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GOALS AND CHALLENGES OF TOTAL LITERACY IN INDIA: COMPARATIVE STUDY

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Abstract

The key to the future is education, and those who start preparing for it today will own it tomorrow. In India, the past of the educational system is very long and esteemed. the educational progression from Veda through Buddhist to Britain. India's educational system underwent significant changes after freedom, becoming more accessible to individuals from all social groups and communities. Periodically, various stages of the Indian education system's transformation have been experienced. The present paper mainly discusses the challenges and achievements affecting Indian education. Lastly, the study discusses how the challenges can be addressed appropriately.

Keywords: Education, Literacy, Challenges, Goals,

INTRODUCTION

In a progressive society, illiteracy is considered a curse. To lead a dignified and purposeful life, a person needs to be at least literate. In the absence of literacy, a person is also unaware of his hidden abilities. Due to this, as an efficient human resource, he is not able to establish himself in society. He is not even aware of his duties and rights. In this way, he is forced to lead a neglected life in society. Since a literate and aware society only keeps the country on the path of progress. Therefore, everyone must have equal access to education. While the statistics of states like Kerala, Delhi, Uttarakhand, Himachal Pradesh, and Assam are encouraging in terms of literacy rate, Andhra Pradesh, Rajasthan, and Bihar. The figures for Telangana and Uttar Pradesh also disappoint. Strenuous efforts will have to be made to increase the level of literacy in these states.

The National Education Policy 2020 makes a number of changes to both college education and secondary education, including vocational education. The National Education Policy 2020 includes several action items/activities for execution in both higher education and primary education. ensuring universal access to all educational levels, from kindergarten through grade 12. Providing all children aged 3-6 with high-quality early care and education, and implementing a new curriculum and pedagogical structure (5+3+3+4). NEP, 2020 aims to increase the GER to 100% in preschool to secondary level by 2030 whereas GER in Higher Education including vocational education from 26.3% (2018) to 50% by 2035, to promote female literacy and to create awareness about education among other disadvantaged groups including scheduled castes and tribes. Through this campaign, along with making people literate, attention should also be paid to their skill development. This campaign will also fulfill the goal of a 'literate India - self-reliant India'. To achieve the goal of complete literacy, the 'Literate India Program' was started in the country in 2009. This target was set to reach the literacy rate at the national level to 80 percent. According to the 2011 census, the literacy rate in the country was 74 percent. At the same time, in a recent survey of the National Statistics Office, the average literacy rate of the country is currently estimated to be around 77.7 percent. This is the highest literacy rate ever and is also four times higher than the literacy rate at the time of independence. However, despite all the government and non-government efforts, the goal of complete literacy in the country is still incomplete. One-fourth of the country's population is far away from the reach of basic education.

Many reasons have been responsible for the decrease in literacy rate. According to UNESCO, India has the largest number of illiterate people in the world. Over the last 65 years, the global literacy rate increased by 4% every 5 years – from 42% in 1960 to 86% in 2015 of the world population older than 15 years 86% are literate. The current literacy rate of India is less than the literacy rate of the world which is 84 percent. In such a situation, this new literacy program can prove



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to be a milestone in the direction of complete eradication of illiteracy There is an essential scale to measure the quality of Literacy refers to the general ability to read and write among people seven years of age or older. According to UNESCO, the meaning of literacy is personal freedom, full opportunities to develop and upgrade one's education. India's position on the global stage has strengthened in terms of economic development, but the country will have to travel a long way to achieve 'complete literacy'. Countries like North Korea, Sweden, Norway, Finland, and the USA have literacy rates above 99 percent, but in India, which dreams of becoming a 'Vishwa Guru', 20 percent of the population is still deprived of education. Necessary steps can be taken by studying the education model of the country which is at the top in terms of literacy rate. This will help in achieving the target.

