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GROWTH AND CHALLENGES OF SCHOOL EDUCATION IN INDIA IN POST ECONOMIC REFORM PERIOD

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ABSTRACT

The present study has been conducted on school education in India especially in post economic reform period (2003-04 to 2009-10). In fact, school education plays very important role to improve the further education system. No doubt, Govt. has taken many steps to introduce elementary system of education even then a lot of improvement is still required. A systematic policy needs to be introduced to reduce the dropout rate and to increase the enrolment ratio at elementary level. In this regard higher investment on elementary education must be made on the one hand and Right to Education Act 2009 must be implemented effectively on the other.

Education plays a vital role in all types of human development outcomes. It is an important input which influences other development indicators especially health and income. In this way unlike any other social service inputs education impacts human development the most. It is an education which is manifest in the cultural, economic, individual, philosophical, scientific, social and spiritual advancement. In other words education is the mean for developing the mind for the betterment of the individual and society. No doubt, India has made tremendous progress in the field of education even then school education is not improving as much as required because investment on education is lower in comparisons to other sectors. Hence, there is great need to development school education in India. No doubt, the number of schools and students is increasing continuously even then there is a great need to improve the quality of education especially at school level by reducing pupil-teacher ratio and dropout rate. Hence an attempt has been made to analyses the school education in India in post economic reform period.

OBJECTIVES

The main objectives of the study are as under:

1. Growth of educational institutions at school level.
2. Growth of enrolment ratio.
3. Factors responsible for the growth of school education
4. Policy package for the future.

Growth of Educational Institutions at School level. After independence India has made much progress in the sphere of especially at school level. It has been shown in table 1st as follows:

Table- 1 Number of Educational Institutions at school level

	2003-2004	Percentage of the total	2009-2010	Percentage of the total	% change in 2009-10 over 2003-04
Primary / Junior Basic Schools	710471	69.6	823162	62.6	15.86
Middle /senior Basic Schools	262649	25.7	367745	28	40.01
High /Post Basic Schools	46796	4.5	123726	9.4	164.39
Total	1019916		1314633		28.9

Source – Economic Survey of India 2005-06 and 2011-12

The above table indicates that the number of institutions like Primary /Junior Basic Schools increased from 710471 to 823162, Middle /Senior Basic Schools from 262649 to 367745, High /Post Basic Schools from 46796 to 123726 during the period 2003-04 to 2009-10. So far as percentage change is concerned the number of Primary /Junior basic schools, Middle/ Senior Basic Schools and High/ Post Basic Schools rose by 15.86 per cent, 40.01 per cent and 164.39 per cent respectively. The percentage share of different institutions indicates the entirely different picture. The percentage share of number of Primary /Junior Basic schools in total number of schools which was 69.6 per cent in 2003-04 declined to 62.6 per cent in 2009-10. From the period 2003-04 to 2009-10 the percentage share increased from 25.7 per cent to 28 per cent and 4.5 per cent to 9.4 per cent in case of Middle /Senior Basic schools and High /post Basic schools. The total number of schools increased by 28.9 per cent during the same period.

The observation is that the number of Primary/Junior Basic schools was the highest whereas the number of High/ Post Basic schools was the lowest in the both years. Same was the result in case of percentage share of different institutions in total school education set up. So far as percentage change in 2009-10 over 2003-04 is concerned, it was the highest in case of high/post basic schools but the lowest in case of primary/ junior basic schools.

