

Elementary Education: A Challenge in India

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Abstract : *Taking the case of India this paper studies the different aspects of elementary education which works as backbone of education system. Firstly the paper tells about the primary education system in India and some legal provision related to it. Secondly this paper discussed about the programme and policy which followed by India for improving elementary education. Thirdly the paper discussed inadequacy of budget to achieve objective of elementary education and underutilisation of funds. Fourthly this paper tells how far India made progress in achieving universal elementary education. Last but not least the paper comes up with some suggestions and policy implications which can help to achieve objective of universalising of elementary education in India where child labour is a serious problem.*

Key words: *Backbone of education system, Child labour, Elementary education, Underutilisation of funds, Universalization of elementary education*

I. INTRODUCTION

Elementary education sector is the most important sub-sector of the education system. The aim of universal elementary education is surrounding, worldwide access and maintenance, bridging gender and social category gaps, and improvement in the quality of education, was sought to be achieved through the country's flagship program, Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan (SSA) launched in 2001-02. Over the years, SSA has contributed significantly to universalisation of access and bridging of gender and social category gaps in elementary education and improving the quality of learning. SSA intervention include inter alia, opening of new schools and every other schooling facility, construction of schools and extra classrooms, toilets and pour drinking water, regular learning achievement levels, provisioning for teachers . The Right of Children to Free and Compulsory Education (RTE) Act has become operative with effect from 1st April 2010. All children in the 6-14 age groups have a right to free and compulsory education in a neighbourhood school as mandated by 86th amendment to the constitution of India. Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan is the main vehicle for implementing the provision of RTE act. The SSA framework of implementation and norms for intervention have been revised to correspond to the provisions of RTE act, including norms for opening new schools as prescribed under state RTE system, the approved pupil teacher ratio, and infrastructure norms. The SSA covers all states and union territories and reaches out to an estimated 19.4 crores children in 12.3 lakh habitations in the country.

II. OBJECTIVES

- To provides an overview of elementary education programmes.
- To studies whether objective of the elementary education schemes are being met in schools.
- To study about availability and quality of infrastructure in schools.
- To highlight specific good practice taken by state.
- To suggests measure to improve attendance rate of student where it is low.

III. PROGRAMMES FOR ELEMENTARY EDUCATION

Various schemes and programmes have been initiated particularly to promote enrolment and retention of girls, minorities, marginalised group and children with special needs.

National policy on education (NPE) in 1986 set out a plan to achieve universal primary access, enrolment, retention, and “an extensive improvement in the quality of education to enable all children to achieve crucial levels of learning” recommending key essentials of a child-centred approach.

Operation blackboard was introduced in 1987 with the aim of ensuring that every primary school had a smallest quota of facilities and aids such as at least two all weather rooms, two teacher, and necessary teaching and learning objects.

District primary education programme (DPEP) was launched in 1993-94 with the purpose of achieving the goal of universal primary education. It is a new approach to primary school intervention in India.

Child labour eradication scheme was started in August 1994 with purpose to sift child from hazardous industries to schools.

Midday meals scheme for school children was formally launched on August 15, 1995. The objective of the programme is to give boost to primary education by increasing enrolment, attendance and retention. It was extended to upper primary level in 2007.

National Programme for Education of Girls at Elementary Level (NPEGEL) and Kasturba Gandhi Balika Vidyalaya were launched in July 2004 for setting up residential schools at upper primary level for girls belonging predominantly to the SC, ST, OBC and minority community. It is a national programme for education of girl's elementary education. It was merged with Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan w.e.f. April 1, 2007.

Shiksh Sahyog Yojana was launched in 2001-01 for education of children below poverty line.

Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan (SSA) as an intervention programme has been operation from 2000-01. But, its roots go back to 1993-94, when the District Primary Education Programme (DPEP) was launched, with the aim of achieving the objective universal primary education. DPEP introduce a new approach to primary school interventions in India.

Perhaps the most significant landmark in advancing the agenda of elementary education in India has been the enactment of the Right to Education Act (RTE) which came into force on 1 April 2010. Some policy makers and educationalists suppose that, with the passing of RTE act, elementary education programmes has acquired the necessary legal force for their functioning.

