

# Newly Appointed CRCCs in Koraput District of Odisha Perceptions, Problems and Promises

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## Abstract

*Educational status in tribal and rural pockets of Odisha, in terms of literacy or enrolment, retention, participation and achievement in different stages of education, are not at par with national level. Particularly in tribal Odisha, low literacy rate, comparatively high dropout rate, low learning achievements of students, poor infrastructural facilities in schools, inadequate number of teachers as per RTE norm, language difficulties, etc. still remain as major challenges. Recently, 101 Cluster Resource Centre Coordinators (CRCCs) in 13 blocks were appointed for looking after the elementary education in Koraput, a tribal dominated district of Odisha. The present paper is an attempt to know the visions of the newly recruited CRCCs about their new assignments. To know the status of different clusters from the newly recruited CRCCs, a self-prepared questionnaire was administered and data were analysed following descriptive method. It is expected that the paper will help the policy makers to think seriously about the education of children in tribal and rural areas as per suggestions given by the newly recruited CRCCs from their experiences as teachers of these areas for not less than ten years.*

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**BACKDROP**

Koraput district is one of the tribal dominated districts of Odisha covering the largest variety of tribal groups with high concentration of tribal population. As per the 2011 census, the total population of the district is 13,76,934. Out of which, 5,85,830 (49.62 per cent) population belonged to Scheduled Tribe category. It means around half of the inhabitants are from tribal community. The literacy rate of the district as per the 2011 census is 49.87 per cent (male: 61.29 female: 38.92 per cent), as against 72.87 per cent literacy at state level and 73.0 per cent at the national level. In the state as well as in Koraput district, Scheduled Tribes have lower levels of literacy. In Odisha, the literacy rate of ST category as per 2011 census is 52.24 per cent which is 20 per cent lower than state literacy rate. Similarly, in Koraput district, the literacy rate of ST population is extremely lower than their counterparts' general category. In the state, the dropout rate at elementary stage has remarkably decreased to 3.07; but it is 4.7 among STs in 2012. According to Odisha Primary Education Programme Authority (OPEPA), the overall dropout rate at upper primary level is highest in Koraput district. According to ASER 2014, the learning achievements of the students in KBK (10 scheduled districts having relatively high ST population) are comparatively low.

Besides, low literacy and low achievement levels of learners at

elementary, secondary and higher education stages, several socio-economic issues are also very urgent to be addressed. Maoist issue is also a great concern of the district. But, all issues can be successfully addressed through better education system because education is an important indicator of human development as well as socio-economic development of a region. The state government has accorded a high priority for spread of education with special focus on primary education. The *Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan* (SSA) in the district of Koraput is also taking constructive steps to reach elementary education at every doorstep ensuring quality education. For that, like other districts of the state, to provide academic supports to the teachers at elementary level, recently 101 CRCCs (Cluster Resource Centre Coordinators) are appointed by the district administration through rigorous selection procedure. Their responsibility is to facilitate the teachers on pedagogical and academic front. They are supposed to be the best channel of communication between school and administration, teachers/head master and authorities, parents/public and local authority. Monitoring and supervising the schools, looking after teaching-learning process, providing necessary feedback to teachers, chalking out plans (short and long) for schools of the cluster, requisition and supply of textbooks, TLM (supplied) and others are the prime responsibilities of the

CRCCs to be undertaken. Besides, arrangement of local specific need-based orientation and training for teachers, developing supplementary text material keeping in view local needs of pupils with the prior advice and support of DIET/TTIs are also the duties and responsibilities of the CRCCs. Keeping in view this backdrop, the investigator tried to know the newly recruited CRCCs about their vision, challenges, basic problems and their suggestive remedies to address several issues associating the elementary education.

### **OBJECTIVES**

- To know the visions of newly recruited Cluster Resource Centre Coordinators (CRCCs) about the schools in their clusters.
- To identify and list out the major challenges before the newly recruited CRCCs in their cluster.
- To study the strategies of the CRCCs to meet the major challenges before them in their clusters.
- To study the perceptions of the CRCCs about a(n) model /ideal school.
- To list out the factors accountable for low learning achievements of the learners in Koraput district of Odisha.
- To study their suggestions and remedies to check the problems of low learning achievements of the learners.

