and February, prior to the commencement of annual school examination.

A semi-structured interview protocol consisting of three main sections along with some open-ended questions required in accordance with the situation was developed in the light of existing literature on automatic promotion policy. Primary grade teachers were asked to describe their views regarding automatic promotion policy.

All of the participant teachers had at least twenty years of teaching experience. Among these participants, 26 were primary school headmistresses, and the remaining 16 were primary school teachers. Thirty teachers held the professional certificate of Primary Teachers Training after matriculation, and ten teachers were acquiring the professional degree of Bachelor's in Education, whereas rest of the two teachers held the professional degree of Master's in Education. All of them were regular classroom teachers and taught either in the public primary schools or in the primary section of public elementary schools located in the Rawalpindi city. Fifteen teachers of the sample interviewed were male; however, the remaining referents were female. Identity of these teachers was kept confidential. It was expected that these participants will provide the key information required to achieve the study objectives, as they appeared to be the competent, and committed to their profession.

During the interview sessions, all participants felt safe, comfortable, and as though what they were saying were valued, ((Hesse-Biber & Leavy, 2006, p.128). Interviews averaging around 25 to 30 minutes were briefly noted and later written in detail on the same day. Ethical considerations of interviewing on issues related to official matters were imperative in relation to confidentiality. From the beginning of every interview, participants were assured that they could withdraw at any point, or refuse to discuss any issue they disliked. All the participants were informed about the nature of the research, and their consent and agreement was sought prior to interviews taking place. Despite of guarantying confidentiality, most of the teachers were reluctant to allow the

use of tape recorder for recording their views. They consented on condition of taking notes and not tape record anything. Demographic data were collected at the end of each interview. Findings from the study were shared with the participants. Interview transcripts were coded as categories emerged from the data.

The teachers' interviews taken for this study were transcribed verbatim. All the transcriptions were "regarded as "the truth" and each transcription was considered to contain a one-to-one correspondence between what was said orally and the printed word" (Hesse-Biber & Leavy, 2006, p.345). The qualitative data was analyzed by using grounded theory method. This process involved "generating categories of information (open coding) selecting one of the categories and positioning it within a theoretical model (axial coding), and then explicating a story from the interconnection of these categories (selective coding)", (Creswell, 2003, p.191). The themes emerged during the process of analysis, were supported with existing research studies in the relevant field. In this way, the literature was also used for "supplemental validation" for the accuracy of findings or how the findings differ from the published data (Creswell, 1998, p.209).

Results and Discussion

Interview data has provided a unique dimension for explaining how individual teachers interpret their beliefs about the causes and consequences of the implementation of a governmental policy. As discussed earlier, the interview guide had three main sections. The results of the thematic analysis are discussed below in three sections separately.

Section I

In the beginning of the interview, the participants were asked whether the government has informed primary grade teachers about the aims and objectives of Millennium Development Goals or it had made any arrangement for giving some orientation to teachers before execution of automatic promotion policy at primary level in the public schools of the Punjab. In response to this question, it was found that the government had not taken any step in this regard. The teachers were of the view that the policy makers do not bother to involve primary grade teachers or their representatives

while planning for achieving the target of universal primary education in order to meet the international commitment of millennium development goals.

Only eight participants acknowledged that they had come to know about the aims and objectives of the automatic promotion policy through some external sources. It is also interesting to note that all the participants who had some knowledge about this policy were mostly having better qualification than ordinary primary teachers and they also supported the policy of automatic promotion.

Rest of the participants admitted that they do not have any information about this policy. Being the government employees, they are just compelled to obey all official orders without knowing their aims and objectives.

Section II

In the second section of interview, the participants were asked about their opinion about this policy. They were requested to explain the reasons, whether they favor or oppose this policy. Thematic analysis revealed distinctions between the view points of opponents and proponents and the anticipated outcomes for automatically promoted students. Certain beliefs were shared by both sides. The themes unique to each group emerged, are discussed separately below.

Shared Beliefs of Opponents of Automatic Promotion Policy

There were thirty two participant teachers who expressed similar beliefs about the disadvantages of automatic promotion policy at primary level in the public schools of the Punjab. Interviews with these primary grade teachers revealed similar depictions of potential hazards and teachers' rejection of automatic promotion as an effective school practice. The discussion below highlights the common themes and provides brief excerpts from interviews with primary grade teachers who opposed this policy.

