



INTERNATIONAL JOURNAL OF CREATIVE RESEARCH THOUGHTS (IJCRT)

An International Open Access, Peer-reviewed, Refereed Journal

DISTRICT PRIMARY EDUCATION PROGRAMME ON THE QUALITATIVE AND QUANTITATIVE IMPROVEMENT OF PRIMARY EDUCATION

Dr. Raj Kumar Nayak
Associate Professor

P.G.Department of Education

Fakir Mohan University, Vyasa Vihar, Balasore

Former Professor, BMCE, Choudhary Ranbir Singh University, Zind Haryana

Visiting Expert N.C.T.E. Inspection Team,

Life Time Member of AIAER, The Global community, IATE

Editor of "Global Evolution Bi-Annual" (Management & Teacher Education) Research Journal

Editor Of "Pahal Horizon" Bi Annual Journal, ISSN :2456-4842, International Research Journal

Ms. Sudha Sahu

M.A. in Education, Ph.D Research Scholar

Sambalpur University, Jyoti Vihar, Burla Sambalpur

PRIMARY EDUCATION : ITS SIGNIFICANCE

Nations all over the globe try to meet the expanding learning needs of children. The primary task of the developing countries is to meet the basic learning needs of providing primary education to the younger section of the population. The data on 'Trends in School Age Population' reveals that in 2000 A.D. six out of every seven primary school children in the world in the age group 6-11 were from the developing countries.¹ This vast potential human resource needs functional literacy and numeracy to function as a member of the world community. Recent research studies have produced a considerable amount of evidence to suggest that primary schooling makes a significant contribution to economic and social development.² Data from 20 countries, which included India and other developing countries, has indicated that the average social rate of return is significantly higher on primary education (26.2 %), than secondary education (13.5 %) and higher education (11.3 %).³

Children need minimum knowledge and skills through a sound primary schooling. Education enables the individuals to adapt to important changes in the world around them. The Indian Education Commission (1964-66), has described education as the main instrument of social change. It heightens economic self sufficiency and facilitates national and social integration and political consciousness among people.⁴ The development of human resource is the primary function of education. It lays the foundation of democracy. The success of democracy depends upon its education and responsible citizens. Therefore, all citizens are to be provided with primary education to have functional knowledge and skills to perform civic responsibilities as citizens of a democratic country. Even for facing the challenges of the world to-day primary education is essential for the development of individual personality.

Providing basic education to all children around the world has drawn the attention of all nations. It was the major outcome of the World Conference on Education for All held in Jomtien in 1990. The goals of Education for All (EFA) are of enormous significance. On the basis of EFA (1990) nations of the world had pledged to achieve universal primary education by 2000 and efforts were initiated accordingly. But, in the year 2000, 104

million school-age children were still not in school, 57 per cent of them were girls and 94 per cent were from the developing countries mostly in South Asia and Sub-Saharan Africa. The Millennium Development goals set a more realistic, but still difficult deadline of the year 2015 when all children everywhere should be able to complete a full course of primary schooling. Therefore, new efforts and planning have been initiated by nations including our own country to achieve quality primary education.⁵

Government of India (1993) reports: “At the time of independence in 1947, India inherited an educational system which was not only qualitatively small but was also characterized by striking regional and structural imbalances. Only 14 per cent of the population was literate and only one child out of three had been enrolled in primary school. The low levels of enrolment and literacy were compounded by acute regional and gender disparities. Recognizing that education is virtually linked with the totality of the development process, the reform and restructuring of the educational system was accepted as an important area of state intervention. Accordingly, the need for a literate population and universal education for all children in the age group 6-14 was provided in the Indian Constitution as well as successive Five Year Plans.”⁶

CONSTITUTIONAL COMMITMENTS

Progress of Education in India:

Article 45 of the Constitution of India under the Directive Principles of state policy enjoins that, “the State shall endeavour to provide, within a period of ten years from the commencement of this Constitution for free and compulsory education for all children until they complete the age of fourteen years.”

Article 29(1) of the Constitution provides that “any section of the citizens residing in the territory of India or any part thereof having a distinct language, script or culture of its own shall have the right to conserve the same.” Article 29(2) lays down that “no citizen shall be denied admission into any educational institution maintained by the State or receiving aid out of the State funds on grounds only of religion, race, caste, language or any of them.” Article 30(1) enjoins that “all minorities, whether based on religion or language shall have the right to establish and administer educational institutions of their choice,” while Article 30(2) lays down that “the State shall not in granting aid to educational institutions discriminate against any educational institutions on the ground that it is under the management of a minority whether based on religion or language.”⁷

Realizing the magnitude of the need of education, the United Nations Organization on 10th December 1948 adopted the Universal Declaration of Human Rights to Education. It enunciates:

Every one has the right to education which shall be free at least in the elementary and the fundamental stages. Elementary education shall be compulsory.