### **DESIGN**

The district administration has newly recruited the CRCCs from among the

experienced teachers for different clusters following systematic and strict selection procedures. At the outset, the experienced regular elementary school teachers applied for the posts. Then the District Project Coordinator Office short listed and uploaded the admission letters of the eligible candidates for written examination in terms of Visioning Test. The question papers for the vision test were prepared by DIET faculties following the guidelines of OPEPA (Odisha Primary Education Authority). The nature of question papers was descriptive consisting of both pedagogical and content-based questions. Some questions were also for testing the vision of teachers to be CRCCs. Then candidates having high scores in written test were called for interview and selected as per the requirement of the districts. Then SSA, Koraput organised an induction level training to the newly recruited CRCCs with the cooperation of DIET. After inaugural sessions, to know the perceptions and visions of them, some questions were asked and they were instructed to give their response in written. A booklet-type questionnaire was given to them encompassing the following questions:

- What is your vision for schools in your cluster as a CRCC?
- How can you materialise your visions /dreams?
- What are the major challenges before you, being the newly appointed CRCC of your cluster?
- How can you face these challenges?
- Which school can be considered by

you as a model or an ideal school for your cluster?

- To which aspects/areas you will give more priority in your cluster?
- Low learning achievement of learners is a major problem in the schools of Koraput district. In your opinion, which factors are accountable for this?
- What are your suggestions and remedies to solve/check the above problem of the learners?

### SAMPLE

All the newly recruited CRCCs were the sample of the study. The sample

consisted of 101 CRCCs from 13 blocks of Koraput district of Odisha. Among the CRCCs, 24 of them have teaching experience of 10 to 15 years while 37 and 40 among them have already worked as teachers in the district from 16–20 years and 21–30 years respectively. Besides, all the CRCCs are trained and some are highly qualified. The sample distribution citing number of CRCCs recruited block-wise, their educational and professional qualifications and teaching experiences as teachers in elementary schools of the district is given in Table 1.

**Table 1**  
**Distribution of Sample**

Blocks	No. of CRCCs	Educational Qualification			Teaching Experience (in Years)		
		+2 CT	+3 BEd	PG BEd	10–15	16–20	21–30
Jeypore	09	3	3	3	2	3	4
Koraput	10	3	4	3	2	5	3
Kotpad	06	2	4	0	0	0	6
Nandapur	11	7	4	0	3	5	3
Kundra	02	1	1	0	0	0	2
Borriguma	10	2	5	3	6	3	1
Laxmipur	07	2	5	0	2	5	0
Boipariguda	09	2	6	1	0	5	4
Bandhugam	03	3	0	0	1	2	0
Lamtaput	10	6	4	0	3	3	4
Semeliguda	10	4	4	2	1	4	5
Dasmantpur	08	2	5	1	4	1	3
Potangi	06	1	2	3	0	1	5
<b>Total</b>	<b>101</b>	<b>38</b>	<b>47</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>24</b>	<b>37</b>	<b>40</b>
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>101</b>	<b>101</b>			<b>101</b>		

### **DELIMITATIONS**

1. The study was conducted on 101 experienced teachers-cum-CRCCs of mainly 13 blocks of a tribal-dominated district of Odisha namely, Koraput.
2. The teachers included in the sample were trained Graduates and Post Graduates.
3. The teaching experiences of the CRCCs as teacher were between 10 and 30 years.
4. The sample size was small for broad generalisation.

### **DATA COLLECTION**

Required data for the study were collected from 101 newly recruited CRCCs from 13 blocks (out of 14 blocks of the district) using self-prepared questionnaire. The questionnaire consisted of two parts. The first part was meant for personal information reflecting name, gender, age, educational qualification, teaching experience, block under which the cluster comes, etc. The second part consisted of seven questions intended to know the dreams/visions of CRCCs for their new assignment, the major problems or issues which would create problem, the strategies to face the challenges, perceptions about an ideal school, area of importance, issues concerning low achievements of the learners and their suggestive remedies to uplift the low achievers. The questions were open to answer but specific space was allowed to write their views/opinions/suggestions. It means the questionnaire was

prepared in booklet form. Besides, the investigator personally discussed with the CRCCs regarding several issues associating quality education, better learning achievements of the learners, practical problems in schools and others. The data collected were analysed and interpreted using descriptive/qualitative techniques.

### **DISCUSSION AND FINDINGS**

Analysing the data collected, the following discussion and findings were made.

