



STRENGTHENING OF ELEMENTARY EDUCATION

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Education is process of development and potentials of man to the optimum level in order to enable him to lead a productive and happy life in Society. Learning, in other words, is the process that produces permanent behavioural changes in the man when he undergoes experience, the permanent behavioural changes that occur desirable or undesirable, socially and for the individual. Education is concerned with the production of behavioural changes that are only desirable. Teaching is the process of providing proper learning experiences to the children, so that they acquire desirable competencies in Cognitive, Psycho Motor and Affective Domains – that is knowledge, skills, values, attitudes and appreciations. Education ensures the preservation and community everything good in the culture of the people and simultaneously prepares them for progress and prosperity. Education is, thus, the most powerful instrument of social change and National Integration. An attempt has been made in this paper to analyze efforts that are made to strengthen primary education in India. The study is emphasis mainly on meaning, objectives and need for primary education. Further the study also covers implementation of government programme to enhance the primary education in Andhra Pradesh.

MEANING OF PRIMARY EDUCATION:

According to J.P. Naik, “The progress of Primary Education is an index of the general, social and economic progress of the country as a whole”. Primary Education plays a significant place in the Educational reconstruction of a developing country. Ever since Educational consciousness developed in India, a great deal of thinking has gone into developing adequate programmes of Primary Education. Elementary stage of formal Educational set-

up is called Primary Education. it is the stage when a child starts formal instruction. With the popularity of Pre-Primary Education, many people think that “Pre-Primary stage” is the first stage of formal Education. This is wrong notion. In reality, Pre-Primary Education prepares the child for Primary Education. So it is Primary Education which is the first stage of the entire superstructure of Educational setup in India.

According to Indian Constitution (Article 45), Primary Education refers to “free and compulsory Education for all children until they complete the age of fourteen years”.

Kothari Commission regarded Primary Education as comprising two stages.

- Lower Primary stage of four years, covering the age group 6-10.
- Higher Primary stage of three years, covering the age group 10-13.

“Well begun is half done” is a well know maxim. The entire superstructure of the Educational set up of a nation rests upon Primary Education. It is on the start that the entire growth, development and enrichment of mental as well as physical potentialities of the child depend. Success is a natural consequence of the foundation laid. The strength and progress of a country rests on the Educational foundation of the people.

OBJECTIVES OF PRIMARY EDUCATION:

The regional meeting of representatives of Asian Member States on Primary and Compulsory Education was held at Karachi in December 1959 and January 1960. They developed the following objectives.

- To give an adequate mastery over the tools of learning.
- To bring about a harmonious development of the child’s personality.
- To prepare children for good citizenship, to develop in them a love for their country’s traditions, culture and to inspire in them a sense of service and loyalty.
- To develop in children, the spirit of international understanding and universal brotherhood.
- To inculcate Scientific Attitude.
- To inculcate a sense of dignity of labour.
- To prepare the children for life through the provision of work experience and practical activities.

NEED OF PRIMARY EDUCATION:

Most of the developing countries in the world are addressing the challenges of Education For All. It has been universally recognized that to meet

the development goals aimed at eradicating extreme poverty and improving the quality of life of the people, Education is one of the most powerful instruments for reducing poverty and inequality and paving the way for sustained economic growth. It is also a necessary condition for the existence of democratic societies. Both for the individual and Nation, Education is the key to creation, application and spread of knowledge.

Primary Education develops the capacity to learn, read and use of Mathematics, to acquire information and to think critically about information. Primary Education is also the gateway to higher level of Education. Micro-Economic Research has revealed that Education improves individual income. Research also indicates the contribution of Primary Education to better natural resource management and more rapid technological adaptation and innovation.

