

A Study of Process and Development of Primary Education in India

¹Pradip Kumar Bhunia & ²Dr. Rajesh Kumar

¹Research Scholar OPJS University Churu Rajasthan

²Associate Professor, OPJS University Churu Rajasthan

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ABSTRACT

Primary education is of utmost significance as it establishes the foundation from which the learning of a person takes place. There have been implementations of schemes and programs that have put emphasis upon initiation of Primary education of the children belonging to deprived, marginalized and socio-economically backward sections of the society. In the field of adult education, it is essential to put emphasis upon the development of programs and processes. These primarily focus upon the implementation of modern and innovative methods and approaches, which would lead to enhancement of this field and benefit the learners. The Total Literacy Campaign (TLC), Continuing Education Programs, Continuing Education Centres, Niranter, SarvaShikshaAbhiyan (SSA) and National Literacy Mission (NLM). The main aspects that have been taken into account in this research paper include projects and programs of adult education, Government organizations for adult education in India, and current status of adult education practice.

1. Introduction

Education is not only considered essential for the pleasant development of one's personality but also for the growth and progression of the country as a whole. Primary education is regarded as the foundation for the growth of not only the individuals but for the welfare of the entire nation. Primary education in India is regarded as the foundation of compulsory schooling that is considered essential for the individuals. It is preceded by pre-school or nursery education and is followed by secondary education. Since India attained independence, the central and the state governments have been involved in the expansion of primary formal and non-formal education to realize the goal of Universalization of Primary Education (UEE). The challenge in the present existence is to provide and develop the current reforms in education and encourage local planning and management of strategies for strengthening and improving Primary education.

Universalization of Primary Education (UEE) is still a distant prospect in substantial part of the world. The central government, and the state government and other organizations have been involved in the progression of Primary education. The 86th constitutional amendment act, 2002 made education the fundamental right of the children within the age group of six to fourteen years. Right of Children to Free and Compulsory Education Act, 2009 was recognized, it stated all children should be made provision of free education up to the age of fourteen years. The role of education within the framework of social and economic progress is well recognized. UEE has opened up opportunities for the individuals leading to their social and economic development. Education is not only meant to improve the knowledge of the individuals but also in enhancing the overall quality of life.

SarvaShikshaAbhiyan (SSA)

The SSA is a historic stride towards the achievement of the long cherished goal of Universalization of Primary Education (UEE). There is a need to formulate a time-bound integrated approach to fulfil the goal of UEE. SSA has been

operational since 2000-2001. This program has made provision of number of interventions for universal access and retention, bridging the gender and social category gaps in Primary education and bringing about improvements in the quality of learning.

National Council for Educational Research and Training (NCERT)

NCERT is a comprehensive extension program in which the departments of the National Institute of Education (NIE), Regional Institute of Education (RIE), Central Institute of Vocational Education (CIVE) and offices of the field advisors in the states are engaged in activities. There has been organization of various programs in rural and backward regions. As in these regions, the individuals usually are residing in seclusion and belong to poverty stricken, deprived and economically backward sections of the society. The programs reached out to the functionaries in these regions. It acts as the secretariat of the National Development Group (NDG), for educational innovations. The NCERT has been making provision of training facilities through the attachment programs and participation in workshops, to education workers of other countries. The NCERT publishes textbooks for school subjects from classes I to XII. The books that are published in NCERT are used in Government and private schools throughout the country that follow the CBSE curriculum.

2. Management Structures In Education

In education, it is vital to take into account the management structures. The management structures primarily are referred to the buildings, infrastructure, materials, equipment, technology, resources and finances. Besides these, it is essential to take into consideration the teaching-learning processes, classroom management, curriculum and the instructional methods, discipline and effective communication amongst the individuals. The educational institutions have the main aim of making provision of education to the students and leading to their growth and development. Besides making provision of quality education, it is important to take into

consideration several areas, these are, making available proper extra-curricular and creative activities, materials to generate improvement in learning, technology, facilities, skilled and professional teachers and appropriate implementation of managerial functions of planning, organizing, controlling, leading, recruiting and directing.