#### **OBJECTIVE 1: DREAMS AND VISIONS OF CRCCs**

The first question asked to the newly recruited CRCCs was, "What are your visions/dreams for your schools as a CRCC?". They responded in the following ways:

- Preparing a database of the schools reflecting students' enrolment and attendance, their learning achievements (CCE pattern), teachers' position (no. of teachers, gender, social category, their qualifications, teaching experience, service condition, area of specialisation — scholastic and co-scholastic area, training or workshop attended, etc.), physical and infrastructural facilities available, organisation of co-curricular activities, status of SMC, learners' learning achievement, library and TLM corners, etc.
- Constructive steps to create learning environment ensuring clean and green schools.

- Make at least one/two model/ideal school(s) in each cluster.
- Ensuring hundred per cent enrolment, retention and participation of the learners in schools.
- Special focus on developing minimum competencies of students in all subject areas. Specifically, emphasis will be laid on developing reading and writing skills of children at primary stage with essential mathematical competencies.
- Empowering teachers giving academic and pedagogical support through need-based orientation, training and feedback from time to time.
- Developing better relations with teachers so they can ask any queries for better learning achievements of their students and smooth functioning of their schools.
- Establish and strengthen better rapport between teachers–teachers, teachers–learners, teachers–parents, school–community, which will pave the way for better learning environment and smooth functioning of schools.
- Emphasising on inclusive classrooms ensuring physical and pedagogical facilities to children with special needs (CWSN) and children from backward and disadvantaged categories.
- Activate and sensitise the SMC members, making aware the parents, guardians, villagers for

making the school an ideal one.

- Regular monitoring and school visits for ensuring quality education to the learners, empowering and enriching teachers' competencies and proper utilisation of funds and grants of the schools.

In short, it is seen that 90 per cent CRCCs dreamed of creating healthy learning environment in schools, while around 96 per cent expressed their interest to develop minimum competencies of their learners (saying Minimum Levels of Learning). They have the vision to bring all children in the locality between the ages 6–14 years to schools. They are keen to ensure that the parents make their children able to read and write in their regional language or mother tongue, which is the major challenge according to the survey reports of several studies like ASER. Besides, 60 per cent of CRCCs are interested to develop database of schools, 80 per cent like to develop better human relations among learning communities and stakeholders, and all of them have special focus to achieve 100 per cent enrolment, retention and participation reducing dropout rate to zero.

## **OBJECTIVE 2: STRATEGIES TO MATERIALISE THE VISIONS/DREAMS**

The CRCCs were asked how to materialise your dreams/visions to make your cluster a model one. They answered differently according to their own strategies. But, most

of the CRCCs focussed on self-empowerment. It means that before visiting schools for monitoring and supervision, they should have competencies and mastery over all subjects, pedagogical innovations and core teaching skills, policy and provisions of government for elementary education, etc. Otherwise they cannot guide and provide academic support to the teachers. They said, the induction training would help them very much, besides they have to do self-study of textbooks and other supplementary materials with policy and documents concerning elementary education. Despite, 90 per cent CRCCs focus on identifying major problems and preparing database of each school of their clusters. They feel proper planning is needed (both short and long-term) to improve the school environment. Around 90 per cent CRCCs said regular monitoring and school visits can improve the academic environment of the schools. It will help the teachers to clarify their doubts regarding any subject or content areas or pedagogical interventions. They said, delivering model classes in schools during their visit will help the teachers to know better strategies of teaching. Besides, they felt the need to develop strategies to arrange need-based training and orientation for capacity-building of the teachers, exploring local resources for better learning, forming resource group and learning community of resourceful dedicated teachers, visits

to homes of the students who are not regularly attending school, to review the academic achievements of the learners, etc.

### **OBJECTIVE 3: MAJOR CHALLENGES BEFORE CRCCs**

The CRCCs were asked what would be the major challenges before them being the newly recruited CRCCs. The major challenges apprehended by majority of CRCCs were:

- Experienced and senior teachers may not accept them as CRCCs as they are comparatively juniors.
- Difficult to take any reformed/constructive steps to change in schools either due to opposition of teachers or pressure of union or non-cooperation of parents.
- Practicing/adopting students' friendly approach or methods in schools (like activity method, play way method, etc.) is a problem as most of the teachers practically prefer chalk and talk method or traditional way of teaching (standing before pupils, talking nonstop, giving least scope to learners, intervention or participation) yet in classrooms.
- Heavy workload (attending parent school, monitoring schools in the cluster and preparing SAMIKSHYA report with official assignments/formalities, etc.)
- Managing and ensuring quality education in single-teacher schools or schools having inadequate numbers of teachers as per requirements.