Education shall be directed to the full development of human personality and to the strengthening of respect for human rights and fundamental freedom.

Parents have a prior right to choose the kind of education that shall be given to their children.

Fundamental Right to Education in Historical Perspective:

Citizens of this country have fundamental right to education under Article 21(a). According to this right free and compulsory primary education is being declared as a basic right for children in the age group of 6-14 years.

Despite unprecedented progress made after independence, it has not been possible to realize the goal. In 1957, the Planning Commission examined the situation and suggested two phases of the programme; in the first phase ending with the Third Plan, free and compulsory education was planned to be provided for all children in the age group 6-11; in the 2nd phase ending with the Fifth Plan, compulsory education should have covered all children in the age group 11-14. Even this target was not possible to reach in view of the immense difficulties and handicaps involved in the task. When it was felt that by 1960 it would not be possible to provide primary education to all, the target year was shifted to 1965-66 and when this was found impossible, it was again revised to 1975-76.

The Report of the Working Group of Planning Commission (1974) emphasized that it would be definitely completed by 1984 or latest by 1986. The target to provide primary education to all children even up to class V for the age group 6 to 11 was not achieved by the year 1984. The Government of India in National Policy on Education 1986 fixed the target date to 1990 for universalisation of primary education for the age group 6-11.

The Programme of Action (POA) of the National Policy on Education 1986 states that in spite of all attempts to provide primary schools a large number of habitations were still without primary schools.⁸

The focus over last 55 years has been on achieving universal access, retention and achievement. Initially the main focus was on enrolment, but in the 1980s there was a shift towards quality-related issues. Several initiatives as detailed below have been undertaken since then.

Mid-Day Meal Programme:

The Mid-Day Meal Scheme is the popular name for school meal programme in India. It involves provision of lunch free of cost to school-children on all working days. The key objectives of the programme are: Protecting children from classroom hunger, increasing school enrolment and attendance. One of the pioneers of the scheme is the Madras Corporation that started providing cooked meals to children in Corporation schools in the Madras City in 1923. The programme was introduced in a large scale in 1960s under the Chief Ministership of Kamaraj. But, the first major thrust came in 1982 when the Chief Minister of Tamil Nadu, Dr. M.G. Ramachandran, decided to universalize the scheme of all children to government schools in primary classes.

Several other states of India also have had Mid-Day Meal Programme. Kerala started providing cooked meals in schools since 1995 and so did Madhya Pradesh and Orissa in small pockets. On November 28, 2001 the Supreme Court of India gave a landmark direction, which made it obligatory for the government to provide cooked meals to all children in all government and government assisted primary schools. The direction was resisted vigorously by State governments initially, but the programme has become almost universal by 2005. Now mid-day meal scheme is operational in almost all states and covers almost all primary schools including EGS and AIE centers. Recently under the Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan MDM programme has become even more popular. Developing good personal hygiene and cleanliness has been an added objective of MDM under the said scheme.

Operation Blackboard:

The scheme of Operation Blackboard (OB), was launched after National Policy of Education, 1986, by the Central Government to upgrade facilities in primary schools all over the country. Operation Blackboard has three interdependent components:

Provision of a building comprising at least two reasonably large all-weather rooms with a deep verandah and separate toilet facilities for boys and girls.

At least two teachers – one of them preferably a women – in every school, and

Provision of essential teaching-learning material including blackboards, maps, charts, toys and equipment for work experience.⁹

Restructuring and Re-Organization of Teacher Education:

For the continuous upgrading of teachers' knowledge and competence the National Policy on Education, 1986 recommended for setting up of District Institutes of Education and Training (DIETs) to provide quality pre-service and in-service education to elementary teachers and functionaries engaged in adult education and Non Formal Education.

The Programme of Mass Orientation of School Teachers (PMOST) was initiated on the line of recommendation of the National Policy on Education, 1986. Under this programme in-service teachers of all primary schools of the country were brought under a short term training course to facilitate the implementation of the new education policy. It was followed by another Mass Orientation of school teachers under the caption Special Orientation Programme of Teachers (SOPT) commensurate with the recommendation on the revised National Policy on Education (1992).

National Literacy Mission:

Following the National Policy on Education, 1986 the Central Government set up the National Literacy Mission (NLM) in 1988 for eradication of illiteracy in the target age group of 15-35 years. NLM was conceptualised after a critical assessment of the strengths and weaknesses of the earlier adult education programmes.

