Abstract:

Education is an important human activity. It was born with the birth of the human race and shall continue to function as long as the human race lives. Man becomes 'man' through education. Education fashions and models man for society. Without education enlightenment cannot be possible and education is the only means which can address most of the human problems, as it gives the people an opportunity to improve their skills to move in the direction development. Since, education is important for the growth of developing nation like India, various steps have been devised to increase the number of children enroll for education. Education was made an important and integral part of the national development efforts. After independence there has been an effort to spread education to all levels of Indian society. To strengthen the Indian Education System, educational policies and various schemes are adopted by the Government.

In order to achieve UEE (Universalization of Elementary Various schemes adopted by the government and policies formulated from time to time have helped in making a tremendous increase in the number of students enrolled for education. As a result of these schemes the country has seen a massive infrastructure development at the school level. It has also increased the quality as well as competitiveness in teaching. But various studies reveal that it could not help in improving the level of knowledge.

This paper is going to try to give a better view of what is elementary education and what is the system of education in India. It also explains about different steps taken the government to improve and extend education which is inevitable for development of nation. This paper also tries to outline the impact of various schemes on enrolment, infrastructure, teaching and learning level of children at elementary level of education.

Keywords:

Elementary education, RTE Act, 2009, schemes, impact, learning level etc.

I. INTRODUCTION

Education is the act or process of imparting or acquiring general knowledge, developing the powers of reasoning and judgment, and generally of preparing oneself or others intellectually for mature life. Education is essential for everyone. The importance of education is undeniable for every person. It goes without saying that education has a positive effect on human life. Only with the advent of education can people gain knowledge and enlarge their view over the world. It is an indispensable part of life both personally and socially. Education is a determined element for the civilization of human society. As a matter of fact, everything we create today is based on the knowledge that we obtain throughout our life by way of education. Education is the critical input in human resource development and is essential for the country's growth

Whenever a discourse on the development of India on all counts is carried on, the knowledgeable people do not miss to refer to its remarkable success in the field of education after a little more than six and a half decades of its independence from the foreign rule. Had India not laid a lot of stress on education, the latent talent of the innumerable individuals would not have come to the fore that had been lying unused due to the coercive measures of an apathetic imperialist power which always thought in terms of making money by exploiting all the subjects physically. Those who have governed the country after independence have realized this fact and keeping this in view an educational policy was adopted by the Indian Parliament in 1968. Education was made an important and integral part of the national development efforts. To spread education among all Indians, the 86th Amendment in the Indian Constitution was made in 2002. Our country also stepped further in this direction when Right of Children to Free and Compulsory Education (RTE) Act, 2009 was enforced.
II. OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY
Following are the objectives of this paper with relevance to the current scenario of education

1. To study various schemes taken by the government for strengthening elementary education
2. To study the various impact of these schemes in education

III. METHODOLOGY OF THE STUDY
The present study on elementary education is based on secondary source of data. The main sources of data are various economic surveys of India, ministry of education, Human resource and Planning Commission data. Online bulletins published by various authorities, journals, articles, newspapers etc. are the sources of data.

IV. EDUCATION SYSTEM IN INDIA
India’s education system is divided into different levels such as pre-primary level, primary level, elementary education, secondary education, undergraduate level and post graduate level. The National Council for the Education Research and Training (NCERT) is the apex body for curriculum related matters for school education in India. The NCERT provides support and technical assistance to number schools and oversees many aspects of enforcement of education policies. In India the various curriculum bodies governing school education system are:

- The state government boards, in which the majority of Indian children are enrolled.
- The Central Board of Secondary Education (CBSE).
- The National Institute of Open Schooling (NIOS)
- International schools affiliated to the International Baccalaureate Programme and/or the Cambridge International Examinations.
- Islamic Madrasah schools, whose boards are controlled by local state governments, or autonomous, or affiliated with Darul_Uloom Deoband.
- Autonomous schools
- NUEPA (National University of Educational Planning and Administration) and NCTE (National Council for Teacher Education) are responsible for the management of the education system and teacher accreditation.

V. ELEMENTARY EDUCATION IN INDIA
The Indian government lays emphasis on primary education up to the age of fourteen years, referred to as elementary education in India. Indian government is well aware of the importance of ensuring universal basic education. The role of Universal Elementary Education (UEE) for strengthening the social fabric of democracy through provision of equal opportunities to all has been accepted since the inception of our Republic. In 1950, the Constitution had resolved in Article 45 under the Directive Principles of the State Policy that the state will provide free and compulsory education for all children until they complete the age of fourteen. Since then, many documents including every Five Year Plan, the 1968 National Policy on Education, and the revised 1992 National Policy on Education have attempted to refine India’s efforts at Universal Elementary Education (UEE). With the formulation of NPE, India initiated a wide range of programmes for achieving the goal of UEE through several schematic and programme interventions, such as Operation Black Board, Shiksha Karmi Project,Lok Jumbish Programme, Mahila Samakahya, District Primary Education Programme etc. Currently, Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan (SSA) is implemented as India's main programme for universalising elementary education. Its overall goals include universal access and retention, bridging of gender and social category gaps in education and enhancement of learning levels of children. SSA provides for a variety of interventions, including inter alia, opening of new schools and alternate schooling