- Identification of fake enrolments.
- Time management.
- Irregular attendance of students due to several reasons like supporting parents in their professional activities, taking care of younger members of their families, etc.
- Promoting participation of CWSN through inclusive education is a great challenge as adequate numbers of Block Resource Teachers are not available.
- Linguistic problem, a challenge during classroom transaction in remote tribal villages/hamlets where teacher cannot understand the students' languages and *vice versa*.
- Activate and sensitise the members of School Managing Committee regarding their duties and accountability for smooth functioning of schools with focus on regular attendance of students in schools, proper utilisation of funds and grants, smooth operation of mid-day meal programme, etc.

#### **OBJECTIVE 4: STRATEGIES TO MEET MAJOR CHALLENGES**

Critical analysis of the views of CRCCs about the ways and means to tackle the forthcoming challenges reveals that all problems can be more or less solved through better relations and cooperation with teachers, parents, School Managing Committee members and administrative authorities.

They think major challenges like apprehension of non-acceptance of senior and experienced teachers to them as CRCCs, negative attitudes of some teachers before implementing some novel interventions and reforms, etc. can be solved by two ways like giving respect and taking help of the senior teachers like a junior member of the family, instead of an academic authority. Secondly, keeping better relations and communication with authorities and SMC/villagers through best performance can meet major challenges. Besides, they said self-confidence, patience to listen to others, tolerance, perfect planning, free from any sorts of prejudice, equal treatment to all; regular visits and interaction with students, teachers, parents, villagers and SMC members, etc., are the best ways to overcome any misunderstandings, misconceptions and strengthening better relations among stakeholders. Besides, they expect the support of their authorities always to make their clusters well-developed and well-functioned.

#### **OBJECTIVE 5: PERCEPTIONS OF CRCCs ABOUT A MODEL/IDEAL SCHOOL**

Almost all newly recruited CRCCs have the vision to make at least one/two school(s) in their cluster a model/ideal one. Keeping in view this promise, they had been asked a question, which school can be considered by you as a model or an ideal school for your cluster? They answered schools having following



features can be considered in a model or ideal schools.

- Essential infrastructural facilities for better learning like adequate number of classrooms, staff and HM chamber, separate office, well-equipped library with relevant study materials, learning corner, question bank, scientific apparatus, study circle, strong and safe boundary and protection wall, attractive school garden (s), better sanitation, separate toilets for staff, students' (boys, girls and CWSN), drinking water facilities, separate kitchen and dining hall for MDM, required number of trained teachers as per RTE norm, etc.
- Teachers should be trained, dedicated, sincere, friendly to students and parents, sociable, hard working, etc.
- School and classroom environment should be conducive for better learning.
- Teaching learning strategy should be as per pupils' needs, standard and interest.

- Activity-based learning approach with stress-free classroom environment should be ensured to the learners.
- Better cooperation, coordination and relationship among staff members.
- Perfect and update documentation and record maintenance as per official decorum.
- Regular attendance of the learners.
- CCE pattern evaluation focussing on holistic growth of the learners.
- Perfect functioning of PTA, MTA, SMC and others.
- All facilities to promote equity and quality inclusive education to all children, respecting diversity and differences particularly to the CWSN.

#### **OBJECTIVE 6: AREAS TO BE GIVEN FIRST AND MOST PRIORITY**

The CRCCs were asked, after taking charge the new assignment (after induction training), to which aspect(s) of schools will be given most priority. They identified following areas to be given the most priority.

**TABLE 2**

<b>Areas to be given priority</b>	<b><u>CRCCs preference (per cent)</u></b>
• School environment, sanitation and beautification	95%
• Developing minimum competencies of all learners	95%
• Focussing on teachers' regularity	90%
• Better cooperation among stakeholders	85%
• Regular attendance of the learners	85%
• Academic and holistic development of children	63%

The CRCCs mostly emphasised on better school environment, sanitation, drinking water facilities and beautification of schools, developing beautiful gardens and regular cleanliness. Similarly, 95 per cent of them focussed on low achieved learners developing minimum skills and competencies in curricular and co-curricular aspects. In addition, they have given priority to regular attendance of teachers in schools. This shows that teachers' irregularity is a big issue in tribal-dominated districts like Koraput of Odisha. Eighty-five per cent CRCCs feel better relationship with the stakeholders like teachers, students, parents, villagers/ community members, SMC members, authorities, etc. They have also promised to give special attention to students' absenteeism and decreasing dropout rate. They also highlighted some areas to be given priority are academic and holistic growth of the learners, proper utilisation of grants and funds, documentation and database, teaching using activity and learner-centric approach, proper operation of mid-day meal programme, etc.

