

Promoting Strategies for Enhancing Quality of Primary Education in India towards Inclusive Growth

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Abstract:

Primary education is the first step towards the development of a nation which teaches us the basic fundamentals of code of conduct, perception and helping to maintain the relationship with others. India is still a developing nation; there have been major obstacles on the way of success. Since last few years India has implemented various policies related to primary education with support of UNICEF and other international bodies; such as Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan, ICDS (Integrated child's development schemes) and also passed an act in 2005 on "Education to all".

Majority of our population is represented by youngsters who are below the age of 18 years and are not getting proper education and guidance for shaping their future. A high percentage of them withdraw themselves from primary education and initiate for their livelihood. Presently in various schemes the government provides free education to all youngsters for primary level and also provides scholarships, food facility to poor and needy children but still in primary school, there is a high rate of student's turnover. The rural environment of India is not supporting to present policies of education run by government because of several reasons such as high unemployment rate, poverty, gender biasness, high mortality rate, high birth rate and also social prejudice and mindset of villagers. Education may be the master key for all youngsters which will open all the doors of success. In this paper, whole study is divided in to four major sections. Firstly, the discussion is made on significance, advantages, disadvantages and objective of the study. In this section researcher will focus on the different statistical data, present status, government policies, mechanism of delivering primary education system. The third section will analyze the effective strategies for the betterment of present primary education system. At the end a rational and cumulative result will be given in conclusion.

Keywords: Primary education, government policies, strategies, rural environment and mechanism.

Education is the one of the parameter which helps in accelerating the growth of the country as well as for the development of the society. Education is important not only for the full development of one's personality, but also for the sustained growth of the nation. Elementary education in India, therefore, is the foundation on which the development of every citizen and the nation as a whole depends. But making primary education available for all in India has also been one of the major challenges for the government. Moreover, the quality of elementary education in India has also been a major cause of worry for the government. In fact, making elementary education in India accessible, universal and relevant has been a goal since the eighth five-year plan. Primary school, which is often called elementary school, include the beginning years of study in school. During this time, children are starting to learn the basic skills necessary for success in overall development of nation as well progress of the students. Unless national and state policies specifically target to address these disparities, achieving 'equality in outcomes', which is the real goal for human development in education and health will only remain a pipe dream for the government. The main purpose of a primary education is providing competency in reading, writing and mathematics as well as a degree of information technology.

Education aims to give you a boost up the ladder of knowledge. Too often, it just gives you a cramp on one of its rungs. (Martin H. Fischer). It truly said as we know without

education economical as well as personal development is not possible. When students have achieved competency in these the youth will be able to face all challenges of life and leads toward the development. In Uttar Pradesh the number of enrollment for primary education was 44514130 out of which numbers of boys were 23848562 and numbers of girls were 20665568. Whereas in Uttarakhand number of enrollment for primary education was 1197941 out of which number of girls was 1097222 and number of boys were 2295163 (statistics of school education 2007-2008). This data states that there is a difference between the primary level educations between Uttar Pradesh and Uttarakhand and it also states that level of education in Uttar Pradesh is greater than Uttarakhand.

Primary education is the one of the important sector which is been covered by government of India since it effect the literacy level as well as the employment rate. A comparative study is made between Uttar Pradesh and Karnataka. From the below data we can easily draft the true situation of educational level residing in the people of Karnataka

Literacy attainments for Karnataka as a whole at present are just above national average. Karnataka's overall literacy rate is 67.04% (2001 Census). The male -female differential is still high, with 76% male literacy and 57% female literacy. Female literacy is highest in Dakshina Kannada (77.39%) and Bangalore Urban (78.98%), which is far lower than the highest in the states of Kerala, Tamilnadu and Maharashtra.

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The disparity between male and female literacy rates is highest in rural areas. Rural female literacy in the state is low, with some districts such as Gulbarga and Raichur having a female literacy rate of 38.40% and 36.84% only which is well below the national average of 54.16%. Totally 12 districts have female literacy below the national average of 54.16%.

I. THE STATUS OF PRIMARY EDUCATION IN KARNATAKA IS AS FOLLOWS

The present scenario in Karnataka is that about 98% of the population has been provided lower primary schools within 1 km distance and higher primary schools within 2 km distance. Primary schools have been started in all habitations with a population of 200 or more (whereas the national norm is 300 populations) and in other habitations with less than 200 populations a primary school is available within walking distance. Access is therefore no longer an impediment to the goal of universalization. The number of schools, now over 50,000, has increased by nearly 25% in the last 10-12 years.

II. ENROLLMENT

School enrollment has increased significantly in recent years through special enrollment drives. In classes 5-7 the increase is nearly 5%, a very encouraging sign. The drop out rate in classes 1-4 came down from about 27% in 1992-92 to about 10.5% in 2000-01. A measure of the progress achieved in this direction in the last few years is the further rapid drop in the number of out-of-school children shown in the chart below. This has been successful due to the massive campaign launched to bring the drop-out children back to school with the help of the community.