India launched a National Literacy Mission with the objectives: 80 million young and illiterate citizens in the age group of 15-35 should become at least functionally literate by 1995 and all Indians shall be functionally literate by the year 2001.¹⁰

Minimum Levels of Learning:

Programme of Action (1992) has mentioned, "the need to lay down Minimum Levels of Learning emerges from the basic concern that irrespective of caste, creed, location or sex, all children must be given access to education of a comparable standard." The MLL strategy for improving the quality of elementary education is an attempt to combine quality with equity. The focus of MLL strategy was the development of competency-based teaching and learning.¹¹ The main steps by which MLLs were being introduced in schools were:

an assessment of the existing level of learning achievement;

a definition of the MLLs for the area and the time-frame within which it will be achieved;

reorientation of teaching practices to competency-based teaching;
 an introduction of continuous comprehensive evaluation of student learning;
 review of the text books and their revision, if required;
 the provision of inputs as necessary including provision of physical facilities, teacher training, supervision and evaluation, etc., to improve learning acquisition to the MLLs.¹²
 District Primary Education programme:

The District Primary Education Programme (DPEP), launched in 1993 sought to operationalise the strategy of district level planning. Initial projects were formulated in 43 districts in the eight states: Madhya Pradesh, Orissa, Assam, Haryana, Maharashtra, Karnataka, Tamil Nadu and Kerala. The DPEP was expected to cover at least 110 districts by the end of the Eight-plan period (1997-98).¹³ Till the year 2003, 273 districts in the 18 states have been covered under the said plan.¹⁴

The main thrust under the DPEP was:

District level planning

Community participation and decentralized management

Focus on education for girls, scheduled castes and scheduled tribes

Improving effectiveness of education through training of teachers, improvement of learning materials and upgrading of infrastructure facilities.¹⁵

Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan:

Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan (SSA) was announced by the Finance Minister Yashwant Sinha on February 28, 2002-2003. The SSA is an effort to universalize elementary education by community ownership of the school system. It is an attempt to provide an opportunity for improving human capabilities of all children, through provision of community owned quality education in a mission mode itself and as an important strategy. The aim of SSA is to provide useful and relevant elementary education for all children in the age group of 6-14 by 2010. The objectives of SSA are:

Access of all children in the age group 6-14 to the regular primary and upper primary schools, Education Guarantee Scheme (EGS) and Alternative and Innovative School (AIS) 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.

The Present Status of Education in India:

During the last half a century a lot of changes have taken place in the field of education at the national level as well as the state level. A comparative analysis is based on the following documents published by Government of India.

Government of India (1994), *Selected Educational Statistics*.¹⁶

Government of India (2006), *Selected Educational Statistics*.¹⁷

The literacy rates of population of India increased from 28.31 per cent in 1961 to 64.46 per cent in 2001. The disparities between the male and female were larger – the literacy rate for male being 40.40 per cent against 15.34 per cent for female in 1961 and the literacy rate for male being 75.26 per cent against 53.67 per cent for female in 2001.

During the last four decades the number of primary schools in India has recorded almost two fold increase i.e. 3.3 lakh schools in 1961 to 6.6 lakh schools in 2001.

Since independence, there has been a substantial increase in enrolment at primary stage. Enrolment at primary stage increased from 3.5 crore in 1961 to 11.38 crore by the end of 2001. Sex-wise comparison indicates that enrolment of boys i.e. 2.36 crore was more than that of girls 1.14 crore in 1961. By 2001, this enrolment of boys

increased to 6.4 crore and girls to 4.98 crore. This again indicates that the enrolment of boys was more in comparison to girls. However, the gender gap has been reduced.

According to the Sixth All India Educational Survey (1999), out of the 5,70,455 primary school in the country 20.12% are single teacher schools and another 0.77 per cent do not have any teacher at all. NPE 1986 envisaged that each primary school should be provided with two teachers under the Operation Blackboard scheme. In terms of the primary teachers, a substantial increase has been registered from 7.42 lakh in 1961 to 19.28 lakh in 2001 an almost two and half fold increase over a period of four decades. There has been a remarkable increase in the number of lady teachers i.e. from 1.27 lakh in 1961 to 7.15 lakh in 2001, which works out to a 5.6 fold increase. Whereas, the position of male teachers which was 6.15 lakh in 1961 increased to 12.13 lakh in 2001. It indicates a less than two fold increase. Substantial increase in the number of lady teachers might be due to the implementation of Operation Blackboard Scheme where emphasis was given to appoint at least two teachers out of which one should be a woman. Pupil-teacher ratio (PTR) directly affects the learning condition in schools. When the ratio is high, it impinges on the organization of the teaching learning process in several ways, reducing its effectiveness. The pupil-teacher ratio in India has registered an increase from 1:36 in 1961 to 1:43 in 2001.