A review of the Education For All's management structures will have to take into account the structures, processes, and functioning (Mukhopadhyay, Ramkumar, & Vasavi, 2009). The provision of education, admission of children, recruitment of teachers, and all the other tasks and operations within the educational institutions require management structures in education. In order to implement the management structures in education in an appropriate manner, the individuals and the members of the schools are required to be skilled, proficient, capable and professional in the performance of their tasks and in carrying out the operations.

The National Plan of Action document that the management structure at the national and the state level, comprising senior officials from the executive domain, are designated as vital for monitoring and co-ordinating the respective roles at their particular levels. Additionally, since the implementation of the District Primary Education Program (DPEP), there has been an increase in the number of structures and institutions that are involved at different levels of delivery of public education. The areas that are required to be improved are, the evaluation procedures, these are regarding the education that is provided to the students, structures of the educational institutions, job performance of the teachers and other policies and practices. The evaluation procedures help in identifying the weaknesses and make improvements. This area puts emphasis upon the critical examination of the internal structure of the state departments and various institutions, as well as those endangered by the programs such as, DPEP and SarvaShikshaAbhiyan (SSA) towards recognition of the EFA goals (Mukhopadhyay, Ramkumar, & Vasavi, 2009).

In order to make the management structures effective, the main functions of planning, organizing, controlling, leading, recruiting and directing have to be taken into account. Planning is concerned with the planning of rules and policies that may contribute towards the productivity of the educational institutions. Organizing is an important area in schools, it is concerned with organizing of events, tests, proceedings, occasions, competitions, and so forth. Controlling is related to maintaining discipline and demureness within the schools and eliminating any kinds of conflicts or violent situations. The directors, teachers and the staff members are bestowed with the responsibility to lead each other and the students towards the right direction and adequately guide them in case of any problems or setbacks. Recruitment of the teachers and the staff members within the schools have to be done in an appropriate manner, taking into consideration their qualifications, experience and way of communication. The function of directing applies to the principals directing the teachers and other staff members and teachers directing their students. It means the individuals need to be guided regarding the performance of their work, maintenance of discipline and possessing the qualities of diligence, resourcefulness and conscientiousness.

3. Major Goals Of Universalization Of Primary Education (UEE)

Universalization of Primary Education (UEE) is one of the most important goals of educational development in India since independence. Article 45 of the Directive Principles of State Policy is committed to ensure free and compulsory education for all. This did not get translated into action and school enrolments and participation remained low even after the decades since the country achieved its independence. Primary education in rural India began to undergo transformations due to the new thrusts given by the government's National Policy of Education, 1986 and the revised Program of Action, 1992. The main objective of these acts are to improve access, lead to a reduction in drop-outs and improve learning achievements for all children up to the age of six to fourteen years. Primary education has been considered as a fundamental right by the 83rd Constitutional Amendment is expected to improve the enrolment in primary schools.

Universal Access – This is regarding the universal enrolment of all children, including girls and individuals belonging to Scheduled Castes, Scheduled Tribes and Other Backward Classes. Provision of primary school for all children within one kilometre. Improvement of ratio of primary school to the upper primary school from the existing 1:2 to 1:4, this being a pre-condition for larger opportunity for increasing participation amongst the girls at the upper primary stage.

Universal Retention – The universal retention aims at retaining the students and leading to a reduction in the drop-out rate in the Primary school stage. The school environmental conditions should be created in a manner that students take pleasure in coming to school and enhancing their learning. Improvement of the school facilities at the Primary school stage is important. The provision of school facilities and other relevant materials helps in the retention of students.

Universal Attainment – Achievement of minimum level of learning by all children at the primary level, and introduction of this concept at the upper primary stage on a large scale. The students at the primary level should acquire the minimum level of learning and enhance their basic literacy skills of reading, writing and arithmetic. At the upper primary stage, there should be an increase in the number of students as well as improvement in the universal attainment of education.

Universal Monitoring – Local level committee with due representation of women and teachers, to assist in the working of primary education to oversee its functioning. Improvement of the monitoring system of UEE to ensure that goals and objectives are adequately met.

4. Important Areas Of Primary Education

The important areas of Primary education have been stated as follows: (Mehta, 2011).

The number of schools, teachers and the enrolment category needs to be classified on the basis of school category and school management. The category and reputation of the schools are identified on the basis of the number of students, teachers, their qualifications, experience, teaching-learning processes, instructional methods, learning materials and other facilities. On the other hand, the management and administration of the schools are considered important to lead to an efficiency in the implementation of all tasks and activities.