VI. SCHEMES ADOPTED BY THE GOVERNMENT FOR STRENGTHENING ELEMENTERY EDUCATION
Education is the most important lever for social, economic and political transformation. A well-educated population, equipped with the relevant knowledge, attitudes and skills is essential for economic and social development in the twenty-first century. Education strengthens democracy by imparting to citizens the tools needed to fully participate in the governance process. Before 1976, education was the exclusive responsibility of the States. The Constitutional Amendment of 1976, which included education in the concurrent List, was a far-reaching step. The substantive, financial and administrative implication required a new sharing of responsibility between the Union Government and the States. While the role and responsibility of the States in education remained largely unchanged, the Union Government accepted a larger responsibility of reinforcing the national and integrated character of education, maintaining quality and standard including those of the teaching profession at all levels, and the study and monitoring of the educational requirements of the country. In order to achieve UEE (Universalization of Elementary Education), the Government of India has initiated a number
of programmes and projects. The Government adopts an integrated approach in the implementation of the various centrally sponsored schemes, in keeping with principles of the National Policy on Education, to ensure that the education of equitable quality for all to fully harness the nation’s human resource potential. The common objectives are to enhance access through the expansion of quality school education; to promote equity through the inclusion of disadvantaged groups and weaker sections, and to improve the quality of education. The following Centrally sponsored programmes are being implemented in the Education Sector under Ministry of Human Resource Development

A. Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan
Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan (SSA) is launched in 2001. It is one of India’s major flagship programmes for universalization of elementary education. SSA is being implemented in partnership with the State Governments. SSA Goals are (a) Enrolment of all children in school, (b) Retention of all children till the upper primary stage, (c) Bridging of gender and social category gaps in enrolment, retention and learning; and (d) Ensuring that there is significant enhancement in the learning achievement levels of children at the primary and upper primary stage. Provisions of Right to Education Act are being implemented through SSA. Accordingly, norms have been revised / modified to align them with the requirement of RTE Act, 2009.

B. Kasturba Gandhi Balika Vidyalaya
KGBVs are residential upper primary schools for girls from SC, ST, OBC and Muslim communities. KGBVs are set up in areas of scattered habitations where schools are at great distances and are a challenge to the security of girls.

KGBVs reach out to

- Adolescent girls who are unable to go to regular schools.
- Out of school girls in the 10+ age group who are unable to complete primary school.
- Younger girls of migratory populations in difficult areas of scattered habitations that do not qualify for primary/upper primary schools.

KGBVs provide for a minimum reservation of 75 per cent seats for girls from SC/ST/OBC and minorities communities and 25 per cent to girls from families that live below the poverty line

C. National Programme for Education of Girls at Elementary Level (NPEGEL)
NPEGEL is implemented in educationally backward blocks (EBB) and addresses the needs of girls who are “in” as well as “out” of school. NPEGEL also reaches out to girls who are enrolled in school, but do not attend school regularly. NPEGEL emphasizes the responsibility of teachers to recognize vulnerable girls and pay special attention to bring them out of their state of vulnerability and prevent them from dropping out.

D. Mid-Day Meal Scheme (MDMS)
In keeping with the Constitutional provisions to raise the level of nutrition of children and enable them to develop in a healthy manner, the National Programme of Nutritional Support to Primary Education (NP-NSPE) was launched as a centrally sponsored scheme in 1995. Commonly referred to as MDMS, this was expected to enhance enrolment, retention, attendance of children in schools apart from improving their nutritional levels.

E. The Rashtriya Madhyamik Shiksha Abhiyan (RMSA)
A Centrally sponsored scheme with a funding pattern of 75:25 between Centre and States was launched in 2009–10. The major objectives of the RMSA are to (i) raise the minimum level of education to class X and universalize access to secondary education; (ii) ensure good-quality secondary education with focus on Science, Mathematics and English; and (iii) reduce the gender, social and regional gaps in enrolments, dropouts and improving retention.