IV. LITERATURE REVIEW

Nair (1976) in this paper made an attempt to study about the measurement of educational costs as an intricate problem. There are also drop out and stagnation factors that affect the 'effective cost' per unit of output. In this paper, an attempt is also made to estimate the rates of drop out and stagnation in various Indian states at the elementary stage of education. Tilak (1979) in this paper briefly discussed about the concept of Inequality in educational opportunity and attainments as a causal factor for other type inequalities outside the schools in the society and attainment of occupational and economic positions. He also critically evaluates the public policy towards reducing inequality. Patel (1996) in his study discussed about the financing structure of Indian education system to alleviate the problem of illiteracy, achievement of 52.1 percent literacy rate but increase in absolute number of illiterate and drop out after elementary education. After all of this he discussed about effort made by government to improve education system. Kumar, Priyam, and Saxena (2001) in their paper study different aspect of district primary education programme (DPEP). They discussed about historical background and launching of national programme, programme design, goals and objectives, and impact of DPEP. Maurya (2001) in this paper discussed about the child labour problem and other problem related to it. He also study about legal provision against child exploitation, and three tier approach towards reforms. He also suggests some measures for rehabilitation of child labour. Rao, Cheng and Narain (2003) in their article considered the reason of differences in performance of India and china in terms of school enrolment ratio and efficiency of primary education. They also discussed about effect of education policy on primary schooling in both country. Kumar, Koppa, and Balasubramanian (2003) in their study discussed a model with some features that ensure flexibility, accountability and quality, which can help achieve the threefold objectives of elementary education - universal access, universal retention and universal achievement. Reddy and Roa (2003) in their paper looks at various aspects of education to pinpoint the reasons for the poor performance of the sector. He discussed about trends in literacy rates, access to education, expenditure on education, determinants of literacy, and policy initiatives and implications. Chaudhary (2004) in this paper study about the effect of subsidy policy on education and of different liberalised trade and investment policies on the incidence of child labour in a developing economy. The article provides a theoretical answer as to why the occurrence of child labour has not significantly declined in the developing economies in spite of economic progress and globalisation. Tilak (2004) in this paper concentrating on education sector reviews some of the well known arguments in favour of and counter arguments against public subsidies. Since much of the controversies are around subsidies in higher education, the paper focuses on the same, though discussion on lower levels of education is also included. It has been shown that the level of subsidies in education in India is not particularly high, nor is the rate of cost recovery particularly low, in comparison with other developed and developing countries. It has also been found that some of the specific subsidies in education are fairly progressively distributed. Ramchandran (2005) in his

study discussed about the complexities of education system, and non teaching tasks. He describes that Increases in enrolment rates, presence figures and midday meal distribution do not express the true picture of the condition of the education system in our country. Equally alarming is the high dropout rate from primary to upper-primary levels, the responsibility for which lies partly with educators, especially teachers who in government schools and in more rural areas appear demotivated and discouraged. Majumdar (2006) in his study describe top down assistance as only one factor among many others that distinguishes a better performing school from a non-performing one. Other vital factors that raised the "quality" of schooling related to issues of decentralisation and autonomy, the quality of teaching as well as initiatives taken to educate less privileged children.

V. EDUCATION DEVELOPMENT INDEX

National University of Educational Planning and Administration (NUEPA) has been computing Educational Development Index and assign ranks to states from last three years. Twenty three indicators have been used to compute EDI separately at primary, upper primary and composite primary and upper primary levels of education. These indicators are sub grouped under access, infrastructure, teachers and outcome indicators. Policy options have been explored for the first time to identify best and worst values in case of few variables. The five Top and Bottom states, along with respective EDI values have been presented below:

Table-1

EDI 2013-14				
		Primary Level	Upper Primary Level	Composite: Primary and Upper primary levels
Best	1	Ponduchary (0.743)	Ponduchary (0.782)	Ponduchary (0.762)
	2	Lakshadweep (0.726)	Lakshadweep (0.756)	Lakshadweep (0.741)
	3	Himachal Pradesh (0.719)	Sikkim (0.742)	Sikkim (0.722)
	4	Tamil Nadu (0.712)	Chandigarh (0.739)	Himachal Pradesh (0.714)
	5	Karnataka (0.705)	Delhi (0.737)	Karnataka (0.710)
Worst	1	Bihar (0.444)	Uttar Pradesh (0.370)	Uttar Pradesh (0.462)
	2	Arunachal Pradesh (0.460)	Madhya Pradesh (0.479)	Bihar (0.491)
	3	Meghalaya (0.468)	West Bengal (0.480)	Jharkhand (0.505)
	4	Assam (0.490)	Jharkhand (0.507)	West Bengal (0.515)
	5	Jharkhand (0.502)	Bihar (0.538)	Madhya Pradesh (0.519)

Source: DISE 2013-14 Flash Statistics

At the Primary level, Ponduchary with EDI value 0.743 is ranked first followed by Lakshadweep, Himachal Pradesh, Tamil Nadu and Karnataka. The bottom ranked states are Bihar with EDI value 0.444 rank 35th followed by Arunachal Pradesh, Meghalaya, Assam and Jharkhand. At the Upper Primary level, Ponduchary with an EDI value 0.782 is ranked first followed by Lakshadweep, Sikkim, Chandigarh and Delhi. Uttar Pradesh is ranked 35th with an EDI value 0.370 followed by Madhya Pradesh, West Bengal, Jharkhand, and Bihar.

So far as the composite Primary and Upper Primary levels is concerned (Elementary level of education), it is Pondicherry with EDI value 0.762 ranked first and Uttar Pradesh is ranked 35th. Lakshadweep is ranked second followed by Sikkim, Himachal Pradesh and Karnataka. On the bottom side, Uttar Pradesh is followed by Bihar, Jharkhand, West Bengal, and Madhya Pradesh.

Facilities Availability in Schools

- Below table indicate that enrolment in primary and upper primary schools show some sign of improvement but average pupil teacher ratio remain 41 in 2004-05 also.

Table-2

Progress in elementary education since 2001					
Indicators	2000-01	2001-02	2002-03	2003-04	2004-05
No. Of Elementary School	845007	883667	897109	1042251	1061061
No. Of Teachers in Elementary Schools	3.22	3.39	3.49	3.75	3.85
Enrolment in Lower Primary Schools Class 1-5 (in millions)	113.83	113.90	122.4	130.8	132
Enrolment in Upper Primary Schools Class 5-8 (in millions)	42.81	44.80	46.9	51.2	52.2
Enrolment in Elementary Schools Stage Class 1-8 (in millions)	156.64	158.70	169.3	182.0	184.2
Average Pupil Teacher Ratio at Elementary Stage	41	39	38	42	41

Source: Selected Education Statistics: 2003-04 and 2005-06, MHRD, GOI, New Delhi; and Education in India, MHRD, GOI.

- It is clear from table that there is little improvement in school facilities such building, drinking water facility, teacher per school, pupil teacher ratio. On the other hand on improvement is shown in school having girl's toilets, computer, ramps, and average number of classrooms.

Table-3

Finding of Elementary Education in India 2007-08		
Parameters	2007-08	2006-07
Percentage of schools having 'Pucca building'	70.63	72.98
Percentage of schools having 'drinking water facility'	86.75	84.89
Percentage of schools having common toilet	62.67	58.13
Percentage of schools having girls toilet	50.55	42.58
Percentage of schools having computer	14.25	13.43
Average number of schools having ramp facilities	34.43	26.61
Average number of class rooms in primary schools	3	2.8
Average number of teachers per school	4.36	4.5
Pupil-teacher ratio	33	34
Percentage distribution of female teachers	42.72	41.86

Source-education statistic at a glance

Spending on Elementary Education

Of the total budgetary outlays reserved for education in India, about 50% go for financing elementary education. The outlays for elementary education are financed primarily through the two percent cess that government of India levies on all central taxes. Government of India receives proceed from the cess and maintains them under a non-lapsable fund called the Prarambik Shiksha Kosh. This is then used as a supplementary resource to finance the SSA and other programmes for elementary education (e.g. Midday meals Programme), other fund coming from the outlays reserved for education under the government of India's budget for a given fiscal