The operative management and administration of the schools will contribute in enhancing their functioning and reputation within the community.

Classrooms are considered to be one of the important areas, where learning takes place. It is important to make the students feel comfortable within the classrooms so that their learning and understanding takes place in an effective manner. Within the classrooms, there should be provision of proper facilities, sitting arrangements, heating and cooling equipment, in accordance to the weather conditions and teaching and learning materials. The classrooms should be attractive and appealing, therefore, in Primary education, when pictures, drawings, paintings and other concepts are displayed, the students take pleasure in coming to school and understanding the concepts. Therefore, to lead to improvements in the curriculum and the instructional methods, it is vital to make the classrooms appealing.

The teaching and the learning processes are of utmost significance. In Primary education, the academic concepts are not much difficult to understand and students are even assisted by their parents at home. In the completion of homework assignments, preparation of class tests and exams and working on any kinds of projects and assignments, parents help their children. The concepts in Primary education are manageable and they are easily communicated to the students. In nursery school education, the students are taught the basics, which serve to be the foundations in the enhancement of their literacy skills. For example, alphabets, numbers, pictures of different objects within the environment, drawing, colouring and so forth.

In spite of well organization of the teaching and the learning processes, it is vital to evaluate the students on the basis of their performance. The major aim of the evaluation processes is to determine where a student stands within the classroom. The evaluation process of the students takes place on the basis of their performance and conduct. The evaluation process helps in identifying the weaknesses and the measures are formulated which are required to improve them. The main ways through which the evaluation of the students takes place is through tests, exams, projects, and assignments. The tests can be both in a verbal and in a written form. Other evaluation procedures can be rating in homework assignments, decorum, and rate of absenteeism.

The physical environmental conditions of the schools are important. The schools are different from each other in their size, number of classrooms, teachers, students, and surroundings. There are some schools which have large buildings, some have small buildings, some are spacious, whereas others are less spacious and so forth. The learning, growth and development of the individuals largely depends upon the physical environmental conditions. The Primary school students enjoy playing on the swings, they like to run around in parks and take pleasure in playing outdoor games. The provision of all these facilities and availability of parks and swings within the schools make students enjoy learning.

The teachers who are recruited for teaching Primary school students should be well trained and experienced. They should possess efficient knowledge regarding the teaching and the learning materials and instructional strategies. It is vital to make young students understand the concepts in an appropriate manner. One of the important areas is that

teachers in Primary education should possess a caring and an amiable nature. They should learn how to deal with young students and solve all their problems. Young students at the initial stage feel vulnerable within the school environment, hence, it is the job of the teachers to make them feel comfortable and contented in school.

In Primary education, various forms of extra-curricular activities are considered vital for the growth and development of the students. The different forms of extra-curricular activities are, making of handicrafts, artworks, sports, physical activities, yoga, meditation, taekwondo, games, music, playing musical instruments, singing, dancing and so forth. The involvement of the young students in extra-curricular activities is enjoyable, stimulates them and arouses enthusiasm within their mind-sets towards learning. When schools work towards development of these activities and encourage participation of the students, then they feel motivated towards learning. In nursery schools, learning begins with play and involvement of the students with help from their teachers in extra-curricular activities.

For the development of Primary education, it is vital to conduct an analysis from time to time, regarding the areas that are necessary to make teaching-learning efficient for the children. There are number of areas within the system of education, which requires improvement, such as in Primary schools, at the initial stage, there would not be swings, therefore, bringing in swings, playthings, water sports, libraries, new materials etc. from time to time would contribute in the enhancement of learning. The teachers are required to communicate with the parents of the young students to find out the areas and concepts which are required to get improved.

5. Features Of Primary Education

The features that have characterized Primary education, since the country achieved its independence are still prevalent in the present existence. These continue to describe the Primary education and have been stated as follows: (Shiva Kumar, & Rustagi, 2010).