Progress of Education in Orissa:

A similar tempo of expansion of education is also observed at the state level in Orissa. Immediately after independence, the educational policy of the Government of Orissa changed radically. The government's attention shifted from elite to the masses. Educational facilities expanded rapidly, with a remarkable rise in the enrolment of students. The National Policy on Education (NPE) approved by the Parliament in 1986 and modified in 1992, envisaged free and compulsory education for all children until the age of 14 years before the onset of the 21st century. To this end number of programmes were launched in the last two decades. The Das Committee Report in Orissa laid special emphasis on elementary education and intended to cover three major aspects in this context: (a) universal access and enrolment, (b) universal retention of children up to 14 years of age, and (c) substantial improvement in the quality of education to enable all children to achieve essential levels of learning.¹⁸

A comparative analysis of the progress of education in Orissa is done on the basis of the statistical data collected from the following four different sources:

Government of Orissa (2004), *Human Development*.¹⁹

Report of the Third Educational Survey Orissa (1978).²⁰

Government of Orissa (1978), *Education in Orissa*.²¹

Government of Orissa (2005), *Statistical Abstract of Orissa*.²²

The literacy rate in Orissa has increased from 21.66 per cent in 1961 to 63.61 per cent in 2001, which is a three fold increase over four decades. This increase is roughly the same at the national level. However, as per the 2001 census, Orissa still ranks a low position among 35 states/Union Territories. The literacy rate for male being 34.07 per cent against 08.65 per cent for female. The male-female disparity was larger in 1961. By 2001 the literacy rate for male has increased to 75.95 per cent against 50.97 per cent for female. There has been a substantial growth in the number of schools in the state of Orissa. Primary schools in the state increased from 21,858 in 1961 to 42,104 in 2001. During the last four decades the number of primary schools in Orissa has recorded two fold increase.

In post-independence period there has been an explosion in school enrolment in Orissa as in other states of India. In Orissa, the number of students in the primary stage in four decades increased 3.3 fold i.e. from 14.29 lakh students in 1961 to 47.10 lakh students in 2001. It is found that the enrolment of students in primary stage increased in the same rate at the state and the national level. Sex-wise comparison shows that enrolment of boys (9.98 lakh) was more than girls (4.40 lakh) in 1961. By 2001, the enrolment of boys increased from 9.89 lakh to 25.70 lakh and number of girls increased from 4.40 lakh to 21.40 lakh. Although, there has been a significant improvement in the sex-wise enrolment position the girls still lag behind the boys in terms of enrolment.

During the period from 1961 to 2001 there has been a significant increase in the number of teachers in primary schools. The number of teachers in primary schools increased from 37,328 in 1961 to 114,791 in 2001, which indicates a three fold increase over a period of four decades. Further, there has been a remarkable increase in the number of lady teachers i.e. from only 814 in 1961 to 28,438 in 2001. There has been a thirty-five fold increase in the number of lady teachers. Whereas, position of male teachers which was 36,514 in 1961 increased to 86,353 in 2001 which indicates only 2.4 fold increase. In a comparative study between the male and female teachers, it has been found that the rate of improvement in the appointment female teachers is remarkably high in comparison to male teachers. This improvement might be due to the implementation of Operation Blackboard Scheme.

The increase in the number of teachers, however, has not kept pace with the increase in the enrolment of students. As a result, the pupil-teacher ratio (PTR) in primary schools has increased from 1:38 in 1961 to 1:41 in 2001.

Progress of Education in Undivided Sambalpur District

A similar trend of expansion is also noted in respect of Sambalpur district. Sambalpur district was one of the 13 districts of Orissa till 1993-94. After that the district was divided into four districts namely Sambalpur, Bargarh, Deogarh and Jharsuguda under reconstitution of districts. However, for the sake of comparison, the data presented below describes the undivided Sambalpur district.

A comparative analysis of the progress of education in the Undivided Sambalpur district is based on the basis of the following statistical data cited from four different sources:

Nilamani Senapati and Bhabakrushna Mahanti (1971), *Orissa District Gazetteers*.²³

Government of Orissa (2004), *Human Development*.²⁴

Government of Orissa (2001), *District Statistical Handbook, Bargarh, Deogarh, Jharsuguda, Sambalpur*.²⁵

Government of Orissa (1966), *District Statistical Handbook, Sambalpur*.²⁶

The literacy population of the district increased from 26.3 per cent in 1961 to 65.85 per cent in 2001. Even then the male and female disparity in literacy population was high. The literacy rate of male has increased from 21.4 per cent in 1961 to 78.41 in 2001 and the literacy rate of female from 4.9 per cent in 1961 to 52.90 per cent in 2001. Though the rate of female literacy has increased almost eleven fold, it is still much below the male literacy rate.

