Primary Educational System In Rural India. A sociological View

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Abstract

Education in India has a history stretching back to the ancient urban centres of learning at Taxila and Nalanda western into Indian society with the establishment of the British Raj education in India the control of both the central government and the states with some responsibilities lying with the centre and the state having autonomy for others. The various articles of the Indian constitution provide for education as a primary need. Most universities in India are Central or State Government controlled. India’s education system turns out millions of graduates each year, many skilled in IT and engineering. This manpower advantage underpins India’s recent economic advances, but asks deep seated problems within India’s education system. Indian governments have seen education as a crucial development tool. Since Independence, the education policies of successive governments have built on the substantial legacies of the Nehruvian period, targeting the core themes of plurality and secularism, with a focus on excellence in higher education, and inclusiveness at all levels. Traditional education in India served a very limited purpose of a particular section of the society belonging to certain caste. During medieval period education was similarly elitist, favouring the rich. These pre-existing elitist tendencies were reinforced under British rule. British colonial rule brought with it the concept of a modern state, a modern economy and a modern education system. The education system was first developed in the three presidencies (Bombay, Calcutta and Madras).

1. Introduction

   Education is perhaps the most vital requirement for inclusive growth, empowering individual and society, opening up opportunities and promoting true public participation in the development process. It is an important factor that fuels both social change and economic growth. India is activity pushing forward with its agenda for revamping and restructuring education in the country. Thanks to schemes like thesarva shishka abhiyan and midday meal schemes, enrolment rates in schools have gone up, as have the number of schools. Right o education is now a fundamental right for all children in the age group of 6 to 14. In simple words, it means that the government will be responsible for providing education to every child up to the eighth standard, free of cost, irrespective of class and gender. It has thus paved the way for building a strong, literature and empowered society in this country. The growth mantra for policy maker today not just in India but the over and for inclusive growth what could be a more crucial input than education for all? Good wholesome education empowers one opens up opportunities for individual and group entitlement productive employment and participation in various arenas of social life in all education ignites social change and catalyzes economic growth. While the world community recognizes education for all as an important millennium development goal and the G-8 nations say that investment in education is crucial for sustainable recovery from the present economic crisis India is actively pushing forward with its agenda for revamping and restructuring education in the country and there is certainly a lot that needs to be revamped and restructured.

   The number of schools across the country have grown enrolment rates have also risen significantly over the years thanks to schemes like sarvashiksha abhiyan and the midday meal scheme yet we are far from our goal of providing universal elementary education school education is plagued by poor infrastructure shortage of teachers and their low levels of training and motivation disparities on social regional and gender levels in the rate of enrolment and continuance in schools, and poverty and livelihood issues that keep children away from studies. Higher education has its own issues to contend with. From making available adequate number of colleges and universities including technical and vocational institutions, ensuring quality of education, promoting the spirit of quest, to working out meaningful curricula aligned with the job market, policy makers in the area have their hands absolutely full. The entire education sector is expectedly buzzing with activity the landmark legislation giving every child the fundamental right to free and compulsory elementary education is just one step towards setting right what is wrong with the sector the emphasis on education in the eleventh plan the setting up of the knowledge commission and the commission to advise on revamping and rejuvenating higher education have all helped to crystallize the issues relating to education that need to be addressed urgently and have suggested ways of addressing them. While there is a lot that the government needs to do to provide quality education to its people an equal responsibility rests with society to do its bit. Every now and then we hear of young people giving up lucrative corporate careers to take on the responsibility of teaching the needy this growing social conscious needs to be promoted and sustained if India with its predominantly
young population wants to reap demographic dividends we need to work really fast. “Shashank Chaturvedi” Education is a necessary and increasingly vital component in any nation’s development the universal declaration of human rights affirms that ‘everyone has the right to education’. In addition, policies of positive discrimination in education and employment furthered the case for access by hitherto unprivileged social groups to quality education. It has been argued that while access for some marginalized communities continues to be limited, the upward mobility of a few Dalit and tribal households resulting from positive discrimination in educational institutions and state patronage has created role models that help democracy survive in India. The main pillar of Indian education policy was to be free and compulsory education for all children up to the age of 14. Other features included the development of languages (Hindi, Sanskrit, regional languages and the three-language formula), equality of educational opportunities (regional, tribal and gender imbalances to be addressed) and the development and prioritization of scientific education and research. The commission also emphasized the need to eradicate illiteracy and provide adult education. After around two decades of National Policy on Education of 1968, in 1986, Rajiv Gandhi announced a new education policy, the National Policy on Education (NPE), which was intended to prepare India for the 21st century. The policy emphasized the need for change: “education in India stands at the crossroads today. Neither normal linear expansion nor the existing pace and nature of improvement can meet the needs of the situation.