1. Powerlessness of the Teacher

Teacher is said to be the most important personality that has significant contribution in the success and failure of students. In education systems, where grade retention policy is practicing, the teacher has the authority to decide about his/her students' capability to cope with the next class or retained in the same grade. Anderson (2000) also stated that "the decision to repeat a grade is made mostly by the teacher, and

because the child is not considered (by the teacher) to be prepared to benefit from the next grade” (p.121).

Opponent teachers consistently indicated that they feel completely powerless in the presence of this policy. Mr. R.A complained

The dignity of teaching profession is adversely affected by this policy and the role of teacher is limited²

2. No Difference between Good and Poor Students

Teachers criticized that due to this policy, all students are promoted to next class, so the discrimination between good and poor students is no more existed now. The participants believe that this policy discourages the hardworking students and they leave struggle to excel in studies. Mr. R.A explained

When the good students observe that the poor students are also promoted, they disappointed and behave carelessly

3. Students not Well-Prepared for Higher Classes

Teachers expressed their deep concern about the students who are not ready to conceptualize advanced set of courses. Participants were of the view that due to this policy, the teachers are compelled to promote all students whether or not they are prepared for the next class. In this way, many poor performers are also advanced and later they face problems in comprehension of curriculum of next class.

Many educators oppose automatic promotion policy on the basis that “continually passing students only pushes the achievement problem further down the road so that poor students arrive at high school totally unprepared to do the work” (Westbury, 1994, p. 249).

² The comments of the teachers are translated and presented in bold to make their voices distinct and audible.

4. Base of Poor Performers Remained Weak

Teachers' comments also suggested that some students are so weak in studies that they cannot master all the curriculum of a grade in one year and needed extra time. But due to this policy the teachers are forced to promote all students whether they are fit for promotion or not. In this way, the base of poor performers is remained weak and they cannot meet the standard of higher grades later and tend to dropout. The teacher Ms. S. B added

The weak students suffered more due to this policy rather than benefitted

The research evidence by Lorence, et al, (2002) also suggested that the practice of automatic promotion is “detrimental to low-performing students who are promoted without requisite skills because such students are presumed to fall further behind their more academically proficient classmates” (p.13).

Shared Beliefs of Proponents of Automatic Promotion Policy

Interviews with ten primary grade teachers revealed similar interpretations of eventual reinforcement and teachers' acceptance of automatic promotion as an effective school practice. The following discussion presents the common themes along with brief excerpts from interviews with participant teachers who favor this policy.

1. Automatic Promotion Policy reduces dropout rate at primary level

Proponent teachers consistently indicated that they promote students to save them from dropping out of education system. They believed that failure of students increases the chances of their dropout; whereas, if the students are continually promoted, their parents try to carry on their studies despite of their economic hardships. On the other hand, failure of a child disappointed their parents and they often decided to discontinue their child's education and engage him/her in making earning. Ms. F.I told

Students do not come back to school after failure

Research evidence has also suggested that grade retention or academic failure is the main reason of dropout. Palafox, et al., (1994) found that “children who repeat one or more grades in their early years of schooling are likely to drop out from the educational system later” (p.179). Similar views were revealed by Roderick (1994) who

provided the strong evidence that “students who are retained in grade face an increased risk of school leaving” (p.747).

Likewise, Lockheed and Verspoor (1991) endorsed in their study of primary education in developing countries that “repeating a grade enhances the probability of dropping out” (p.181).

2. Supportive in Better Adjustment of Children in Working Environment

Participant teachers favor automatic promotion policy on the basis that it helps children to spend more years in an educated environment in the supervision of teacher. No matter what the quality of education is, it is evident that one must learn there. After four or five years of learning, the little child becomes an adult and thus he/she can be better adjusted in working environment.

The teachers expressed that due to this policy, the children spend at least four to five years in school and after this if they discontinue their education, and they are mature enough to be capable of doing some earning job. Whereas, if children fail in junior classes, they often leave school and roaming outside as they are too young to do some earning activity. Consistent with the teachers’ point of view, the research study by Mehrotra (1998) added that “spending at least four years in school is essential to ensure that literacy and numeracy skills are retained, this is likely to ensure a minimum level of learning” (p.473).

3. Reduces the Repetition Rates in early grades

The teachers believe that due to this policy, the repetition rate in first three grades is much reduced; only some special cases (immaturity or chronic illness) are now retained in these grades. Mehrotra (1998) also agreed with this view and stated that “automatic promotion clears the backlog of repeaters in grades 1 and 2 (grades where much of the repetition is concentrated), creating space for new students” (p.473).