The role of Primary Education in reducing poverty and inequality has been strongly established. Illiteracy is one of the strongest predictors of poverty and unequal access to Educational opportunity is one of the correlates of income inequality. It is clearly visible in societies in respect to poor girls, ethnic minorities, orphans, people with disabilities and people living in rural areas. Extending adequate quality Primary Education to these vulnerable groups is crucial to equip them to contribute to and benefit from economic growth. The International Literacy Survey reveals high correlation between country level of income inequality and inequality in the distribution of literacy. Primary Education promotes the achievement of all the millennium development goals.

A large number of researchers suggest that completion of at least five to six years of schooling is a critical threshold for sustainable mastery of basic competencies, such as, literacy and numeracy. In less than five to six years of schooling children remain functionally illiterate for the rest of their lives. This is a serious implication from a human capital perspective.

UNIVERSALISATION OF ELEMENTARY EDUCATION:

The strength and progress of any Nation depends on Education of her people. Education is considered as the third eye of man. Developing countries like India Education up to Elementary stage is considered very essential for every citizen the Constitution of India therefore laid down under the Directive principles of state policy, that the state shall endeavor to provide with in period of 10 years from the commencement of this Constitution for the free and compulsory Education for all children.

MEANING: Universalisation of Elementary Education implies making Elementary Education available to all, the rich and poor, those who living in

towns as well as in Rural and Tribal areas and for people living in place that are easily accessible or where accessibility is difficult. All the people of all categories have to be provided with facilities for Elementary Education, it signifies “Education for all”.

HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVE:

A Nation – wide movement for compulsory Education was started by some eminent national leaders. It was mainly led by G.K. Gokhale, who on the 19th March, 1910 moved a resolution in the Indian Legislative Council for the purpose, “that this council recommends that beginning should be made in the direction of making Elementary Education free and compulsory throughout the county and that a mixed commission of officials and non-officials be appointed at an early date to frame definite proposals”. This resolution was, however, withdrawn as the Government of India assumed the House that the whole question was being carefully examined. Provincial Government opposed free & compulsory Education on the ground that the local authorities were unveiling to increase taxes required to finance the scheme. According to Rath (1948) the central Government, therefore, therefore, decided to try persuasion before adopting compulsion.

GOVERNMENT PROGRAMMES:

In the Indian Constitution school Education was included in the state list. As such, it was responsibility of the state Government to provide Universalisation of Elementary Education. At the policy level the situation changed with Constitutional change made in 1976 by which school Education was put in the concurrent list. U.E.E. became a shared responsibility of the central and State Government. The National Government realized its direct responsibility in this field after the adoption of National policy of Education in 1986. In the 1990s there was very intensive activity in the field of literacy in Elementary Education. Issues of adult literacy in Elementary Education and its direct relationship to development entered public discourse. This led the Union Government to procure and channalise funds from international agencies for initiatives and interventions in a big way in different States. The stress in recent decades is now to sustain and deepen current reforms in Elementary Education with the help of local planning and new management strategies.

It is recognized that growth in Elementary Education is largely determined by State specific conditions. Mere funds and schemes from the centre will not guarantee the achievement of U.E.E. goal. It is very much dependent on the tradition and values of local communities, commitment and

enthusiasm of State level Educational leadership, political will of the State Government and capacity to adopt innovative approaches. It is on account of these factors that differential success has been achieved in different States.

DISTRICT PRIMARY EDUCATION PROGRAMME (DPEP):

This programme was launched in November 1994 with a view to overhauling the Primary Education system. The programme aims at translating into action the strategies for achieving U.E.E. through the district specific planning and disaggregated target setting.

ANDHRA PRADESH PRIMARY EDUCATION PROJECT:

This project was started in districts with female literacy of just 34%. It has adopted a two step strategy of improving class – room transaction by training teachers and promoting school construction activities. More than 80,000 teachers have been trained in all districts and more than 3,000 training centers became operational.

