

Access of Education at the Primary Level: A Study of Kashmir Division

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Abstract

Education leads to individual freedom and empowerment, which yields significant societal development gains and makes an individual self-reliant. It is seen as the foundation of society, enabling economic wealth, social prosperity and political stability. It is increasingly being viewed as a fundamental right across the globe and essential for the exercise of all human rights. It is a necessity and rather a birth right of every human being. Education is very important for the progress of both individual and society and now it is regarded as an effective instrument through which the standard of living of peoples their prosperity and security can be considerably improved.

Primary education plays an important role in the proper foundation of child's natural, emotional, intellectual, moral, physical, social, and spiritual development. Various studies have clearly demonstrated that countries which have made proper provision for primary education are far ahead with those of inadequate provision. There has been a spectacular in primary education during the post independence period. The number of primary school has been increased from 476, 636 in 1978 to 529, and 392 in 1989. The corresponding measure in upper primary education was from 1,12,404 to 1,38,687 (94.6 percent) of the rural population has schools within a walk distance of 1km and 85.3 percent of rural population have upper primary school within a walking distance of 3km, out of total habitation 502,806 (51.36 percent) habitation concerning (80.34 percent) rural population had primary schools. Primary education is the most important stages of learning. It constitutes the bed rock supporting the whole edifice of education. Therefore, in the present study an attempt has been made to study the access of primary education in the Kashmir division with a view to offer suggestion for improvisation of the same.

Key Words

Education, Primary Level, NCERT, UEE and Kashmir Division.

I. Introduction

Education leads to individual freedom and empowerment, which yields significant societal development gains and makes an individual self-reliant. It is seen as the foundation of society, enabling economic wealth, social prosperity and political stability. Education is increasingly being viewed as a fundamental right across the globe and essential for the exercise of all human rights.

Education should not be regarded as a luxury. It is a necessity and rather a birth right of every human being. Education is very important for the progress of both individual and society and now it is regarded as a potent. It furnishes the individual with basic knowledge and technical skills essential for work, productively and economic survival. It serves as the basis for the exercise of all rights and prevailing of a citizen and also a pre-condition for the effective discharge of his duties. Children are the future generation of the nation. They are the pillars on which a nation puts all of its hopes. Yet it many developing countries including India they constitute more than 40 percent of the population up to 14 years of age. The holistic nature of child development viz, economic, social, moral, physical, emotional, development, Primary education has received high priority and must be integrated with integrated child development service programmes. Access of education has been one of the most important goals of education development in India. Since independence "Article 45 of Indian constitution directly states 10 endeavour to provide, with a period of ten years of the commencement of the constitution free and compulsory education to all children up to age of 14 years. India which is a developing country can't afford to make education compulsory beyond first eight years of schooling for its enormous population of 1000 million people. Consequently, the India, with a literacy rate of 64.84 percent, has 767520, 274731 and 152049 schools along with 12 open schools at primary, middle and secondary/higher secondary levels catering to 130.8, 51.2 and 37.1 million

students respectively. At higher education level, 13578 colleges and 407 universities along with 106 distance education institutions address needs of 11.7 million students are still for behind to provide access to primary education to all children's below 14 years of age (Right to Education, 2015).

India has come late to its emphasis on Primary education compared with other countries, where focusing on Primary education has helped to achieve high economic growth with and sharply reduce poverty. Although a large share of school-children in India enrol at the beginning of primary school, and about 45 percent drop out before completing the primary school cycle. The overall challenge for India is to sustain and deepen current reforms in primary education in an era of fiscal adjustment and increasing administrative and political decentralization. Strategies for expanding and improving primary education will need to be planned and managed locally to address the diverse constraints on primary education, with a sharper focus on cost effectiveness.

In India primary education is co-current responsibility of the central Government and the states. In many states this responsibility is not adequately fulfilled and primary education is under-funded. To achieve National Policy objectives in education will need to improve their fiscal performance and devote more resources to primary education. And at least in the medium term the central government will need to continue to support these efforts. A lot of plans and projects have been implemented in our country will all hopes and aspiration which have not brought us to our expected destination. The quantitative aspect is still for form our reach and qualitative improvement is our desired dream. The National Policy of Education, 1986 and revised National Policy Education, 1922 have laid stress on provision of primary education for all children. This primary education would not only compulsory but also be free and of reasonable standard. In spite of all emphasis, we are not in position to achieve our objectives by the end of ninth five year plan. Therefore, concerted efforts are being made towards

goals of UEE.

Access to schools is not longer a major problem, as at the primary stage 94 percent of our population are in school within a distance of 1km. Similarly, at the upper primary stage 84 percent of population have schools with a distance of 3kms. There are quite a few stages where enrolment is not all satisfactory. These include U.P, Bihar, Rajasthan, Andhra Pradesh, Orissa, Sikkim, and our state also i.e. Jammu and Kashmir which needs further improvisation in terms of infrastructure, equipment, teachers and much more.