During 1961 census the number of primary school was 1,634. The same has increased to 3,367 in 2001 which recorded two fold increase after four decades.

The enrolment position of the district which was 1.33 lakh in 1961 has increased to 3.35 lakh in 2001. Sex-wise comparison of enrolment of boys and girls indicates that the enrolment of boys has increased from 89,441 in 1961 to 179,237 in 2001 and the enrolment of girls from 44,552 in 1961 to 156,372 in 2001. There has been a two fold increase in boys' enrolment and three and half fold increase in girls' enrolment.

The number of primary teachers was 3.68 thousand in 1961, which has increased to 8.82 thousand in 2001. It indicates a 2.4 fold increase in the number of teachers. The number of male teachers which was 3576 in 1961 increased to 6559 in 2001 and the number of female teacher which was only 105 in 1961 increased to 2262 in 2001. The disparity in increase of male and female teachers was found to be 1.8 fold and 21.5 fold respectively which showed significant growth of female teachers. It might be due to implementation of the Operation Blackboard Scheme where appointment of female teacher was mandatory. In spite of that the number of male teacher is found to be more in comparison of female teachers.

The pupil-teacher ratio (PTR), which was 1:36 in 1961, increased into 1:38 in 2001, which indicates a growth in the rate of enrolment of students.

So far as the divided Sambalpur district is concerned the literacy rate in the year 2001 has been 67.01 per cent out of which 78.87 per cent are male and 54.79 per cent are female. It has 1033 primary schools with enrolment of 53,632 boys and 38,987 girls. Out of 3067 number of teachers, 2021 are male and 1046²⁷ are female. The pupil-teacher ratio of this district has been 1:30. This figure indicates a better student teacher ratio than the undivided Sambalpur district. However, the same also indicates that the average rate of enrolment of student has been less than earlier.

DISTRICT PRIMARY EDUCATION PROGRAMME: APPROACHES

QUALITATIVE AND QUANTITATIVE

Universal Elementary Education (UEE) continues to be a constitutional provision and national commitment in India. In the initial stage, the strategy was to achieve this goal by relying entirely on the formal system of education. Hence, the focus was to expand the formal schooling facilities and facilities within the schools. From the seventies onwards, India moved towards alternatives to formal schooling – non-formal education. In the late seventies, the government launched the national Adult Education Programme. By the eighties an integrated approach to universalize primary education emerged which later on got incorporated in the broader objectives of Education for All (EFA). Education for All in India includes formal primary schools, alternatives to primary schools, pre-primary education and adult

education. By the end of the eighties and beginnings of the nineties the Total Literacy Campaigns were initiated. The experience drawn from planning and managing TLCs has become vital input in the process of conceptualising and preparing plans at the district level.

The District Primary Education Programme (DPEP) is a programme conceptualised and evolved on the basis of varied experiences the country possesses. It is supplemented by the experiences of various international agencies directly involved in the funding of primary education projects in the developing countries. DPEP has been envisaged as a centrally sponsored scheme with flexible parameters. These parameters are meant to ensure that the plan is within the framework of national concerns and priorities.

The districts with the following criteria were covered under the programme:

educationally backward districts with female literacy below the national average;

districts where TLCs have been successful leading to enhanced demand for primary education (Department of Education, 1993).

The objectives of the programmes were:

to provide all children access to primary education through formal primary schools or its equivalent through alternatives;

to reduce overall dropout rate at primary level to less than 10 per cent;

to increase achievement levels 25 percentage points over and above the measured baseline level; and

to reduce disparities of all types to less than 5 per cent. (Dept. of Education, 1993).²⁸

Besides, the DPEP focuses on following pulse points:

Facilitating access for disadvantaged groups such as girls, socially backward communities and the handicapped.

Improving the quality of education through a process of demand creation for better service.

Recurrent and regular upgrading of teachers' skills.

Involvement of communities in programme planning as district from project planning.

Strategies convergence with related service such as health care, early childhood care and education, (ECCE), and other government welfare schemes.

Improvement of infrastructural facilities.

Effective decentralised school management.

Achievement of minimum levels of learning.²⁹

While the quantitative expansion of the system appears to be very impressive the achievement of the goal of universalisation of primary education has still remained elusive. Even to-day, a sizeable portion of the school age group children are not enrolled in the schools or non-formal centers. Among those enrolled nearly 50 per cent do not complete even 5 years of primary schooling (NCERT, 1990). Among those retained in the schools a sizeable proportion fail to acquire even basic literacy and numeracy skills expected to be achieved by the end of grade V (Dave et.al., 1988, and Gogate, 1984).