GROWTH OF ENROLMENT RATIO

The enrolment of the students of Primary /Junior Basic schools, Middle/Senior Basic schools and High/ Post Basic schools is also increasing with the passage of time which has been shown in Table 2 as follows

Table 2. Gross enrolment Ratio in India

	2003-04				2009-10				Variations in 2009-10 over 2003		
	Boys	Girls	Total	Variation in Boys & Girls	Boys	Girls	Total	Variations in Boys & Girls	Boys	Girls	Total
Class I-V	100.75	95.67	98.31	5.08	115.6	115.4	115.5	0.2	14.85	19.73	17.19
Class VI-VIII	66.87	57.69	62.49	9.18	84.5	78.3	81.5	6.2	17.63	20.61	19.01
Class I-VIII	88.02	81.51	84.91	6.51	103.8	101.1	102.5	2.7	15.78	19.59	17.59

Source – Economic Survey of India 2005-06 and 2011-12

The above table exhibits that gross enrolment ratio increased from 100.75 to 115.6 for boys and 95.67 to 115.4 for girls in 1 -V class from 66.87 to 84.5 for boys and 57.69 to 78.3 for girls in VI-VIII class from the period 2003-04 to 2009-10. Hence the enrolment ratio accelerated from 88.02 to 103.8 for boys and 81.51 to 101.1 for girls in 1 -VIII Class during the same period.

So far as the gap of enrolment ratio between boys and girls is concerned it was the highest (9.18) in case of class VI-VIII the lowest (5.08) in case of class 1-V 2003-04. Same type of result has been observed in 2009-10. The variation in total enrolment ratio was also the highest in class VI-VIII and lowest in class I-V from the period 2003-04 to 2009-10.

FACTORS RESPONSIBLE

Number of educational institution at school level and enrolment ratio have increasing up trend. Many factors are responsible for the growth. Expenditure on education is one of the most important factor so far as expenditure on education is concerned it has gone up. The centre Govt. expenditure which was Rs.75607 Crore in 2003-04 increased to Rs 197070 in 2009-10 and Rs.276.866 Crore in 2011-12. In this way total expenditure on education increased by 160.65 per cent during the period 2003-04 to 2009-10. As a percentage of GDP which was 2.74 in 2003-04 increased to 3.05 in 2009-10 and further 3.11 in 2011-12.

The other important factor that is pupil –teacher ratio also plays very important role in growth process of school education. Pupil –teacher ratio was 42 in Pre Primary/ Primary/Junior Basic schools, 34 in Middle/ Senior Basic Schools and 30 in High/Post Basic Schools in 2009-10. With respect to drop out rate, no doubt the number of out of school children which was 134.6 lakh in 2005 declined to 8.15 lakh in 2009. In this way the number of out of school children decreased by 39.45 per cent during the same period. The observation is that there has been significant decline in dropout rate.

POLICY PACKAGE FOR THE FUTURE

Government has made earnest efforts to popularize elementary education. In this regard various schemes like 1

Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan(SSA), National Programmes For Education Of Girls At Elementary Level(NPEGEL), National Programme of Midday Meals In Schools (MDM), Kasturba Gandhi Balika Vidyalas Schemes(KGBVS), Rashtriya Madhyamik Shiksha Abhiyan(RMSA), Inclusive Education Scheme, Merit cum Scholarship Scheme etc. have been implemented.

No doubt Right to Education Act 2009(RTE) has been implemented to provide free education for all children between the age group 6-14 years even though the quality of school education is far satisfactory. In fact the improvement in the quality of education is the need of the hour. In this regard better infrastructure must be provided in schools especially for the retention of girl-child in order to reduce drop out rate and to increase gross enrolment ratio. All types of facilities like free books uniforms etc. need to be given specially economically backward children. For further study as incentives, scholarships schemes must be given to all the children who belong to weaker section of the society. Moreover Right to Education Act needs to be implemented effectively.

CONCLUSION

No doubt India has made much progress in education especially in the post economic reform period even though there is need to improve school education. In this regard proper schooling of girl child needs to be given top most priority. To reduce the dropout rate retention of girl child must be given preference Right to Education Act (2009) needs to be implemented effectively. More over investment on education as a percentage of GDP is very low. It must be increased up to 6 per cent at least from the current level of 3.11 and higher investment must be made on elementary education in the present scenario.

REFERENCES

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