With 14.89 lakh schools, about 95 lakh teachers, and roughly 26.52 billion students, India has one of the largest educational systems in the globe. as per the academic year 2021-22 numerically, the system touched higher dimensions in terms of gross enrollment ratio But compared to the achievements of the developed countries of the world and other developing countries like China, India's school education system proves to be weak. Qualitatively it is also highly backward and the system cannot withstand extraordinary circumstances like the lockdown caused by the global pandemic of Kovid-19.

Worrying Condition of Education

Gross Enrollment Ratios at Different Levels of Schooling the Gross Enrollment Ratio (GER) compares enrollment at a specific level to age-appropriate levels of education for a population by age group. The gross enrollment ratio usually doesn't change much from year to year, but its long-term trend provides important information.

GER for a group is more than 100% means that students enrolling in that class group are from outside the corresponding age group. For example, if the Gross Enrollment Ratio at the primary education level is 107, then it simply means that some students are studying in classes 1 to 5, whose age is either less than 6 years or more than 10 years.

Enrollment at different levels of school education

According to the report, the enrollment of girls from primary to higher secondary in 2021-22 is more than 12.8 crore, which there is a huge increase of 14.08 lakh as compared to 2018-19. Between 2012-13 and According to the study, there will be 14.08 lakh more girls enrolled in elementary through upper secondary schools in 2021-22 than there were in 2018-19. The Gender Parity Index (GPI) increased at both the intermediate and upper secondary levels between 2012-13 and 2021-22. In 2019-20, the total number of students enrolled in school, from elementary to higher education, exceeded 26.45 million. 42.3 lakh more than in the earlier year. 2021-22, Gender Parity Index (GPI) improved at both secondary and higher secondary levels Total enrollment of students in school education from pre-primary to higher secondary crossed 26.45 crores in 2019-20 has reached This is 42.3 lakh more than in 2018-19. Enrollment of girls from primary to higher secondary in 2021-22 is more than 12-08 crores. This increase is 14-08 lakhs as compared to the 2018-19

The Gross Enrollment Ratio at all stages of secondary instruction has increased in 2021-22 as compared to 2018-19, according to the UDISE+ 2020-21 study. Gross Enrollment Ratio at the upper primary level increased to 89.7% (from 87.7%), at the elementary level to 97.8% (from 96.1%) in 2021-22 (from 2018-19), 77.9% (up from 76.9%) at secondary level and 51.4% (up from 50.1%) at the senior secondary level.

Between 2012-13 and 2021-22, the Gross Enrollment Ratio (GER) in secondary schools increased by about 10 percent. The GER for Secondary increased to around 78% in 2021-22 as compared to 68.7% in 2012-13. The Gross Enrollment Ratio (GER) in higher secondary has improved by over 11% between 2012-13 and 2021-22. The GER for Senior Secondary increased to 51.4% in 2019-20 as compared to 40.1% in 2012-13.

The Gross Enrollment Ratio of girls soared in 2021-22 (compared to 2018-19) at the upper primary level to 90.5% (from 88.5%), at the primary level to 98.7% (from 96.7%), at the secondary level to 77.8% (from 76.9%), and at the higher



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secondary level to 52.4 percent (from 50.8%). The Gross Enrollment Percentage of girls in upper secondary schools increased by 13% from 2012–13 to 2021–22. It increased from 39.4% in 2012–13 to 52.4% in 2021–22. When compared to boys, the rise is greater. In comparison to 2012–13, when the GER of boys for higher secondary was 40.8%, it is 50.5% in 2021–22.

As per the academic year, there has Primary (1 to 5) is -98.1, Upper Primary (6-8)- 95.9, and Secondary (9-10)-86.3 the Promotion Rate by the level of education. Repetition rate in Primary -0.5, Upper Primary- 0.7, Secondary -1.1. Dropout rate Primary -1.5, Upper Primary-3, Secondary-12.6 in 2018-19, Dropout Rate of school education:4.5, 4.7, and 17.9 continuously in Primary, Upper Primary, and Secondary education.

From the above data we get the information that as the level of education increases, the Dropout rate, Repetition rate, and Promotion rate also increase which shows a negative effect on the education quality and quantity as well.