Enrolment – Since the 1990, there has been a steady increase in the enrolment rate of Primary education. There have been initiation of a number of schemes that have led to an increase in the enrolment rate, these are, recruitment of local teachers, having an increase in the proximity of the schools, providing mid-day meals and incentives and scholarships for the students. One of the most important reasons is, individuals have begun to recognize the significance of education. They have formed this viewpoint that with the acquisition of education, they will be able to enrich their lives. If the parents feel disinterested in sending their children to schools or if the children consider discontinuing their education, this is because, the teaching-learning processes are not well organized, there are not proper availability of creative activities, the management of the schools is not carried out in an appropriate manner and the environmental conditions of the schools are not suitable. Therefore, to lead to an increase in the enrolment rate, it is vital to make improvements in all these areas.

Equity – There have been numerous improvements in education at all levels. In spite of improvements made in all the areas of education, there is an increase in the inequalities in basic education. Differences between the regions, genders, castes, class, ethnicities, religions and other marginalized

sections of the population continue to exist and serve to be the biggest challenge for the policy makers and the educationists. The levels of educational attainment vary across the states. Though the average literacy rate for India was 65.4 percent in 2001, the proportion of the population who could read and write varied from 48 percent in Bihar and 91 percent in Kerala. Such indicators were observed in the provision of school education as well. There has been an increase in the school drop-out rate amongst the deprived, marginalized and socio-economically backward sections of the society due to various reasons. In addition, there are differences on the basis of gender amongst the Scheduled Castes, and Scheduled Tribes, regarding the children who are in between six to fourteen years of age. Measures should be initiated to eliminate gender differences and equal opportunities should be made available to all the individuals.

Quality – Quality of Primary education is regarded as an imperative aspect. The quality of the schools can be improved by making use of meaningful curriculum and instructional methods, materials and equipment, technology, physical environmental conditions, libraries and resources. In some of the Primary schools, there is limited materials and equipment available, which is not sufficient to meet the needs and requirements of the students. Therefore, the measures that are vital to be undertaken to enrich the quality of Primary education are, making provision of proper teaching-learning methods, effective communication between the teachers and the students, availability of materials, books, articles, swings, playthings and other resources. These should contribute not only in the learning of the students, but also they are able to generate awareness regarding different areas. Teachers should focus upon making available concepts to the students that would make them better human beings, such as values, norms, standards, principles, and etiquettes. Teachers have a vital role to play in enhancing the quality of the schools, especially in rural areas, where they are the sole representatives of the education system. They are the main people who contribute an important part in the management of the school. Efficiency in the management process leads to an improvement in quality.

Effectiveness – There are various systemic and structural deficiencies that characterise the functioning of the government schools. The effectiveness of the school is characterized by proficiency and expertise in carrying out the managerial functions of planning, organizing, leading, directing, recruiting and controlling. These functions apply to both students and the staff members. The teachers play an important part in

maintaining effectiveness of the schools. They are required to be supportive and encouraging towards the students. On the other hand, high rate of absenteeism amongst the teachers, ineffective teaching methods, engagement of the teachers on frequent basis in non-teaching work and use of intimidating and uninteresting methods of teaching are the ways that lead to an increase in the drop out of students. Teachers are expected to enrich the learning and understanding of the children. Within the classroom setting, there are various forms of biases and discriminations. In order to promote effectiveness within the Primary education, the primary factors are to treat all students equally, providing them equal opportunities, encouraging operative teaching-learning methods, and creative activities, having proper materials and equipment, and improving the physical environmental conditions of the schools, and effective communication processes. All the members of the schools and students should work in collaboration towards implementation of these factors.

6. Conclusion

Primary education in India needs to be spread amongst the deprived, marginalized and socio-economically backward sections of the society. Girls, children in difficult circumstances and those belonging to ethnic minorities, should have access to and complete free and compulsory primary education of good quality. The management of the education structures should be carried out in a manner that children should benefit from learning. It is vital to ensure that the learning needs and the requirements of the individuals are met through equitable access to appropriate learning and life skills programs. The accessibility should be there of all the individuals belonging to different backgrounds to learning programs and educational institutions. There has been an increase in the demand and recognition of education amongst the individuals. Education is not only considered necessary to attain a status or reputation within the community but in order to carry out daily life activities too education is regarded imperative. The demand for basic education continued to grow with an increasing recognition of the importance of educating children amongst the parents and the guardians. There have been improvement in infrastructural facilities within the schools, gross enrolment is universal, there have been a decline in the school drop-out rates, especially amongst the girls and more teachers have been recruited. The progressions of various areas and opportunities have led to the development of Primary education in India.

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