In the pursuit of goal of universalisation, quantitative expansion leading to universal access and participation becomes a pre-requisite. However, the objective should not only be to provide access to schooling but also to ensure success of all children in satisfying their basic learning needs. The effort should be to achieve a minimum level of quality in all institutions imparting primary education.

Quality of Education : An Overview

There is no consensus among educationists as to what constitutes quality in primary education. It is generally agreed that the quality of education can be more objectively and concretely seen in terms of the quality of primary schools. However, what should one look for in assessing the quality of a primary school? Many researchers on the subject have been focusing on the level of material and human inputs available in the schools. This, perhaps, is very narrow in its scope and school quality needs to be related to the processes that take place in the school and the effects they produce on the learners. Beeby (1971) defines school quality in a dynamic perspective focusing on the actors and action involved in school functioning rather than the passive material inputs available in the school.

In a recent World Bank (1990) policy paper on primary education, it is highlighted that children's learning is a function of family background and school inputs. Family background characteristics that enhance children's teachability are investment in health, nutrition and pre-school experience. The school related inputs are curriculum, learning materials, instructional time, and teaching method which have been found to have the most significant effect on student learning.

Quality Education is viewed in this study to include four distinct but related dimensions with respect to primary schools in India:

Infrastructural facilities which include physical and academic infrastructure available in a school;

Human resources mainly focusing on teachers and administrations;

Teaching-learning process to reflect how curriculum is transacted; and

Learner achievement as an outcome of schooling process.

The nature and interaction between first three factors will certainly influence the forth factor namely learner achievement.³⁰ And hence learner achievement is treated as an indicator of school quality.

RATIONALE OF THE STUDY

The National Policy on Education (NPE, 1986) states, “Education is unique investment in the present and future.” The reasons for accepting this principle are also mentioned in the policy document – “Education develops manpower for different levels of the economy. It is also the substrata on which research and development flourish, being the ultimate guarantor of national self-reliance.”³¹ Education is the key of human resource development. It is crucial for a meaningful and accelerated economic and social progress of any country. In addition, education is one of the basic or primary requirements of every child. It has been rightly said that only the rich countries can afford the slogan Education for All, but the reality is, only those countries that provide education for all can become rich and remain rich.

Through the development of knowledge, skills, attitude, values and capacities education contributes significantly to the development of the individual and society. Primary education is the foundation of secondary education. Education at the secondary level is not within the easy reach of all. Therefore, minimum efforts need to be made for imparting primary education to the children of the age group 6 to 11 years for the attainment of literacy and numeracy. Minimum continuous schooling of five years is indispensable to retain literacy throughout life.

In fact providing education means developing human resources, who can change things, shape things, be in tune with the changing environment and adapt themselves to the expanding universe around them. Galbraith asserts, “We now get the larger part of our industrial growth not from more capital investment but from investment in man and improvement brought about by improved men.” Thus, it is obvious that for progress, enlightenment and economic prosperity, India must maintain and build up qualified and trained human resources by providing primary education to all. But, it is disheartening to note that in spite of the increase in the large number of educational institutions, the dream of providing quality primary education to every Indian has not yet been fulfilled.³²

Research studies (Venkata Narayana, 1980; Govinda and Varghese, 1991; Mehta, 1993; Sahu, 2000) have reflected that inadequate funding, insufficient infrastructure affect the quality of education adversely. However, it has been very clearly spelt out in the objectives of DPEP that enough care is being taken through the scheme to overcome the said constraints and ensure quality education.

So far DPEP has been introduced in eight districts of Orissa. In the first phase (1996-97), the project has been started in the districts of Bolangir, Dhenkanal, Gajapati, Kalahandi and Rayagada. In the second phase (1997-98), the three districts, Bargarh, Keonjhar and Sambalpur came under this project.

Taking into consideration the above information, the investigator felt that although a few macro level studies relating to various states have highlighted the extent to which the DPEP has or has not succeeded; there is need for several micro level studies. Hence, the study relating to the impact of DPEP on qualitative and quantitative improvement of primary education would be a worthwhile attempt to identify some of the factors responsible for the achievement of the national goal at the micro level.

So far as the introduction of DPEP in the Orissa state is concerned 5 districts have got the inputs of DPEP for 4 years and three districts have got the inputs for about 3 years by now. It would be proper to raise a few research questions at this stage to know the impact of DPEP on the qualitative and quantitative improvement of primary education.

The research questions are as follows:

Have the objectives of DPEP been fulfilled with regard to quality and quantity?

How far the access of primary education has been extended to the marginalized groups?

To what extent the programme has been successful in reducing the rate of dropout and increasing the rate of retention?