Table-4

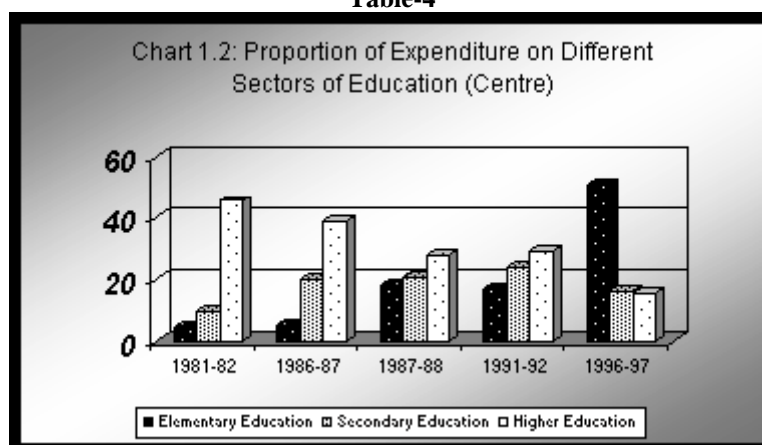


Table-5 Expenditure on elementary education by education and other department

year	Expenditure on elementary education Rs. crore			Expenditure on elementary education as % of GDP		
	States/UT	centre	total	States/ UT	Centre	total
2007-08	51403.56	18122.68	69526.25	1.12	0.40	1.52
2008-09	64833.28	21942.84	86776.12	1.23	0.42	1.64
2009-10	76389.18	22270.76	98659.94	1.25	0.36	1.61
2010-11	96851.44	31744.19	128595.63	1.33	0.44	1.77
2011-12	112545.04	35205.58	147750.62	1.35	0.42	1.77

Source- Education statistic at a glance, 2011

a. Inadequate Budget for Elementary Education

One major of judging adequacy of public spending on education is its ratio to the country's GDP in comparison of other country expenditure on education in India is very low. It is very high in Norway and Sweden.

Table-6

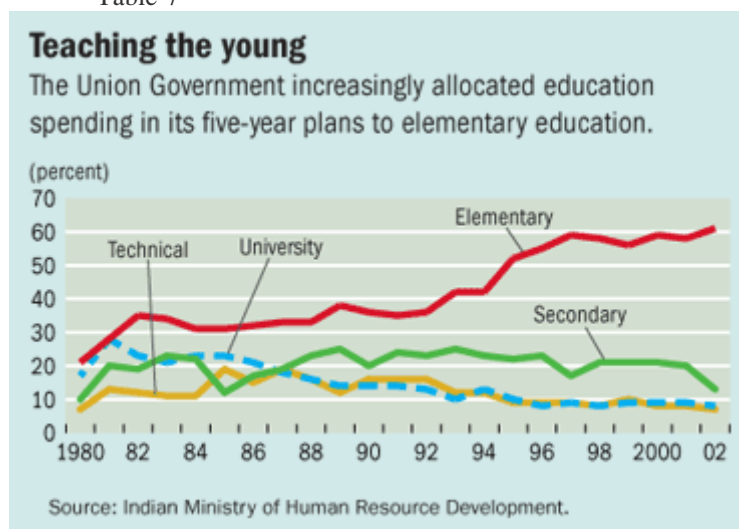
Country	Total spending on education as percentage of GDP
Norway	6.9
Sweden	7.0
New Zealand	7.2
UK.	5.6
France	5.9
USA	5.6
India	3.3

Source- Human development report 2012, UNDP

b. Underutilisation of Available Funds

Comparing programme expenditures against planned allocations we find that nearly one fourth of the funds allocated for elementary education remain unused in 2009-10. India's education budget more than doubled in the last five years increasing from Rs 152,847 crores in financial year 2004-05 to Rs 372,813 crores in financial year 2009-10. An estimated 45 percent of education expenditure are now devoted to elementary education . However, close inspection of India's education system reveals that this large investment has been spent poorly and as the ASER report reminds us that year after, increased investment have failed to improve education outcomes.