F. Scheme for Setting up of 6000 Model Schools at Block Level
The Scheme envisages providing quality education to talented rural children through setting up 6000 model schools as benchmark of excellence at block level at the rate of one school per block. The objectives are:

- To have at least one good quality senior secondary school in every block.
- To have a pace setting role.
• To try out innovative curriculum and pedagogy
• To be a model in infrastructure, curriculum, evaluation and school governance

G. Scheme of Vocationalisation of Secondary Education at +2 level
This is a centrally sponsored scheme of Vocationalisation of Secondary Education provides for diversification of educational opportunities so as to enhance individual employability, reduce the mismatch between demand and supply of skilled manpower and provides an alternative for those pursuing higher education

H. Scheme of ICT @ School
The Information and Communication Technology in School Scheme was launched to provide opportunities to secondary stage students to mainly build their capacity of ICT skills and make them learn through computer aided learning process. The Scheme provides support to States/Union Territories to establish enabling ICT infrastructure in Government and Government aided secondary and higher secondary schools

I. Inclusive Education for Disabled at Secondary stage (IEDSS)
The Scheme of Inclusive Education for Disabled at Secondary Stage (IEDSS) is a scheme that provides assistance for the inclusive education of the disabled children in classes IX-XII. The aim of the Centrally Sponsored Scheme of IEDSS is to enable all students with disabilities, after completing eight years of elementary schooling, to pursue further four years of secondary schooling (classes IX to XII) in an inclusive and enabling environment.

J. Quality Improvement in Schools
During the 10th Five Year Plan, Quality Improvement in Schools was introduced as a composite centrally sponsored scheme having the following components:
• National Population Education Project
• Environmental Orientation to School Education

• Improvement of Science Education in Schools
• Introduction of Yoga in Schools

K. Strengthening of Teachers’ Training Institutions
The Right of Children to Free and Compulsory Education (RTE) Act, 2009 poses major challenges for improving the quality of teachers and for expanding institutional capacity in States to prepare professionally trained persons for becoming school teachers. Government has initiated steps to revise the existing Centrally Sponsored Scheme of Restructuring and Reorganization of Teacher Education.

L. Adult Education and Skill Development Schemes
Adult Education aims at extending educational options to those adults, who have lost the opportunity and have crossed the age of formal education, but now feel a need for learning of any type, including, basis education (literacy), skill development (Vocational Education) etc.

M. Scheme of Infrastructure development in Minority Institutions (IDMI)
IDMI has been operationalized to augment infrastructure in private aided/unaided minority schools/institutions in order to enhance quality of education to minority children

N. Scheme of Infrastructure development in Minority Institutions (IDMI)
IDMI has been operationalized to augment infrastructure in private aided/unaided minority schools/institutions in order to enhance quality of education to minority children

O. Eklavya Model Residential Schools (EMRSs)
These schools are funded by the Government for the welfare of Scheduled Tribes. The Ministry of Tribal Affairs administers this special area programme

P. Pre-matric Scholarship Scheme
Pre-matric is the Scholarship for students from Minorities Communities. The Scholarship at Pre-matric level will encourage parents from minority communities to send their school going children to school, lighten their financial burden on school education and sustain their efforts to support their children to complete school education.
VII. IMPACT ON EDUCATION

Impact of various schemes adopted by the government for strengthening elementary level of education can be discussed under the following heads:

1. Impact on Enrolment
2. Impact on Schooling facilities
3. Impact on teachers in position
4. Impact on Learning Level of pupil

1. Impact On Enrolment

Efforts to universalize elementary education gained momentum during the last few years. Annual Status of Education Report (ASER) explains about the achievements in education. According to this report the school enrolment has improved impressively. 96 percent of the children between the age group 6-14 had got enrolled in 2013. The report shows that for the last five years the enrolment of the children in this age group had never gone down and remained consistent at 95-96 percent. Enrolment in government schools at elementary level increased from 188 million children in 2009–10 to 192.80 million in 2012-13. The percentage of girls out of the total number enrolled at primary and upper primary levels was 48 and 46.5 respectively in the year 2009–010; this increased to 48.4 and 48.3 at primary and upper primary levels respectively in 2012-13.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>2009-10</th>
<th>2012-13</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Percentage of girl students at primary level</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>48.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Percentage of girl students at upper primary level</td>
<td>46.5</td>
<td>48.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of students enrolled at elementary level</td>
<td>188 million</td>
<td>192.80 million</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

2. Impact On The Schooling Facilities

There was a substantial increase in the number of primary and upper primary schools after the implementation of various schemes. Over the years it has also made excellent progress in providing infrastructure to the school. It is found that school infrastructure is as much the right of school children as quality textbooks and pedagogy. According to the data provided by ASER, 76.3 percent schools possess an office cum store, 62 percent have a playground, 56 percent have a boundary wall, 73 percent have a provision for drinking water, 62 percent of the schools have got usable toilet, 53 percent of them provide girl students a separate usable toilet, 87 percent of the schools provide mid-day meal and 40 percent of the students use library facility. Following table explains this.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Infrastructure facility</th>
<th>Percentage of schools</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Schools with office cum store</td>
<td>76.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Playground</td>
<td>62</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Boundary walls</td>
<td>56</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Drinking water</td>
<td>73</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Usable toilet</td>
<td>62</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Separate toilet for girl student</td>
<td>53</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Midday meal facility</td>
<td>87</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Students using library</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