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

To answer the above research questions the researcher has taken up the present study entitled, **IMPACT OF DISTRICT PRIMARY EDUCATION PROGRAMME ON THE QUALITATIVE AND QUANTITATIVE IMPROVEMENT OF PRIMARY EDUCATION.**

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

The study has been undertaken with the following objectives:

To assess the status of infrastructural facilities in DPEP schools.

To find out the impact of DPEP on the provision of access of children to primary education.

To find out the impact of DPEP on enrolment, retention and dropout of children at primary level.

To study the educational awareness of parents of the children studying in DPEP schools.

SCOPE AND DELIMITATIONS

The present study has been proposed to be conducted in the Sambalpur revenue district. Sambalpur district is one of the eight districts of Orissa coming under the DPEP. The same scheme have now been merged with the Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan since 2002. Sambalpur district represents almost all the aspects and characteristics of Western Orissa. It has a sizeable chunk of Scheduled Caste and Scheduled Tribe population and is considered to be a backward district of the state. The purpose of delimiting the scope of the study to Sambalpur district is solely to focus on the implementational problem and target achievement at micro level. It is also intended by concentrating on a specific district, to have an in-depth analysis of the impact of the programme.

The present study is further delimited to only the primary schools having classes I to V. In other words, the study has excluded from its scope, the EGS and AIE Centres and primary schools with classes I to III and primary school attached to Upper primary school and High schools.

MAJOR FINDINGS:

The major findings of the study are as follows:

1. Infrastructural Facilities in DPEP School:

There has been an increase in the number of partly pucca buildings after the implementation of DPEP.

The condition of the primary schools in urban areas was much better compared to the rural primary schools.

The percentage of schools which require major repair is almost the same in both the urban and the rural areas.

The learning materials like blackboards, syllabus, teacher guide, district map, state map, country map, plastic globes and educational charts were available in almost all sample schools. On comparison, it was found that provision of learning materials were better in rural schools than in urban schools.

It was found that 16.67 per cent of urban schools and 30.55 per cent of rural schools had no drinking water facilities.

The schools in urban areas have advantage over their rural counterparts in this respect.

Only 50.00 per cent of sample schools had toilet facilities for both boys and girls in urban areas. In rural areas number of schools availing such facilities was still less. So far as toilet for girls was concerned the figure was deplorable i.e. 12.5 per cent in urban areas and 11.11 in rural areas. It is surprising to note that inspite of intervention of DPEP, there has been no significant improvement in providing toilets in schools.

Sitting arrangements for students like benches, desks and mats were not available in any of the sample schools irrespective of area whether urban or rural.

It was heartening to note that in the sample schools all teachers are found to be trained. The number of trained female teachers was almost four times higher than the number of trained male teachers.

The pupil-teacher ratio in the sample schools was found to be 1:32. This figure was lower than the state pupil-teacher ratio (1:35) and national pupil-teacher ratio (1:36) in the year 2005-06.

2. Access of Children to Primary Education:

It was found that 6.24 per cent of the population had no access to primary education at the national level. It was reported that 17.58 per cent habitations did not have schooling facility within one kilometer of walking distance from the home of the child in Orissa. As per an estimate there were 17.56 per cent habitations without primary schools within a walking distance of one kilometer in Sambalpur district in the year 2001.

3. Enrolment, Retention and Dropout of Children at Primary Level:

In pre-DPEP period out of every 100 children admitted in class I only 47.42 children reached class V. It is a matter of serious concern that as large as 50.49 per cent of boys and 54.24 per cent of girls were found to have dropped out by class V. The rate of dropout was the highest in class I in comparison to other classes.

In post-DPEP period out of every 100 children enrolled in class I, 102.82 were able to join class II, 104.97 class III, 100.46 class IV and 97.28 class V.

It was found that enrolment of children in classes from I to IV was over reported.

The dropout rate during the period was 2.72 per cent by class V in the schools of Sambalpur district. Thus the rate of dropout was found to have been reduced to a great extent in Sambalpur district due to the impact of DPEP. However, the phenomenon of dropout is still a curse for the girls which is as large as 7.83 per cent by class V.

Educational Awareness of Parents of the Children Studying in DPEP Schools:

About 85 per cent of parents were found to be aware and conscious of the educational requirements of their children.

Up to 85 per cent of parents in urban areas were found to be in a position to assist their children at home.

More number of urban parents felt the necessity of tuition as compared to their rural counterparts.

Around 4 per cent to 9 per cent of parents were found to be in disadvantageous position both academically and financially in guiding the education of their children.

Around 4 to 5 per cent of parents expressed that they would not like to send their girl children to school. The same number of parents also despised the bad condition of the school.

About 25 per cent of parents in rural areas were not in a position to inquire about the participation of their children in co-curricular activities.