Table-7



Yet to be achieved

Considerable progress has been made in case of elementary education wherein government has been trying to focus on Universalization through its initiatives like Sarva Siksha Abhiyan, Mid Day Meal Scheme and Right to Education Act. Acknowledging the need of initial schooling for all, government has made elementary education not only universal but compulsory also.

Many challenges, however, remain in achieving this vision, considering dropout rate, infrastructure facilities, gross enrolment ratio, and out of schools children.

1. Literacy Rate

Literacy rate of persons increase from 18.3 in 1951 to 73 percent in 2011. Literacy rate of males increase from 27.2 in 1951 to 80.9 percent in 2011. Female's literacy rate increase less in comparison of males

Table-8 Literacy rate

Census Years	Persons	Males	Females
1951	18.3	27.2	8.9
1961	28.3	40.4	15.4
1971	34.5	46.0	22.0
1981	43.6	56.4	29.8
1991	52.2	64.1	39.3
2001	64.8	75.3	53.7
2011	73.0	80.9	64.6

1951-1971: Age 5+, 1981-2011: Age 7+

Source: Census of India-2011

2. Gross Enrolment Ratio

Gross enrolment ratio in elementary education is above 97 percent for boys, girls and both.

Table-9 Gross enrolment ratio

Year	Elementary(1-8 class)		
	Boys	girls	All
1950-51	46.4	17.7	32.1
1970-71	75.5	44.4	61.9
1990-91	100.0	70.8	86.0
1995-96	86.9	69.4	78.5
1997-98	86.4	70.0	79.4
2000-01	90.3	72.4	81.6
2005-06	98.5	91.0	94.9
2008-09	102.5	99.6	101.1
2010-11	104.5	103.3	103.9
2011-12	97.2	97.6	97.4

Source- Selected educational statistic 2011

3. School Infrastructure

School building- wide variation was observed among states in respect of condition of school buildings. Over 70% of school buildings appears to be well maintained in states like Kerala, Gujarat, and Punjab, more than 20% of primary and upper primary schools were reported to be in the need of major repair in Assam, Bihar, Orissa and West Bengal.

Table-10

States	Primary Schools			Upper primary schools		
	Building well-maintained	Needs minor repair	Needs major repair	Building well-maintained	Needs minor repair	Needs major repair
Andhra Pradesh	46.0	33.8	13.9	56.1	29.6	13.3
Assam	38.5	29.8	31.7	26.9	42.3	30.8
Bihar	32.6	38.4	22.9	18.0	41.6	38.2
Chhattisgarh	44.9	33.2	18.7	47.6	40.2	9.8
Delhi	66.1	21.5	12.3	-	-	-
Gujarat	70.7	22.4	6.9	67.6	22.3	10.1
Haryana	65.2	19.8	14.6	67.9	20.08	11.3
Himachal Pradesh	25.7	52.2	21.2	37.9	41.3	17.3
Jammu & Kashmir	49.3	45.9	4.9	50.8	39.5	9.7
Karnataka	48.5	39.0	11.9	45.1	38.0	16.9
Kerala	81.6	17.1	0.9	82.2	15.6	2.2
Madhya Pradesh	66.0	25.0	8.0	68.0	20.0	7.0
Maharashtra	58.5	30.5	11.0	62.5	22.6	15.3
Orissa	25.5	39.8	34.0	16.0	33.0	51.0
Punjab	77.1	22.0	0.9	91.2	5.9	2.9
Rajasthan	66.4	25.9	6.9	66.9	26.5	6.61
Tamil Nadu	47.7	38.4	13.5	45.8	31.9	22.2
Uttarakhand	46.8	34.8	18.4	34.5	37.9	27.6
Uttar Pradesh	53.2	30.8	14.1	58.0	26.1	15.9
West Bengal	29.3	43.2	26.7	26.9	37.2	35.9
Over all	49.1	33.2	16.3	49.8	30.6	18.8

Source- Research, evaluation and studies unit technical support group for Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan EdCIL (India) Ltd.