II. Literature Review

The progress of education is an index of general, social, and economic development of the country as a whole. The education system of India is one of the largest education systems in the world as it caters to the need of more than 1028 million people (as per 2001 Census). The Government of India has been focusing not only on spreading education but encouraging the people to be literate which forms the basis for universalization of education in the country. With the literacy rate of merely 18.3 percent in 1951, it has increased to 64.8 percent in 2001 to 67.3 percent in 2004-05. According to the Census of India 2001, the male literacy rate was 75.26 percent while female literacy was 53.67 percent with literacy gap of 21.59 percent. The state of Kerala is having highest literacy rate in India with 94.24 percent for male and 87.72 percent for female with 6.52 percent literacy gap which happens to be the minimum in the country (Right to Education, 2015). On further analysis of literacy rate on rural and urban perspective, India has 58.74 percent literacy in rural areas and 79.92 in urban areas. The state of Kerala once again has the highest literacy in rural areas which is 90.04 percent and 93.63 percent and 86.69 percent for male and female respectively. However in urban areas, it is the state of Mizoram which has the highest literacy rate of 96.13 percent.

The government has taken huge steps in expending the education to all up to the age group of 14 years but still this dream is yet so far. Shuklas, et. al., (2005) revealed that very progress has been made in expending access to all groups and habitation in recruiting the new teachers but schools need to improve the quality of education which remains an era of concern through favourable physical environment, clean schools, gardens and cheerful spaces for children where they will play. These things promote learning among the children's. Further, Rao and Kumar, (2005) also focussed that there is a demand for good quality education in all the habitations. There was also a high awareness among parents about the labour of education among their children. Birdi, (1992) added that the condition of building, furniture, equipments was unsatisfactory in almost all the primary schools. Jha and Haradikar, (2005) revealed in their study that significant number of primary schools have been opened, the school facilities have been improved on the various parts but it can be improved more to make it suitable for children. Many class rooms lack the basic facilities like blackboard, and even when they were there, they were being put too much use in most cases. The teachers should be provided with the teacher training to make classroom teaching effective for both.

From this it is concluded that government has taken enough steps to improve the teaching and access but still the schools lack basic infrastructure like building, furniture, play grounds, toilets etc which are the main cause of dropouts. Schools are not well maintained and decorated so that effective teaching and learning will take place.

III. Research Objectives

1. To study the access of education at primary level;
2. To assess the infrastructure in terms of building and other education facilities which are needed in primary schools;
3. To suggest ways and means of improving the access of education at primary level in Kashmir Division.

IV. Research Methodology

Research is an activity directed towards the solution of a problem, characterized by systematic and logical enquiry aimed to develop generalization principles or theories that will be helpful in predicting future occurrences. The present study is based on the survey method done with the help of structured schedule prepared on the basis of literature gap. The structured schedule designed was divided into two parts on one part the information was with regard to gender, age, class etc. And the second was developed to get the information regarding infrastructure, building, equipments, qualification of teachers etc. The sample for the present study where the children between the age groups of 6-14 years. The total number of children was taken 145 which were considered adequate as per the sample adequacy test. From each primary school a single respondent was given a schedule to answer the questions.

Table: 1 - Total Enrolment in numbers

Total primary schools	Boys	Girls	Total Enrolment
145	3500	2300	5800

Therefore, the total number of primary schools visited was also 145 divided among four districts of Kashmir Division namely, Srinagar, Budgam, Ganderbal and Bandipora. The total enrolments were 5800 children among them 2300 were girl students and remaining boys. Primary data collected was coded and analyzed with the help of the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS). The results were presented using tables for ease of understanding. The collected data was analyzed using descriptive statistics such as frequencies and percentages. Descriptive statistics allowed for the generalization of the data so as to give an account of the characteristics of the population as represented by the sample.

V. Results and Discussions

1. Structure of your school

It is revealed from the data that among the total surveyed schools, 77 percent buildings were concrete made and 18 percent building were made with kacha material and remaining school building were made with the combination of both (Table- 2).

Table 2 : Structure of School Building

Particulars	Frequency	Percentage
Concrete	112	77
Kacha	26	18
Mixed	7	5

2. Is your school building owned or rented?

The results showed that most of school buildings were owned by the government (72 percent) and rest were rented building (Table-3).

Table 3 : School Building Owned or Rented

Particulars	Frequency	Percentage
Owned	104	72
Rented	41	28

3. Is your school nearer to your home or far?

The table discloses that majority of the students (65 percent) feel that their schools are not too distant from their homes but still there are school which are far from the homes in certain areas (Table-4).

Table 4 : School Nearer or Far from your Home

Particulars	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	94	65
No	51	35

4. Average qualifications of teachers

The result discloses that majority of teachers qualification are graduates (30 percent) followed by matriculate (22 percent) and Graduate + B.ed (20 percent) (Table-5).

Table: 5 - Average Qualifications of Teachers

Particulars	Frequency	Percentage
Matriculate	32	22
12	15	10
Graduate	43	30
Graduate + B.ed.	29	20
Post graduate	26	18

5. Is washroom facility available in your school?

It is clear from the survey that 88 percent of the schools have washroom facilities but 12 percent of the sampled schools don't have toilet facilities which is very humiliating thing for both faculty members as well as students of the said schools (Table-6).