III. PRESENT SCENARIO OF PRIMARY EDUCATION

Free and compulsory education to all children up to the age of fourteen years is the Constitutional commitment in India. At the time of adoption of the Constitution in 1950, the aim was to achieve the goal of *Universalisation of Elementary Education* (UEE) within the next ten years i.e. by 1960. Keeping in view the educational facilities available in the country at that time, the goal was far too ambitious to achieve within a short span of ten years. Hence, the target date was shifted a number of times. Till 1960, all efforts were focused on provision of schooling facilities. It was only after the near realization of the goal of access that other components of UEE, such as universal enrolment and retention, started receiving attention of planners and policy makers. It is the *Quality of Education*, which is at present in the focus in all programmes relating to elementary education in general and primary education in particular. (Mehta). The Indian education system is perhaps the largest system in the world catering the need of more than 190 million students of different socio-economic background in pre-primary to primary, upper primary, secondary and higher secondary to college and university level. Keeping in view the size of the system, it is bound to have certain limitations, which can be grouped under administrative and non-administrative problems. Data gaps, time-lag in data, inadequate, untrained and unqualified staff, lack of equipments and understanding

of definitions and concepts of educational terms, poor dissemination, feedback and utilization of data, etc. are some of the major limitations in the existing information system. However, reliability of data remained the major cause of concern of the data users (Mehta, 1996). In the recent past efforts have been made to strengthen information system among which the development of computerized information system under the centrally sponsored *District Primary Education Programme* (DPEP) is the most prominent and sincere one.

IV. GROWTH IN ENROLLMENT

Considerable progress has been made so far as enrolment at primary and upper primary levels of education is concerned. Enrolment at the primary level was 19.16 million in 1950-51; which has now been increased to 110.9 million in 1998-99. Compared to primary level, the growth in enrolment at the upper primary level is much impressive and substantial but is not adequate to attain the status of universal enrolment. From a low 3.12 million enrolment in the year 1950-51, enrolment at the upper primary level increased to 40.30 million in the year 1998-99 accounting for thirteen fold increase as against six times at the primary level. The impressive growth is attributed to comparatively a low enrolment base in the initial year and consistent increase of girls' participation in upper primary education (Varghese & Mehta, 1999).

V. INNOVATIVE PROJECTS AND PROGRAMMES

I. District Primary Education Programme

Uttar Pradesh (Uttar Pradesh Basic Shiksha Project) and the District Primary Education Programme are of recent origin. Among these, the scope and coverage of DPEP is much wider than other programmes of similar nature. The programme that was first introduced in 1994 in 42 districts spread over seven states is now under implementation in about 240 districts of fifteen states. The programme is structured in such a fashion so that it can provide additional inputs over and above the provisions made by the state governments for elementary education. Eighty five per cent of the project cost is shared by the Government of India and the rest 15 per cent by the concerned project states. The Government of India share is resourced by external funding from IDA, European Community, Government of Netherlands, DFID (UK) and UNICEF.

Decentralized planning in a project mode, disaggregated target setting, community mobilization through Village Education Committees, participative planning process and autonomy to set targets, priorities and strategies are some of the salient features of DPEP (Box 4). For guidance and supervision, state-specific autonomous bodies are created at the state level and at the district level, District Planning Teams were constituted. With the participation of the local community and others - both government and non-governmental agencies and individuals including the NGOs, district-specific plans were developed which are at different stages of implementation. The programme however confines to only primary level but the Government of India at present is thinking seriously to upgrade it to the upper primary level

initially in 42 phase one districts. Also under the Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan, provisions are made to cover the entire elementary level. A growth of 6.2 per cent per annum in primary enrolment has been noticed in 42 phase one (1995-98) districts with average GER at 99.7 per cent. These programmes lead towards the sustainable development as well as poverty reduction and helps in enabling the environment.

VI. THE ROLE OF NONGOVERNMENTAL ORGANIZATIONS IN PRIMARY EDUCATION

India has an arduous task ahead to provide good quality schooling to all six to fourteen year olds. It is a task of enormous proportions in every way. India's elementary education system is already one of the largest in the world – 150 m children enrolled in nearly 800 thousand schools that provide primary education within 1 km to children in 95% of the country. Despite this, 35-m children are outside schools and an equal number do not complete even 5 years of schooling. The cost estimates for universalizing elementary education in India range from an incremental investment of Rs 40,000crores to Rs 1 30,000 crores over a ten-year period.

NGOs can and do play a strong role in assisting the State to complement the public education system and to improve its effectiveness. The experimental approaches of the NGOs have successfully tackled many shortcomings in schooling. NGO models in education increase the accountability of the schooling system to the beneficiaries.

The education system not only needs to 'let a thousand flowers bloom' but also to imbibe lessons from NGO activities to improve the quality of education at large.

VII. CONCLUSION

The government initiated several measures the launching of DPEP (District Primary Education Programme) and SSA (Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan, India's initiative for Education for All) and setting up of Navodaya Vidyalaya and other selective schools in every district, advances in female education, inter-disciplinary research and establishment of open universities. India's NPE (National Policy on Education) also contains the National System of Education, which ensures some uniformity while taking into account regional education needs. The NPE also stresses on higher spending on education, envisaging a budget of more than 6% of the Gross Domestic Product. While the need for wider reform in the primary and secondary sectors is recognized as an issue, the emphasis is also on the development of science and technology education infrastructure.

VIII. REFERENCES

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