Improvement in School Infrastructure

Percentage of schools with drinking water facility decrease from 96.7 percent in 2007-08 to 92.6 percent in 2009-10. there is no sign of improvement in drinking water facilities. Percentage of school with common toilet facility is also decreased from level of 2007-08. But little sign of improvement is shown in schools with girls toilet facility which increase from 50.5 percent in 2007-08 to 58.8 percent in 2009-10.

Table- 11 Improvement in school infrastructure

Key indicators	2007-08	2008-09	2009-10
Average number of rooms(All government school)	n.a.	3.6	3.7
% schools with drinking water	96.7	87.8	92.6
% school with common toilet	62.7	66.8	54.3
% of schools with girl' toilet	50.5	53.6	58.8

Source- District information on school education (DISE, 2011) MoHRD

Access to education in India is sharply skewed, at the primary and upper primary level. Therefore, in the past decade, India has initiated many steps for moving towards universal quality elementary education, mainly with the help Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan. Significant change has been made in term of improving the availability of schools, enrolment, retention, infrastructure and bridging social disparity gap.

4. Overcrowded Classrooms

The problem of overcrowded classrooms in primary schools was particularly serious in schools of Bihar followed by, Orissa, Gujarat, West Bengal, and Uttar Pradesh.

In upper primary school, most overcrowded state is also Bihar which is followed by Assam, West Bengal, and Gujarat.

Table- 12 Percentage of overcrowded Classrooms

States	Primary			Upper primary		
	None	Some	All	None	Some	All
Andhra Pradesh	50.3	29.1	16.9	44.9	42.9	12.2
Assam	56.3	12.7	31.0	33.3	32.1	34.6
Bihar	19.4	35.1	42.3	12.4	25.8	61.8
Chhattisgarh	59.7	30.0	9.9	62.2	28.0	9.8
Delhi	82.0	13.1	4.9	-	-	-
Gujarat	72.4	5.2	22.4	60.3	22.0	17.8
Haryana	77.7	17.8	4.0	71.7	22.6	3.8
Himachal Pradesh	84.9	11.4	3.7	77.8	16.0	6.7
Jammu & Kashmir	70.5	19.2	10.3	69.9	25.1	5.0
Karnataka	73.6	18.6	7.1	53.5	33.8	12.7
Kerala	93.9	4.8	1.3	96.7	3.3	0.0
Madhya Pradesh	60.0	26.0	14.0	58.0	30.0	11.0
Maharashtra	88.5	10.5	1.0	73.2	18.5	9.3
Orissa	39.0	29.0	32.0	41.0	47.0	12.0
Punjab	95.2	4.8	0.0	92.6	7.4	0.0
Rajasthan	72.6	18.4	8.7	63.6	27.3	9.1
Tamil Nadu	81.1	16.0	2.8	68.1	23.6	8.3
Uttarakhand	80.2	12.1	7.8	82.5	7.9	9.5
Uttar Pradesh	65.1	21.5	10.9	76.1	14.8	8.0
West Bengal	38.7	42.3	18.4	37.2	43.6	18.2
Over all	63.1	21.9	14.3	59.2	25.9	14.9

Source-Research, evaluation & studies unit Technical support group for Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan EdCIL (India) limited.

5. Furniture and Drinking Water Facility

Statistic show that more than 85 percent school in Delhi, Haryana, Chhattisgarh, Kerala, Punjab, and Uttar Pradesh having enough furniture and safe drinking water facilities. But state only 30-40 per cent schools having such facilities.

Table- 13 Percentage of school having adequate furniture/ tat patties and safe drinking water

States	Primary		Upper primary	
	Adequate furniture / tat patties for student	Safe drinking water	Adequate furniture/ tat patties for student	Safe drinking water
Andhra Pradesh	24.1	6.6	1.1	76.3
Assam	74.2	39.3	51.3	44.9
Bihar	22.2	70.3	78.7	51.7
Chhattisgarh	80.2	82.3	84.1	84.1
Delhi	96.8	98.4		
Gujarat	51.7	62.1	76.3	63.8
Haryana	89.9	80.6	86.8	77.4
Himachal Pradesh	93.1	78.4	70.7	90.7
Jammu & Kashmir	86.3	65.8	80.6	92.8
Karnataka	45.1	65.8	85.9	54.9
Kerala	85.5	86.4	95.6	88.9
Madhya Pradesh	92.0	64.0	74.0	89.0
Maharashtra	79.7	69.0	73.6	75.5
Orissa	20.3	76.3	77.0	51.0
Punjab	87.2	99.6	97.1	98.5
Rajasthan	77.6	73.3	82.6	81.8
Tamil Nadu	39.5	77.9	81.9	41.7
Uttrakhand	94.2	76.7	63.5	93.7
Uttar Pradesh	85.4	85.4	81.4	88.4
West Bengal	35.8	64.2	66.4	43.6
Over all	65.5	65.3	71.7	72.7