3. Impact On Teacher In Position

There has been a substantial increase in the availability of teachers at elementary level in the past few years. The pupil-teacher ratio (PTR), which determines the attention a student receives from a teacher, has improved since the RTE act came into force. From 38.9 percent schools meeting PTR norms in 2010, as many as 45 percent schools have done in 2013. The another significant constituent, teacher attendance has also reached 85%

4. Impact On Learning Levels Of The Students

Assessment is at the heart of education. The demands of the present world require students learn many skills. Studies reveal that though the government has pumped in funds to and focused closely on building new classrooms, toilets, playground, libraries etc. it has not helped in improving the learning level of the students. The parameters taken for evaluating the learning level of the children are their ability to read, II standard text book, their ability to subtract two numbers, their ability to do division, students depending on private tuition etc. as per ASER figures the standards of basic learning and arithmetic skills of government school students were much below than those studying in private schools. As a result states with larger proportion of private school students have fared better than those with a lower proportion. In case of leading states about two third of the students are from private schools but in case of lagging states they are at the other end. Following table explains the variation in learning levels.
Table3

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Criteria</th>
<th>% of Government Schools Children</th>
<th>% of Private School Children</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Student of 5th standard reading text book of class II</td>
<td>50.3 41.1</td>
<td>52.9 47</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student of 3rd standard doing subtraction</td>
<td>36.5 18.9</td>
<td>47.3 45.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student of 3rd standard doing division</td>
<td>36.1 20.8</td>
<td>43.2 42.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Students opting private tuition</td>
<td>22.8 24.8</td>
<td>38.5 44.2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: ASER

Table4

State wise learning levels

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>5 leading states</th>
<th>% of students able to read</th>
<th>% of students able to subtract</th>
<th>% of students able to divide</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mizoram</td>
<td>80.2</td>
<td>77.8</td>
<td>72.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Meghalaya</td>
<td>80.0</td>
<td>72.3</td>
<td>63.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Manipur</td>
<td>78.7</td>
<td>67.2</td>
<td>62.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HP</td>
<td>78.5</td>
<td>66.6</td>
<td>59.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kerala</td>
<td>77.8</td>
<td>72.2</td>
<td>61.7</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>5 Lagging states</th>
<th>% of students able to read</th>
<th>% of students able to subtract</th>
<th>% of students able to divide</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>MP</td>
<td>38.1</td>
<td>22.3</td>
<td>19.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jharkhand</td>
<td>45.4</td>
<td>27.7</td>
<td>25.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assam</td>
<td>46.4</td>
<td>31.7</td>
<td>26.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UP</td>
<td>47.8</td>
<td>32.3</td>
<td>26.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bihar</td>
<td>47.9</td>
<td>34.9</td>
<td>28.2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: ASER

VIII.CONCLUSION

As mentioned previously, substantial spatial and numerical expansion of primary and upper primary schools has been achieved with access and enrolment at the primary stage of education reaching near universal levels, gender gap in enrolment being narrowed and the percentage of enrolled SC/ST children being proportionate to their population. Nonetheless, the agenda of universalizing education at the upper primary stage remains unfinished. The number of children particularly children from disadvantaged groups and weaker sections who drop out of school before completing upper primary education remains high, and the quality of learning achievement is not satisfactory even in the case of children who complete elementary education. Despite the fact that there has been a huge increase in the investment and levels of physical and infrastructural progress in elementary education in the SSA regime, and in the post-RTE regime in particular, the main objective of learning is not satisfactory. It is therefore imperative to look beyond the provision of infrastructure alone in the pursuit of improved learning levels. While there is no denying the fact that school buildings and teachers are important, it is equally, if not more, important to achieve the desired quality of education and learning level of a child who completes primary education. So far, the existing structure has not yielded full results in terms of learning outcomes. It is thus imperative to do something more over and above what is already there today. It might lead us to approach the problem a little differently.

Learning level is directly and positively correlated to the quality of teaching. It also depends on a student’s ability to understand and follow the teaching method, including the language and methodology of the teacher. A more personal approach rather than a generalized one would work better, and it may well be the case that the local teacher’s personalized efforts even beyond school hours would yield better results. From the recent trends in the incidence of tuitions, it can be inferred that the rise in the number of private tuition is attributable to personalized efforts rather than the generalized approach in school. Teachers must also get requisite motivation through appropriate training on a continuous basis as well as financial incentives linked with the learning outcome of their students. A lot has already been achieved in fulfilling the various schemes and mandates of
RTE Act, 2009. However there are still gaps between mandates and achievements.

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