In such a situation, due to the closure of the school, the goal of equal education has suffered a setback. Away from the reach of online education, the future of students hangs in the balance.

Recently, the report of the first phase of the Annual Status of Education Report (ASER)-2022 focused on the quality of school education was released. Its statistics show that even this year the condition of education in rural India is not satisfactory. Due to Corona, education has been affected at all levels. About 40 percent of the children included in the survey do not have the facility of a smartphone. Regular online classes are being conducted by the private schools during this period, but the children of the government schools did not get this special facility.

In tribal-dominated areas, where the 'mid-day-meal' scheme only works to attract children to school, this whole year has been wasted for the children there! During this time it is natural to divert attention from studies by concentrating on agriculture or domestic work. When will the schools open and after opening how many of these children will step into the school premises again, this is also a matter to think about. Undoubtedly, after independence, the availability of children in the country has become easier due to various efforts. But the question of quality remains the same.

Pupil-Teacher Ratio (PTR)

The PTR for primary school increased from 34.0 in 2012–13 to 26.5 in 2021–22. In comparison to 23.1 in 2012–13, the PTR for upper elementary education has risen to 18.5 in 2021–22. The PTR for secondary education rose to 18.5 in 2021–22, compared to 29.7 in 2012-13. PTR for higher secondary education has increased to 26.1 in 2019-20 as against 39.2 in 2012-13

According to the information given by the Union Education Minister in the Lok Sabha, the posts of 10 lacks, 60 thousand 139 teachers are vacant in the whole country. Teachers are the backbone of the education system. The teacher attracts students to schools based on his interesting teaching style and attractive personality. Even if the infrastructure of the school is not good, but the teaching of a teacher is good, then the children automatically go to the school. The teacher works like a potter to carve his students out of clay. After all, how will the education system move forward without him? At present, three and a quarter lakh posts of teachers are vacant in Bihar and two and a quarter lakh posts are vacant in UP. Apart from this, there is a huge shortage of teachers in states like Andhra Pradesh, Jharkhand, Karnataka, Madhya Pradesh, Rajasthan, and West Bengal. The result of the vacancy of the posts of teachers is that today the student-teacher ratio is mismatched in most of the schools of the country. The government has taken care of students and teachers.

A ratio of 40:1 is considered ideal, but it is incomplete in most of the schools facing a shortage of teachers. Due to the shortage of children in many schools, this situation remains odd.

If you notice, we are far behind many countries of the world in terms of student-teacher ratio. Actually in Poland, Iceland, and Sweden where there is only one teacher for 10 students. Whereas in Cuba, Andorra, and Luxembourg this ratio is 9:1,



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while in Kuwait, Bermuda, and Saint Marino there is only one teacher per six students. A teacher can teach fewer children well, but due to the shortage of teachers, there is pressure on them to improve the future of more children at the same time. Another problem related to the education system is that 99 percent of the families in the country have primary schools within a distance of two kilometers, but as far as secondary schools are concerned, only (6) percent of children in rural areas have access to them. There are facilities of secondary schools within two kilometers only. Apart from this, there is also a lack of facilities for public transport or school buses for rural children to take them to school. In such a situation, due to a lack of personal resources, parents hesitate to send their children to school.

Expenditure on Education

On the other hand, the condition of India in terms of expenditure on education is not very satisfactory. According to IMD, India is ranked 62nd in terms of overall public spending on education per student and indicators of educational excellence (pupil-teacher ratio in primary and secondary education). Countries like Japan and Cuba allocate 10 percent of their budget to the country's education system, while Norway, New Zealand, Britain, and the United States spend more than 6 percent of their GDP on education. Under the new education policy, the central government has set a target of spending 6 percent of the GDP on education. It may be known that in 1964, the Kothari Commission constituted for education reform had also recommended spending 6 percent of the GDP on education, but even after so many years, governments have not yet become serious about adequate investment in education.

Girl's education should also get attention

The GER for girls at the secondary and higher secondary levels grew more than the GER for boys between 2012–13 and 2021–22. In comparison to 2012–13, when it was 68.2%, the GER for girls at the secondary level improved by 9.6% to 77.8% in 2021–22.