**OBJECTIVES 7 & 8: FACTORS ACCOUNTABLE FOR LOW LEARNING ACHIEVEMENTS OF THE LEARNERS AND SUGGESTIVE REMEDIES TO CHECK IT**

Low learning achievements of the learners not only in the elementary schools in rural pockets of Odisha but also in all government schools in rural

areas of India is a great challenge before teachers and all stakeholders. The survey reports of ASER by Pratham organisation is a pointer in this regard. Keeping in view this sensitive issue, the newly recruited CRCCs who are also experienced teachers, were asked questions like: 'Low learning achievement of learners is a major problem in the schools of Koraput district. In your opinion which factors are accountable for this? What are your suggestions and remedies to solve/check the above problem of the learners?' They remarked following factors:

- Irregular attendance of students in schools.
- Indifferent attitude of parents towards the education of their children.
- Less commitment of teachers for their students' learning and absenteeism.
- Linguistic barriers—learners do not understand perfectly the teachers' language and *vice versa*.
- Poor financial background of parents.
- Adaptation of stereotyped and traditional methods during classroom transaction by teachers.
- Apathy of parents towards girl's education.
- Lack of learning environment in schools.
- Engagement of children in household activities like supporting parental profession and looking

after younger brothers and sisters in the family.

- Physical facilities and geographical location of schools (hill, cut-off and inaccessible areas).
- Inadequate teachers as per RTE norm.
- Single-teacher schools and multi-grade situation.
- No detention policy or compulsory promotion to learners from one class to another.
- First generation learners.
- No better rapport between school personnel and SMC managers.
- Anganwadies (ECCE) failed to motivate children for formal education.

### **REMEDIAL MEASURES TO IMPROVE THE LEARNING ACHIEVEMENTS OF THE LEARNERS**

The CRCCs suggested the following remedies to address the problem of low learning achievements of the learners in elementary schools of the district:

- Active community involvement in school management and practices.
- Accountability will be fixed for the teachers, and disciplinary action may be taken if needed.
- The basic problems of the teachers will be solved immediately like residential facilities in nearby schools with living conditions.
- Suitable methods should be adopted for classroom transaction

giving importance to the pupils' need, interest and mental ability.

- Empowering teachers pedagogically through need-based area-specific training to teachers.
- Teachers are only engaged for students' learning instead of official formalities and non-academic activities like teachers of privately managed schools.
- Low achievers may be specially identified and perfectly execute the SAHAJA — the reinforcement programme to uplift the slow learners.
- Frequent awareness programme may be organised to make the parents and community members aware of the need and importance of education in the present era.
- Regular monitoring of higher authorities.
- Instead of day-scholar schools, residential schools should be opened at *Gram Panchayat* level where both students and teachers are given shelter for staying there like Ashram schools at least in tribal-dominated districts like Koraput.
- Appointment of trained language teachers respecting students' language.
- Introduction of pass/fail system by abolishing no detention policy.
- Appointment of teachers as per the requirements of the schools and justifying Students Teacher Ratio.
- Prepare ECCE centres as motivational

centres for formal education of the children. So, necessary training and orientation may be given the workers.

- Strict instruction to parents to send their children to schools. Otherwise they may be debarred from governmental benefits and facilities.
- Supplementary textbooks and study materials may be developed keeping in view the area-specific or learner-specific needs.

### CONCLUDING REMARKS

The CRCCs are the channel of communication between schools and local authorities. They are the best friends, guides and facilitators of teachers whose sole responsibility is to provide them academic and pedagogical supports. So, they should have competency and mastery over the contents and pedagogical innovations. They should be competent enough to take model classes during monitoring of the schools. For that, they should be made free from more official

formalities and documentation. They should be given ample opportunity to visit schools, deliver demo or model lessons, organise need-based local specific training and orientation of teachers, preparing supplementary textbooks, teaching learning materials and conducting action research relating to issues of students, schools and else. Besides, the district administration has to do two important things. Firstly, the performances of the CRCCs should be assessed (It is seen some CRCCs think this is a good job to prepare report staying at home without visiting schools or compel the teachers and headmasters to come and submit their reports and documents at their residence, even some CRCCs do not go to their parent-schools). Secondly, safety and security to the CRCCs must be ensured because sometimes it is really difficult or risky to take any innovative and constructive steps for better education of students and smoothing functioning of the schools.

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