Table 6 : Washroom Facility in Your School

Particulars	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	128	88
No	17	12

6. Is water facility available in your school or not?

It is clear from the survey that every sampled school are having adequate water supply to cater the needs of each and every student (Table-7).

Table 7 : Water Facility Available in Your School

Particulars	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	145	100
No	-	-

7. Does your school have electricity facility?

The data on Table 8 clearly reveals that majority of the school (60 percent) are without the electricity.

Table 8 : Electricity Facility in Your School

Particulars	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	58	40
No	87	60

8. Is library facility available in your school?

It is completely clear from the data that majority of the sampled schools (88 percent) are without the library facility which are otherwise very important for student learning (Table-9)

Table 9 : Library Facility Available in Your School

Particulars	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	17	18
No	128	88

9. Number of school inspection in a year to verify the performance of schools.

It is clear from the data that 54 percent of sampled schools are having once an inspection in year and 46 percent of schools are having twice in a year. School inspection enhances staff cooperation and public recognition that the school is basically on the right track and boosts staff morale (Table-10).

Table 10 : Number of Inspection in a Year

Particulars	Frequency	Percentage
Once	78	54
Twice	67	46
More than twice	-	-

10. Does your school provide you with the computer facility?

It is concluded from the data that 83 percent of schools are without computer facilities which means that they are not imparting any computer education to their students which is very important in the present time (Table-11).

Table 11 : Computer Facility Available in Your School

Particulars	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	120	83
No	25	27

11. Does your school provide you with any medical facilities or not?

The data in the Table 12 reveals that majority of the sampled schools (49 percent) are without medical facilities which are basic necessity for each child taking education from these institutions. Proper medical facilities increase access to care and improve mental health and control the spread of communicable disease through the information they provide by conducting various seminars and workshops.

Table 12 : Medical Facility Available in Your School

Particulars	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	71	49
No	74	51

12. Does your school support any physical activity at their campus?

It is revealed from the survey that 76 percent of the schools are providing different physical facilities to students and 26 percent of the schools aren't providing them any physical activity equipment (Table- 13).

Table 13 : Support Any Physical Activity for Their Students

Particulars	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	110	76
No	35	24

13. Is uniform necessary in your school?

The uniform is now a day's part and parcel of each school curriculum which is also revealed by the data (Table - 14).

Table 14 : Uniform Necessary in Your School

Particulars	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	145	100
No	-	-

14. Does your school provide you with a clean water facility?

It is understandable from the data that 80 percent students agree that their school provide them with clean drinking water and remaining not (Table-15).

Table 15 : Your School provide you with a Clean Drinking Water

Particulars	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	116	80
No	29	20

15. Is your school co-ed or not?

It is concluded that majority of the sampled school are having co-education (Table-16).

Table 16 : Your School Co-ed. or Not

Particulars	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	139	94
No	6	6

16. If co-ed, do your school have a separate washroom facility?

It is revealed from the survey that 76 percent of schools are having separate latrines and remaining are not having which is not good for all students especially girl student (Table-17).

Table 17 : School Have a Separate Washroom Facility

Particulars	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	110	76
No	35	24

VI. Conclusion

Education leads to individual freedom and empowerment, which yields significant societal development gains and makes

an individual self-reliant. It is seen as the foundation of society, enabling economic wealth, social prosperity and political stability. The evolution of India's education system has been driven by increased focus on basic education. One of the key achievements of India's education system since Independence has been the consistent rise in the country's literacy rate, which has risen from 18 percent in 1951 to 80 in 2014. Significant efforts have been made to universalize elementary education in these 63 years. The number of elementary schools and teachers grew significantly during the period. Gross enrolment figures for elementary education also increased from 32 in 1950-51 to 95 in 2004-05. The overall gender parity index for basic education increased from 0.4 in 1950-51 to 0.9 in 2005-06. This is primarily the result of the enhanced participation of girls in the education system. Yet, there are certain states in India like Jammu and Kashmir which continue to remain significantly underserved as is also revealed from the present study. The present study concluded that although government has taken various initiatives in imparting and expending education to all but still there are loopholes present in the system which needs improvisation like teachers qualification, clean drinking water, computer and library facilities, play grounds, separate washroom facilities for girls and boys, chalks, dusters and many more..

VII. Suggestions and Policy Implications

1. Vigorous efforts should be made to increase the enrolment of students at the primary level of education by conducting seminars and workshops in areas where there are fewer enrollments. Scholarship, free-uniform, books etc. should be used to attract more for education.
2. The infrastructure and other school facilities should be improved in all primary schools so that the students will develop interest towards studies. Availability of school buildings and well decorated class rooms can be used as positive reinforcement for the children.
3. Compulsory interaction programme between teachers and parents so that the parents may develop keen attention towards the studies of their children. The equipments like chairs, tables, desks, black board, charts, should be provided to all primary schools for effective teaching and learning process.
4. Areas such as management and teachers' training are vital for improving the quality of education and should be taken in to account.
5. Setting of more primary schools for the children of far-away areas.

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