4. Helpful in Developing Positive Self-Concept in young Students

Teachers who favor this policy were of the view that the impact of being successful in studies can help students develop a positive self-concept. The teachers believed that the child feels confident after success. A research study by Trethewey (1999) affirmed the

teachers' point of view and stated that "being rated as "unfit for promotion" at the end of a year frequently undermined a child's self-respect and confidence" (p.280).

5. Taken as an Official Obligation

The primary school teacher is most vulnerable rank in education system in Pakistan. They have no say in policy making or implementing any initiative at primary level. Every new scheme or project is taken as an official obligation and do as directed. Nobody has right to question its effectiveness. The participant teachers gave one reason of not opposing this policy that being a government servant, they have to obey all official orders, and therefore thinking about refusal is of no use.

Section III

In the last section of interview, the participants were asked to propose some workable strategies for improvement of quality of primary education with reference to this policy in order to meet the international commitment of Millennium Development Goals. The proponents proposed some useful strategies to make this policy more effective. Whereas the opponents suggested some possible alternatives of automatic promotion policy. All participants whether they were opponents or proponents, shared some similar beliefs. The discussion below highlights the common themes in this regard.

1. Teacher as a Responsible Person

All participant teachers complained that the primary school teacher is not given due respect by the concerned authorities. They are just compelled to obey official orders, without knowing their aims and objectives. The teachers believed that if authorities involve them or at least share the aims and objectives of any new implementing policy with them, the ratio of the success of these policies will be much better. In this way, the teachers feel confidence and work more efficiently.

2. Special Attention of Teacher

Participants from both sides agreed that the role of teacher is very crucial in better performance of the students. The research studies reported that if schools offer some special interventions and teacher gives special attention to poor performers, this policy may produce better result, but in actual practice, especially in developing

countries, most schools do not provide special interventions or modify curricular content for weak students. Rivkin, Hanushek and Kain, (2005) concluded in their study that “achievement gains are systematically related to observable teacher and school characteristics” (p.449).

3. Involve Parents in School Matters

Participants were of the view that whether this policy is carried on or not, involvement of parents in school matters always play effective role in child’s studies.

Consistent with this view, Gonzalez- Pienda, Nunez, Gonzalez-Pumariega, Alvarez, Roces and Garcia, (2002) indicated that “without the children's parental support, it is hard for teachers to devise academic experiences to help students learn meaningful content” (p.281).

4. Provide Adequate Facilities in Schools

Participants from both sides complained that the public primary schools are not well-equipped with educational facilities, which is the main reason of declining the standard of education.

The research study of the factors affecting learning of Mexican Primary School Children by Anderson (2000) also demonstrated that “poor condition of the physical plant decreases reading and math scores, and increases the likelihood of repetition” (p.149).

5. Shift the Child to other School

Teachers' comments also suggested that if a student does not perform well in one school, and parents shift him/her to some other school, it is often observed that the new environment is influenced in a better way, and the child starts taking interest in studies. A very experienced teacher Ms K. B told

Shifting of child to some other school is often seen as harmful for good students while weak students are generally benefitted in this way.

Consistent with the teacher's view, the research study by Alexander, Entwisle, and Dauber, (1996) obtained "only weak support for adverse effects of school moves" (p.9).

Conclusion

The thematic analysis of teachers' perception and the literature review regarding automatic promotion policy at primary level discovered that no policy can be proved successful unless it is shared by all concerned personnel and there is dire need of engaging teachers' representatives in policy making process. Teachers' comments suggested that no orientation program at grass root level is arranged for primary school teachers before commencement of any new policy. They do not have any information about the rationale of the implementing policies.

Teachers' concrete arguments both in favor and opposition revealed that they were well-aware of the consequences of this policy, but they do not have proper knowledge about the rationale of this policy. The overall analysis of the teachers' perception demonstrated that automatic promotion policy facilitates in quantitative improvement but it does show negative consequences on the quality of primary education. It reduces the struggle for getting better position among hardworking students and lowers the motivation among teachers as well.

Moreover, the teachers' responses reflected that merely promote students to next class does nothing positive with their well-being. The automatic promotion policy will be only workable if it is accompanied by other reform measures. The teachers themselves recognized their pivotal role in improving the quality of education as well as in the success of any ongoing educational policy.

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