

STATE OF PRIMARY EDUCATION IN RURAL HARYANA : A COMPARATIVE STUDY

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Abstract

Education is the foundation stone of any society. The quality and level of education a society has, determines how it will respond to its challenges. It also determines the quality of the future generations. In India, the last decade has seen a number of major changes in the educational system for the first time. Some of them proved great e.g., RTE while some of them did not work as expected e.g., Removal of lower level board exams. Now, to answer the question as to how the government's policies have fared, this paper has taken the example of Rural Haryana. This paper is based on comparative study of the educational level of Haryana within a time span of ten years. The present study will give an idea of how the state has performed and what more needs to be done.

Keywords: Rural literacy, Gross Enrollment, Right to Education, Haryana.

Introduction

Education is the most powerful weapon we can use to change the world

Nelson Mandela

These words by Nelson Mandela aptly describe the importance of education. Today, in the globalized world, where human contacts are so easy and important, the role of education has become even more critical for any society.

In India education has always been given much importance as far as policy formulation is concerned. But, as one look at the statistics there is an altogether different picture that comes out. Every year after board exams, the news channels are flooded with news of mass cheating scams, very poor pass percentage of various state boards etc. This definitely disturbs and needs to be tackled immediately but at the same time this doesn't

necessarily mean that the government is not taking steps to improve the quality of education. Some noteworthy steps taken by the government in this direction are:

- **Reservation in education for the underprivileged.**

In its landmark judgment on April 12, 2012, the Supreme Court upheld the Constitutional validity of the Right to Free and Compulsory Education (RTE) Act, 2009, which mandates a minimum of 25% free seats for children belonging to weaker sections and disadvantaged groups (EWS) in all private unaided primary schools.

- **Education as a fundamental duty of a parent [Art.51A(K)]**

51A. It shall be the duty of every citizen of India- (k)who is a parent or guardian to provide opportunities for education to his child or, as the case may be, ward between the age of six and fourteen years.

- **Right to education (86th amendment act,2002)**

The State shall provide free and compulsory education to all children of the age of six to fourteen years in such manner as the State may, by law, determine.

- **Mid-day Meals**

On August 15, 1995, National Programme of Nutritional Support to Primary Education (NP-NSPE) was launched as a Centrally Sponsored Scheme and in the year 2001, the Supreme Court of India ordered all the state governments and union territories to implement Mid-Day Meal Scheme and provide cooked meals to school children from Government and Government-aided schools.

- **Grading system**

- **Smart learning reducing the weight of bags**

- **Beti bachao beti padhao**

The objectives of this initiative are:

1. Prevention of gender biased sex selective elimination
2. Ensuring survival & protection of the girl child
3. Ensuring education and participation of the girl child

among others.

Education plays a vital role in the smooth functioning of the state machinery. The democratic apparatus of a country can easily sustain the political ups and downs where the population is well educated.

There has been an appreciable growth in the educational level since independence. The literacy rate has grown up in 2010-11 to 74.04% from 18.8% in 1950-51. The government since 1951 has embarked upon the task of improving the standard of education ultimately leading to the better quality of life of the citizens. This explains that a study of the educational level of a country/state is very important and needs to be done regularly for its betterment.

The state of Haryana in the northern part of India is the focus of this paper. The state got recognition as a separate entity on 1,nov,1966. Since then the government has been working to make education accessible to each and every section of the society. But the lack of effective implementation measures and various social

evils have restricted the state to achieve the desired results. This paper aims to study and compare the elementary educational level of the state of Haryana(Rural). The comparison to be made is between various statistics of 2005-06 to that of 2015-16. The purpose of taking this topic is to find out how the state has performed in these years and to help fellow researchers interested in this field to take it further.

Objective

The main objective of this paper is two-fold:

1. To compare the elementary educational status in rural areas of the State within a gap of ten years. Educational status here includes gross enrollment, problem solving, English reading etc.
2. To find out the inference from the comparative study and suggest what necessary steps should be taken to improve the quality of education. It will be extremely satisfying if this paper helps in further research in any possible way.