Between 2012-13 and 2021-22, the Gender Parity Index (GPI) improved at both the secondary and senior secondary levels, with the highest improvement in the GPI at the senior secondary level,

However, apart from taking the national literacy rate up to 100 percent in front of India, it is also a challenge to reduce the gender equality gap between men and women. In the year i.e. by 2030, it is necessary from all over the world in education, because the United Nations has resolved to eliminate gender discrimination in the next ten areas. In India, the difference between male and female literacy rates has decreased by 10 percent in the last thirty years, but according to the last census, there is still a difference of 17 percent between male and female literacy rates. According to the last census report, the literacy rate of men in the country is 82-14, while its percentage among women is only 65.46, which is less than that of men. In the first census after independence (1951), the gap between male and female literacy was 19 percent. Which increased to a maximum of 27 percent in the 1981 census. However, in the 2011 census, this difference was 17 percent.

Under the Literate India Program of 2009, reducing the gender gap in the literacy rate was to be brought down to 10 percent. In the matter of male and female literacy, good work has been done in Kerala. Where this difference is only 2 percent, while it is 11 in Delhi, 14 in Andhra Pradesh, 23 in Rajasthan, and up to 20 percent in Bihar. There is a need to emphasize girl child education in these states.

There are many reasons for increasing gender disparity in the field of education. Even today a part of society has not become aware of the education of girls. Even today, parents in rural societies do not give enough emphasis on girl child education. The result is that the daughters are not able to pass the 10th and 12th board exams properly and they are married off. Parents do not want to send daughters in proportion to the proportion in which sons are sent to study in other cities and abroad. Even today, usually daughters get B.Ed. And don't think about providing nursing education. The reality is that girls are performing better than boys in the education sector, so they should be encouraged. Therefore, along with



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the spread of literacy, it is also necessary to bridge the gender gap in literacy between women and men. The smaller this difference, the stronger it will be socially.

Challenges of new education policy

Even a good policy can fail due to a lack of proper implementation. Therefore, first of all, proper and transparent implementation of the new education policy should be ensured on the ground. The second major challenge is also regarding the coordination between the center and the states. Since education is a subject of the concurrent list. In such a situation, it is the moral responsibility of the Center to properly consult the states in this matter. The third challenge is related to finance, as the education policy recommends several infrastructural, institutional, and administrative changes as well as increasing the total expenditure on education. Therefore, the central and state governments will have to provide adequate financial resources.

Conclusion

India's school education system has made good achievements in terms of access and equity, but the goal of qualitative education and relevant education is still to be achieved. Far from it, backwardness is visible everywhere even in the case of the adoption of state-of-the-art teaching methods in school education. In the rural and remote areas of the country, where the uninterrupted supply of electricity is still a daydream – this smart class, computer, and information technology-based education, online education is also not possible. The net result of all this is that after passing out from these schools, the students who try to make a career in the field of higher education are more likely to fail.

All stakeholders associated with the school environment such as teacher educators, students, parents, community, school management committees, block resource persons, cluster resource persons, and volunteers should be involved in the change of education.

Apart from this, more focus will be given to imparting skills among the students. Vocational education will be expanded with funding being provided by the Ministry of Skill Development and Entrepreneurship and other ministries to provide skills. The existing infrastructure of schools and IITs and polytechnics should be utilized to ensure maximum utilization of facilities not only for school children but also for children out of school.

The main objectives of the schemes are equal access to school education, promotion of equity through the inclusion of disadvantaged and weaker sections, and improving the quality of education at all levels of school education. Cooperation between the states and union territories should be provided in achieving the objectives of the scheme.

The future of our nation can be improved by addressing present policies and problems in Indian education and by giving young people more satisfying educational opportunities. Although improvements have been made to the Indian educational system, there are still many uncertainties that need to be clarified. The reader can comprehend the flaws and issues with the Indian educational system in depth, as well as a few alternatives to these issues.

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