SARVA SHIKSHA ABHIYAN (SSA):

The SSA is a flagship programme of the national Government in the new millennium. It seeks to achieve the goal of universal Primary Education by 2005 and the goal of UEE by 2010. This would mean that children in all states would complete at least five years of schooling or its equivalent through the non-formal means by the year 2005. SSA is an effort to universalize Elementary Education by community ownership of the school system. It is a response to the demand for quality basic Education all over the country. It is also an attempt to provide an opportunity for improving human capabilities to all children through provision of community owned quality Education in a mission mode.

OBJECTIVES OF SARVA SHIKSHA ABHIYAN:

- All children in school, Education Guarantee Centre, Alternate School, “Back to School” camp by 2003.
- All children complete five years of Primary schooling by 2007.
- All children complete eight years of Elementary schooling by 2010.
- Focus on Elementary Education of satisfactory quality with emphasis on Education for life.
- Bridge all gender and social category gaps at Primary stage by 2007 and at Elementary Education level by 2010.
- Universal retention by 2010.

All the developing countries are addressing the challenge of Education for all since Education is most powerful instrument for the alleviation of poverty and inequality in society. This commitment was made in the Jomtein conference in 1990 and was reaffirmed at Dakar in 2000. Great importance has been attached to Primary Education as it develops the been attached to read and use mathematics and to acquire information and use it for development. Completion of at least 5-6 years schooling is critical threshold for sustainable mastery of basic competencies. The main task is to enroll all children in the official school going age. It is more important to see that they do not drop-out before completion of 5-6 years of schooling. This has proved to be a difficult task for many social and economic reasons. It has proven to be a great constraint for girls, Scheduled Tribes and the poor in India.

RESIDENTIAL BRIDGE COURSE:

This is for the 9-14 age group children priority shall be given to the hard core children i.e. released form labour, street children and platform children etc. the intake capacity of on RBC is 100. MEO will run the camp. The camp shall be run for 10 months only (maximum) Educational volunteers selected by Mandal Educational committee shall teach. For every 20 children one volunteer shall be engaged. Locally enthusiastic youth who have a minimum qualification of intermediate shall be selected as volunteers. Those selected volunteer's shall be given training for seven days. Volunteers will have their meals in the Centre during nights. Volunteers should be very playful with the children, be their friend and show love for them and continue teaching.

The bridge course material shall be used for children. Relevant class textbooks shall be introduced one month before admitting in schools.

BACK TO SCHOOL PROGRAMME:

The back to school programme are residential bridge course camps. Education department as well as social welfare department jointly conduct 'back to school' programmes during the summer, when the schools are closed these centers are run for 45 days. Children will be admitted into regular schools form these Centers. Social welfare department provide all the facilities in hostels run by it for these residential bridge courses for the out of school children. It will provide both lodging and boarding facilities in the hostels and also take care in the activities.

HOSTELS FOR THE MIGRATING CHILDREN: Generally we observe some children dropping out from schools for some period, while migrating to other places along with their parents. These families come back to their villages

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after a period of 4 to 6 months. Because of this problem children lag behind in studies and some times totally stop attending school. To assist this problem, migrating families shall be provided hostel facility in the same village for 4 to 6 months, and necessary arrangements are made in the absence of their parents, so that these children can continue their studies without any break and thus preventing them from child labour. The school headmaster in the village shall run this hostel under his direct supervision school Education committee shall frequently visit the hostel and provide necessary facilities.

CONCLUSION:

Education is an essential input for accelerating the pace of development of any community. Education is also a right and all citizens have a claim on it. It is an instrument of liberation and endows the deprived groups with confidence, courage and ability to resist exploitation. It is in due recognition of this fact the Kothari Education Commission assigned the subtitle 'Education and National Development' to their Report. The report begins with the aphoristic statement that "The destiny of India is being shaped in her class room". – a statement which sounds platitudinous, but nevertheless, totally true and reminds everyone that a country cannot progress beyond its schools. Sri Thakur defined Education as "systematic organization of habits, and instincts, which purpose of fulfilling the becoming of life, by graduated active manipulation of behavior".

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