Methodology

As the paper is based on comparative analysis, the methodology used is :

- To analyse the secondary data from various surveys and reports.
- Data has been gathered primarily from Census reports and Annual Status of Education Report.
- Various government sites and newspaper articles have also helped in getting information related to the study.

Data Analysis

The following statistical study will clear the picture of how the state has performed. What has worked for and against the state to achieve its goals? The Rural areas are taken into consideration for they are worst affected from educational backwardness due to various social hindrances.

Gross Enrollment

The Gross Enrollment Ratio is a statistical measure used in the education sector to determine the number of students enrolled in school at different grade levels

Table 1

School Enrollment and Out of School Children					
Age	Govt.	Pvt.	Other (Madrassa etc.)	Not Enrolled	Total
2006					
7-16 All	52.3	40.3	0.6	6.8	100
7-10 All	50.2	45.8	0.9	3.2	100
7-10 Boys	46.2	51.1	0.4	2.3	100
7-10 Girls	55.5	38.7	1.5	4.4	100
2016					
7-16 All	43.3	52.9	0.6	3.2	100
7-10 All	39.6	58.2	0.7	1.6	100
7-10 Boys	35.6	62.5	0.6	1.3	100
7-10 Girls	44.2	53.2	0.8	1.8	100

Source: Annual Status of Education Report 2006 & 2016

The number of children going to government schools has gone down. It shows that people prefer private school over government ones. The number of children in the not enrolled category has gone down. This is a good sign. It shows the growing awareness among people for educating their children.

Young Children

Table 2 shows the awareness of rural households for early access to education:

Table 2

% Children in Pre School or School				
Age	Anganwadi/ Balwadi	In School	Not going anywhere	Total
2006				
3 All	68.7	4.3	27	100
4 All	61.3	18.8	19.9	100

5 All	31.1	57.4	11.5	100
6 All	2	91.3	6.7	100
2016				
3 All	48.8	24.3	26.9	100
4 All	23.1	55.9	20.9	100
5 All	3.8	88.7	7.6	100
6 All	1.1	95	3.8	100

Source: Annual Status of Education Report 2006 & 2016

The number of Children going to Anganwadi/Balwadi has shown a decline showing people's preference for schools. A significant increase in the number of Children enrolled in school e.g., 57.4%(age 5) in 2006 to 88.7% in 2016 is a good sign. Still, there are 7.6% (age 5) children who are not going anywhere. This needs to be taken down further.

Learning Level

Learning level is the measure of the ability of children to read, write and solve arithmetic problems according to their age. The following tables(3&4) show the quality/effectiveness of education given at primary level. Also it gives an idea of the impact of family/society on child's mind.

Table 3(Reading)

Reading : % children who can read						
Std	Nothing	Letter	Word	Class I text	Class II text	Total
2006						
I	32.4	38.6	17.6	6.3	5.1	100
II	9.5	25.5	31	17.5	16.6	100
III	3.5	11.9	23	26.7	35	100
IV	1	4.6	10.3	28.7	55.3	100

V	0.7	2.8	4.9	17.6	74.1	100
VI	0.3	1.4	2.4	11.5	84.4	100
2016						
I	23.4	29.3	21.1	12.4	13.8	100
II	9.3	20.7	23.5	20.6	26	100
III	6.3	10.8	16.1	20.8	46.1	100
IV	3.3	8.8	10.4	21.4	56.1	100
V	2.4	5	6.8	17.6	68.3	100
VI	1.9	3.9	5.1	13.9	75.2	100

Source: Annual Status of Education Report 2006 & 2016

The number of Children in V and VI standard not able to read class I and Class II text has increased in 2016. This is very discouraging. This shows the negative impact of no fail/detention policy. The no-detention policy was implemented as part of the Continuous and Comprehensive Evaluation (CCE) under the RTE Act in 2010 to ensure holistic development of students. A section of teachers and parents have complained that this policy has led to students developing a lackadaisical attitude, with there being no risk of failing.