REFERENCES FOR FURTHER STUDIES

- 1) Philip H. Coombs (1985), *The World Crisis in Education – The View From the Eighties*, New York : Oxford University Press, P. 39.
- 2) Christopher Colclough (1980), "Primary Schooling and Economic Development : A Review of Evidence," *World Bank Working Paper No. 399* (Washington D.C.), P. 2.
- 3) Education Sector Policy Paper, (Washington D.C. : 1980), P. 44 in John Kurrien, *Elementary Education in India – Myth, Reality, Alternative*, New Delhi : Vikash Publishing House, Pvt. Ltd., 1983.
- 4) Government of India (1966), Ministry of Education, *Report of the Education Commission (1964-66)*, Vol. I, New Delhi : NCERT, P. 7.
- 5) Dr. N. Pradhan (2006), National Seminar on Effective Management of Primary Education, DRS-UGC Project, Dept. of Educational Administration, Faculty of Education and Psychology. The M.S. University of Baroda, March, P. 01.
- 6) Government of India (1993), Ministry of Human Resource Development, *Education for All – The Indian Scene*, New Delhi, Dec., P. 9.
- 7) Government of India (1993), *Education for All – The Indian Scene*, Op.Cit., P. 5.
- 8) Government of India (1986), Ministry of Human Resource Development, *Programme of Action – National Policy on Education 1986*, New Delhi, Aug., P. 9.
- 9) Government of India (1993), *Education for All – The Indian Scene*, Op.Cit., P. 39.
- 10) Government of India (1993), Ministry of Human Resource Development, *Education for All – The Indian Scene, Widening Horizons*, New Delhi, Dec., P. 9.

- 11) Government of India (1992), Ministry of Human Resource Development, *Programme of Action – 1992 (Revised Ed.)*, National Policy on Education, Faridabad, P. 41.
- 12) Government of India (1993), *Education for All – The Indian Scene*, *Op.Cit.* , P. 52.
- 13) Government of India (1993), Ministry of Human Resource Development, *Education for All – The Indian Scene, A Synopsis*, New Delhi, Dec., pp. 15-16.
- 14) ABL Srivastava (2003), “Enrolment and Retention at Primary Level under DPEP,” in Srivastava and Balla (Ed.), *DPEP Impact on Primary Education*, New Delhi, Educational Consultants India Limited (Ed. CIL), June, P. 64.
- 15) Government of India (1993), *Education for All – The Indian Scene, Widening Horizons*, *Op.Cit.*, P. 67.
- 16) Government of India (1994), Ministry of Human Resource Development, *Selected Educational Statistics*, 1993-94, Sept.
- 17) Government of India (2006), Ministry of Human Resource Development. *Selected Educational Statistics*, 2003-04.
- 18) Government of Orissa (2004), *Human Development*, Bhubaneswar: Planning and Coordination Department, pp. 100-101.
- 19) Government of Orissa (2004), *Op.Cit.*
- 20) *Report of the Third Educational Survey Orissa (1978)*, Bhubaneswar: Directorate of Public Instruction, Orissa.
- 21) Government of Orissa (1978), *Education in Orissa*, Bhubaneswar: D.P.I. (Statistics and information cell).
- 22) Government of Orissa (2005), *Statistical Abstract of Orissa*, Bhubaneswar: Directorate of Economic and Statistics.
- 23) Nilamani Senapati and Bhabakrushna Mahanti (1971), *Orissa District Gazetteers*, Cuttack-3: Orissa Government.
- 24) Government of Orissa (2004), *Human Development*, *Op.Cit.*
- 25) Government of Orissa (2001), *District Statistical Handbook*,
- 26) *Bargarh, Deograh, Jharsuguda, Sambalpur*, Bhubaneswar: Directorate of Economics and Statistics.
- 27) Government of Orissa (1966), *District Statistical Handbook, Sambalpur*, District Statistical Office.
- 28) Government of Orissa (2001), *District Statistical Handbook Sambalpur*, *Op.Cit.*
- 29) N.V. Varghese (1994), “District Primary Education Programme : The Logic and the Logistics,” *Journal of Educational Planning and Administration* 8(4), 449-451.
- 30) Government of India (1993), *Education for All – The Indian Scene, Widening*

- 31) R. Govinda and N.V. Varghese (1992), “quality of Primary Education : An Empirical Study,” *Journal of Educational Planning and Administration* 6(1), 17-21.
- 32) *National policy on Education (1986)*, Ministry of Human Resource Development of Education (with Modification Undertaken in 1992), New Delhi, P. 5.
- 33) S. Agrawal (1998), School Education, The Quality Perspective, *Journal of Indian Education* 24(3), 25-26.