Source-Research, Evaluation and Studies Unit Technical support group for Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan EdCIL (India) Ltd.

6. Out of School Children

A major survey was conducted in 2009 for accessing the number of out of school children in age group 6 to below 14 in the country.

Table- 14 Out of school children

Out of school children		2005	2009
All (6-13 years)		6.9	4.3
Drop outs		2.2	1.1
Never attended		4.7	3.2
By area	Rural	7.8	4.5
	Urban	4.6	3.2
By gender	Male	6.2	3.9
	Female	7.9	4.7
By social group	SC	8.2	6.0
	ST	9.5	5.6
	Muslims	10.0	7.7
	OBC + others	5.6	2.7
Percentage of disabled children amongst out of school children (6-13 years)			

Source - Social and Rural Research Institute – IMRB International (SRI-IMRB)

- Table show the sign of inequality between the different groups of society. Dropout rate is higher in rural area in comparison of urban area and it also higher for girls than boys. For SC, ST and Muslim dropout rate is greater than other classes.

Cause of Out of School Children

This table show that why children are out of school? What the parents' surveys reveal.

- Too much cost is the main reason in case of never attended schools
- No interest in study is the major cause of drop out schools

Table-15 children aged 6-14 years, reasons for never attending or dropping out of school, NFSH 2, 1998-99

Reasons	Males		Females	
	urban	Rural	urban	rural
Never attended school:				
%	6.4	13.6	9.0	25.7
School far away	1.5	4.4	3.4	5.2
Education not necessary	6.1	7.8	12.9	13.1
Required for work at home or outside for cash / kind	12.6	17.1	15.4	24.5
Costs too much	28.5	25.8	30.1	23.8
Not interested in studies	26.5	25.7	15.7	15.9
Other	26.5	17.0	19.7	15.4
Don't know	3.0	2.0	2.8	2.1
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
Dropped out of school				
%	10.6	10.6	11.0	12.6
School far away	0.3	1.4	1.2	7.5
Education not necessary	2.4	2.3	5.4	4.3
Required for work at home or outside for cash / kind	21.9	28.4	20.8	26.2
Costs too much	15.2	13.3	17.0	11.4
Not interested in studies	42.5	40.0	30.2	24.8
Other	6.0	5.3	6.1	3.7
Other*	5.9	5.5	14.3	18.2
Don't know	5.7	3.8	5.1	4.0
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0

*in case of girls, this category also includes reasons such lack of proper school facilities for girls and marriage, among those who dropped out.

Source- NFSH 2

Three most prominent reasons that emerged from the survey for non-attendance by children were 1) high schooling costs, referring to hidden costs of books, stationary and clothes; 2) Lack of interest in studies which could stem from a number of reasons, from an in conducive home environment to a poor quality schooling system; and 3) As far as work is concerned, it could be possible that children are withdrawn because they are needed to contribute to the household income. Equally possible could be the fact that they are engaged in household activity, after dropping out (Ramachandran, Vimala, 2002).

7. Pupil Teacher Ratio

Pupil teacher ratio which is increased from 24 to 43 in 1990-91 shows not any sign of improvement till 2010-11 for primary schools. Upper primary schools are also not showing any improvement after 1980-81.

Table-16 Pupil teacher ration

Year	Pupil teacher ratio	
	Primary	Upper primary
1950-51	24	20
1960-61	36	31
1970-71	39	32
1980-81	38	33
1990-91	43	37
2000-01	43	38
2005-06	46	34
2010-11	43	33

Source- Statistic of school education 2010-11

Child Work and Elementary Education

In a broad sense, all-out of children must be considered child labourer: they are not in work-force today, they will join it tomorrow. At present there are 17 million children labour in India.