The 1986 policy was reviewed by a committee constituted in 1990 under the chairmanship of Acharya Ramamurti. On the basis of the recommendations of this committee, certain provisions of the 1986 policy were modified in 1992. Thus, in all, the three comprehensive national policy statements exist on Education.
National policy on education, 1968
National policy on education, 1986
National policy on education, 1986, as revised in 1992

Apart from these above National Policies on education, in order to ensure quality education following initiatives have been developed. Operation Blackboard (1987-8) aimed to improve the human and physical resources available in primary schools. Restructuring and Reorganization of Teacher Education (1987) created a resource for the continuous upgrading of teachers’ knowledge and competence. Minimum Levels of Learning (1991) laid down levels of achievement at various stages and revised textbooks. National Programme for Nutritional Support to Primary Education (1995) provided a cooked meal every day for children in Classes 1-5 of all government, government-aided and local body schools. In some cases grain was distributed on a monthly bases, subject to a minimum attendance. District Primary Education Programmed (DPEP) (1993) emphasized decentralized planning and management, improved teaching and learning materials, and school effectiveness. Movement Educate All (2000) aimed to achieve universal primary education by 2010 through micro planning and school-mapping exercises, bridging gender and social gaps. Fundamental Right (2001) involved the provision of free and compulsory education, declared to be a basic right for children aged between 6 and 14 years. A linked challenge is one of equity. Participation rates in Education are poor largely because students from disadvantaged groups continue to find it difficult to pursue it. Even when they manage to participate, students suffering from disadvantages of gender, socio-economic status, physical disability, etc. tend to have access to education of considerably lower quality than the others, while the education system needs to provide them access to the best possible education so that they are able to catch up with the rest.

Democracy and development mean nothing for those who are not touched by the hand of progress. In this strive for ensuring the hand of progress to the last person there is urgent need to ensure quality education for all right to education is one of the most remarkable attempts made by the government in the recent past the strong growth prospects of our economy coupled with present phase of globalization have fuelled the demand for education in India to cater to this demand the government has gone ahead with a new set of strategies in the xi the plan it has launched ambitious schemes for expansion strong knowledge base and other quality parameters so as to adapt the system of higher education to the market requirements this kind of interventions will ultimately help our education system to exploit opportunities emerging from globalization at the same time catering to wide variety of needs that make up for the diversity of our society. The Indian government has expressed a strong commitment toward education for all though the gender gap in educational involvement has reduced over the years but in India it is still a matter of great concern. As per the latest human development report of south Asia one of the discrimination that girls and women are facing India is the fact that they are not able to enjoy the right to education more than half of the adult illiterates (63%) are women and nearly 2/5th girls enrolled in primary school are drop outs before grade 5 while overall enrolment rates at different levels of schools has gone up especially after the sarva shiksha abhiyan the gap between enrolment level of boys and girls continues to be disturbing. However it is heartening to note that while the gap between enrolment of boys and girls or the female male ratio in education is still a matter of concern it has been steadily improving over the years. The village education committee should not be an ad hoc project arrangement and should be a permanent structure of the village panchayat. The panchayati raj act of many states envisaged for the constitution of such committees at the village level. A frequent parent and teacher interaction will enhance student enrolment and attendance rate. However, the teachers
are found to be interacting less with the parent because of paucity of time and sometimes even from the other side as the parents too busy in their livelihood earning activities also fail to make themselves available to the teachers. The incentives available to the students must be made at the beginning of the session. Any delay in the availability of books will demotivate the students. The parents those who are not sending their children to the school particularly women must be employed under Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act. The linkage between MREGA and education must be established. The quality of Mid-day meal needs to be improved, which will attract children of the weaker sections of the society to the school. Village monitoring committees must be formulated so that they will monitor the enrolment and student absenteeism. The overall attitude of the people particularly the socially and economically backwards towards the education of the girl child needs to be changed. Universal basic education of good quality without discrimination is thus unquestionably a key to reducing both the structural causes of poverty and its effects and to building processes for sustained and equitable development it is entrusted that the goal of growth and sustainable development can be achieved only by brining equality through proper and sufficient education between men and women ensuring education to every women is thus crucial for the achievement of millennium development goals. An ancient Indian proverb says, If you are for a year, plant a coconut tree, if you are planning for five year, cultivate rice but if you are planning for future send your girl/child to the school. After six fifth decades of investments in education India the largest system of education, has realized that benefits of knowledge are growing as rapidly as the penalties of ignorance. We have also not lost sight of the fact that the financial in-puts are a poor substitute for human efforts and that foreign aid for education is no longer a miracle drug for ailing educational systems. As a nation, have opted for inclusive education where instead of child going to the school, the school comes to the child and the teacher goes to the homes of the drop-outs.

2. Conclusion

The problems associated with education of the children in India are manifold, complex and interrelated. Factors like poverty, apathy of the parents, prejudice, lack of suitable teachers, alien language, inadequate facilities in the educational institutions and wastage and stagnation causes major hindrances in the process of education in the schools. The progress that the country has made during the last sixty years has been remarkable. The country of villages is viewed entirely differently then what it was sixty years ago, by the outside world. A lot however, it still pending to be done, and with such concerted efforts that have been taken in recent past, the outcome should be fruitful. However, much will depend upon the approach of which sincerity and dedication at all levels are essential elements. Education is the most effective instrument for ensuring equality of opportunity.

3. References


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