Table 4(Arithmetic)

Arithmetic : % children who can do					
Std	Nothing	Recognize Numbers	Subtract	Divide	Total
2006					
I	47.3	40.7	7.6	4.4	100
II	19	44.9	22.7	13.4	100
III	8.7	30.6	31.5	29.1	100
IV	4	13.6	31.9	50.6	100
V	2	8	20.8	69.2	100
VI	0.8	4.7	15.5	79	100
2016					
I	19.9	66.1	11.9	2.2	100
II	6.7	57.9	27.8	7.6	100
III	5.4	39.8	33.1	21.6	100
IV	3	28.3	33.4	35.4	100
V	1.7	22.3	27.2	48.9	100
VI	1.4	19.3	23.8	55.5	100

Source: Annual status of Education Report 2006 & 2016

Percentage of Class VI Children not able to solve any problem has gone from 0.8 in 2006 to 1.4 in 2016. Again this is very disappointing. Children who can recognize numbers and subtract have increased during the decade but nominally. Still needs a lot of work to be done. The number of children able to do division has drastically declined. 69.2 to 48.9 in Class V and 79 to 55.5 in class VI. This clearly displays the lack of effective teaching and non seriousness of students.

Rural literacy

The following table compares the Rural Literacy Rates of India and Haryana for an idea of where Haryana stands when compared to all India average.

Table 5

Country/State	Literacy rate and Gender Gap	2001	2011
India	Total rural literacy rate	58.74	68.91
	Rural Male Literacy	70.7	78.57
	Rural female Literacy	46.13	58.75
	Gap	24.57	19.82
Haryana	Total rural literacy rate	63.19	72.74
	Rural Male Literacy	75.37	83.2
	Rural female Literacy	49.27	60.97
	Gap	26.1	22.23

Source: Census of India 2001, social and cultural tables

Census of India 2011, provisional population totals

The performance of Haryana is almost same or better than the India's average except the gender literacy gap. The gap has reduced from 24.57 to 19.82 i.e. almost 19.3% for India whereas for Haryana it has reduced from 26.1 to 22.23 i.e. mere 14.8% from 2001 to 2011. Poor performance in comparison to all India average is a matter of concern.

Conclusion

The state is doing great when it comes to sports. Girls also have shown that they are in no way less than boys. In education sector also the state has made its mark whether it is IAS or IITs. The number of new schools, colleges and universities opened in the last 10-15 years speaks about the efforts of the state. A girl pursuing MBBS winning the Miss world title from a society considered orthodox is an example in itself that the thinking of the society is changing.

The interpretation of the data has given an idea of the situation of Rural Education level in Haryana. Gross enrollment has shown a positive trend. The number of children drop outs has also decreased. The government needs to work towards making it come down to zero. Some areas where there is an unfavorable outcome viz. Class V & VI Reading and Problem solving abilities, some exemplary steps have to be taken as early as

possible. Regular evaluation of not just the students but the teachers also should be done to keep a check on their attitude towards work.

The government has realised what damage the no fail policy has done and has taken corrective measures in the same direction. A sub-committee of the Central Advisory Board of Education on no-detention was constituted in 2012 under the then Haryana Education Minister Geeta Bhukkal. The committee pitched for the return of detention in a phased manner. The Union Cabinet in 2017 agreed to dilute the no-detention clause to allow state governments to detain children in classes VI, VII and VIII.

The Cabinet approved the HRD Ministry's proposal to amend the law to provide state governments the freedom to draft appropriate rules under the Act for detaining a student in Class VI, VII or VIII. However, no child will be held back in a class unless she/he has been given an additional chance to clear the exam after failing once. In between the first and second attempt, the student will be given remedial coaching.

The government needs to formulate an effective policy on population control. In order to make things work properly, this multiplying trend of population needs to be checked.

A resonance of the positive attitude of the government and that of the citizens is very crucial for significant outcomes. The gender bias in rural areas in particular needs to be eliminated for the development of any society rests on the development and equality of each and every person and not just the selected ones.

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