- 17.26 children neither at work nor at school. Only a little awareness about importance of education and education facilities can these children in schools.

Table- 17

Activities	Children of Age Group (5-14 years)					
	Number of Children (%)			Number of Children (in 100's)		
	Boys	Girls	Total	Boys	Girls	Total
Children engaged in "economic activities"	4.18	3.86	4.02	52967	45618	98392
Attended domestic duties only	0.30	3.15	1.67	3770	37208	40788
Attended domestic duties plus free collection of goods, tailoring, weaving for HH only	0.25	1.92	1.06	3178	22693	25897
Children at Work	4.73	8.93	6.75	59915	105519	165077
Attending schools	72.98	61.45	67.44	925350	725964	1651186
Children neither at work nor at school	17.26	20.42	18.80	218889	241255	460205

Anganwadis can lend a Hand

A well functioning anganwadis has much to contribute to the success of schooling. One of the aims of anganwadi Kendra's run under integrated child development schemes (ICDS) should be provided child care facility. It would enable poor women and their elder children to go to work or school without constraints. It would even look after the developmental needs of young children placed under its care.

Some States Particular Action

West Bengal Assam, Rajasthan, and Orissa implement programmes to improve learning atmosphere. The learning environment relates to creating child-centred learning and teaching activity and materials that promote active, creative approach to learning in a joyful classroom environment as well as developing teachers proficiencies. West Bengal, Uttar Pradesh, Assam, Jharkhand, and Bihar start some steps to make better school environment for children. The school environment relates to ensuring that all children have equal access to schooling and supported by all concerned people and institutions to keep them healthy and safe and protect them from all forms of violence and harassment at school, in the family and in society.

Teacher development and support relates to a supportive system that enhances teacher proficiencies to ensure that they have theoretical and practical knowledge, skills, appropriate attitudes and values. Andhra Pradesh, Assam, Gujarat and Karnataka take some steps to improve teacher development and support. Community and civil society partnerships relates to the participation of children, families, communities in the management of their local school. It is a step used by Bihar, Maharashtra, Chhattisgarh, and Karnataka.

Policy Implications and Suggestions

1. Illness in family is a major problem because of this problem many children have to leave their school. Therefore it is necessary and urgent to start health education and awareness in education backward areas.
2. It is necessary to meet the challenge in elementary education with full dedication and commitment not only by government but the community also.
3. The burden of non teaching duties is often cited as a reason why teachers are enabling to concentrate on teaching. Therefore distracting duties should be removed.
4. Many children are first generation learner, armed with just one alphabet text and one slate. Teacher should take the view that this substantial proportion of their pupils needs extra learning time from them in spare time.
5. Little awareness about education facilities in major reason of out of schools children. Therefore time to time awareness opportunity should be provided in backward states and regions.
6. Corruption is the main reason of misused of funds. It should be handled strictly.
7. Only well trained teacher should be employed. The govt should enhance the knowledge and skill of teachers.
8. Pupil teacher ratio should be increased and maintained as per requirement.
9. Child labour law should be implemented properly.
10. The quality of education must be improved rather than quantity.
11. The education system of india put more emphasis on theoretical knowledge than practical knowledge. Therefore practical work should be increased in course work.

VI. Conclusion

Practices for elementary education in India are no doubt leading to a gradual increase in enrolment, and attendance and reduce dropout rate but a great deal remains to be done : education at the upper primary is still far from universal (especially for girls), pockets of backwardness persist even at the primary level. The first step to achieving any improvement in education is to allocate fund for it. Funds allocation for education in India has increased significantly in the past few years, though it is still short of the funds in comparison of other countries. What is of concern is the states inability to utilise the funds allocated. Clearly there are the lessons to be learnt from the states which utilised funds more efficiently. But more significantly, there is need to improve quality of spending for getting better outcomes. State intervention and public response is likely to be consolidated as education levels among parents continue to increase rapidly in the near future.

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