

Progress Of Elementary Education In India

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Abstract

For India, Universalization of Elementary Education (UEE) is an urgent issue. Various initiatives have been taken by central and state governments to achieve the goal of UEE. In the present paper an attempt has been made to study the progress of Elementary Education in India with the help of 'District Information System for Education' (DISE) data. For this, the DISE data of 2006-07, 2007-08, 2008-09 and 2009-10 is reviewed and analyzed. The key indicators that are analyzed are: (i) School Based Indicators, (ii) Facility Indicators, (iii) Teacher Related Indicators, and (iv) Enrolment Based Indicators.

Key words: Elementary Education, Universalization of Elementary Education, School Based Indicators, Facility Based Indicators, Teacher Related Indicators, Enrolment Based Indicators.

I. Introduction

Education has always been a major concern in India. The progress of any nation depends on the quality of human resources. For a successful functioning of democracy in a democratic country it is important to have educated and enlightened citizens. At the time when India got independence, its literacy rate was very poor. Only 14% of the population was literate and hardly 31% of the children of the age group 6-11 yrs went to school. For the progress of the nation the need of literate population was felt and as a result in article 45 of the constitution it was stated that "state shall endeavour to provide within a period of 10 years from the commencement of the constitution for free and compulsory education for all children until they complete the age of 14 years." But due to the lack of resources and facilities the target could not be achieved and the time limit was extended. The target have not been achieved till now, though significant efforts have been made to universalize Elementary Education. With the amendment to the constitution of India in 2002 to make elementary education a fundamental right of every citizen, policies formulated to achieve this goal have been strengthened.

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II. Initiatives for Universalization of Elementary Education

In order to achieve the goal of UEE, the central and state governments have taken a wide range of initiatives through formal and non-formal education. The major initiatives so far include Operation Blackboard, Non-formal Education, District Institute of Education & Training, Total Literacy Campaigns, National Programme for Nutritional Support (known as Mid-day Meal), Bihar Education Project, Lok jumbish, Siksha Karmi, Andra Pradesh Primary Education Project, Uttar Pradesh Basic Shiksha Project, Janshala, Minorities Welfare, Mahila Samakhya, District Primary Education Programme, Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan, Gyan Kalash, Nali kali, Free books, Book Bank Scheme, Uniform to girl child, Shishu Shiksha Scheme, Health Check-up, Education Guarantee Scheme, Alternative School Scheme, Head Start etc. In order to have community participation in education, Village Education Committee was formed and every village has a VEC.

To assess the progress of Elementary Education in India between the sessions 2006-07 to 2009-10, the key indicators that have been analyzed are: (i) School Based Indicators, (ii) Facility Indicators, (iii) Teacher Related Indicators, (iv) Enrolment Based Indicators

School Based Indicators

Table 1: School based Indicators

S.No.	Indicators		2006-07	2007-08	2008-09	2009-10
1.	No. of Recognized Schools imparting Education (covered under DISE)		1196663	1250775	1285576	1303812
2.	% of govt. share to total Schools		80.83	80.18	80.52	80.37
3.	% of govt. schools by type of management	Department of Education	-	55.73	56.48	56.07
		Tribal social Welfare Department	-	4.48	3.71	4.35
		Local body	-	19.37	19.47	18.90
		Others	-	0.60	0.85	1.60
4.	% of Pvt. share to total Schools		18.86	19.50	19.44	19.49
5.	% of Pvt. schools by type of management	Private Aided	-	5.65	5.67	5.46
		Private Unaided	-	13.85	13.77	14.04
6.	No. of Primary Schools covered under DISE		779482	805667	809108	809974
7.	Primary Schools / Sections per thousand Child population (6 to 11 years)		9	9	9	10

S.No.	Indicators		2006-07	2007-08	2008-09	2009-10
8.	Upper Primary Schools / Sections per thousand Child population (11 to 14 to years)		6	6	7	7
9.	Ratio of Primary to Upper primary Schools/Sections		2.5	2.41	2.27	2.23
10.	Average number of Instructional days (In previous academic year)		219	211	211	224
11.	% of Single teacher Schools	All Schools	11.76	10.13	9.71	9.33
		Primary Schools	-	13.73	13.25	12.26
12.	% of Single Teacher Schools with 15 and more students	Primary Schools	11.34	8.97	8.44	8.14
		All Schools	10.49	8.97	8.44	8.14
13.	% Enrolment in Single Teacher Schools	Primary Schools	8.16	6.84	6.41	6.05
		All Schools	4.92	4.05	3.72	3.65
14.	% of Schools having Pupil-teacher Ratio \geq 60	Primary Schools	16.55	14.22	13.32	12.11
		All Schools	15.94	13.76	12.96	12.21
15.	% of Schools with female teachers		71.74	72.88	73.66	74.48
16.	% Distribution of Schools having enrolment \leq 50		25.00	25.17	26.66	27.10

Source: DISE data 2006-07, 2007-08, 2008-09 and 2009-10

According to flash statistics of DISE, in 2006-07 there were 1,196,663 recognized schools which were imparting Elementary Education in 609 districts. The number of schools increased to 1,303,812 in 2009-10 in 635 districts. During this period, government schools increased from 967,263 to 1,048,046. The government share to total schools declined from 80.83% to 80.37, still holding the highest percentage share to total schools. Number of private schools also increased from 225,691 to 254,178. The percentage share of private management to total schools has been small but is increasing over the years. The percentage share of government aided schools is gradually declining, while the percentage share of unaided schools has been increasing. In 2009-10, 56.07% government schools were under Department of Education, 4.35% under Tribal Social Welfare Department, 18.90% belonged to local body and remaining 1.06% to others.

Government of India is trying its level best to achieve the goal of UEE. In this effort, between 2002-03 and 2008-09, 126,335 new government primary schools and 48,994 upper primary schools were opened. In 2009-10, 5,874 new government primary schools and 9,726 new

government upper primary schools were opened all over India. From 2003 to 2009, the ratio of primary to upper primary schools in India has improved from 2.5 to 2.23. This ratio is significantly good in Chandigarh (1.08), Gujarat (1.37), Lakshdweep (1.46) and Mizoram (1.38). West Bengal remains behind in this regard with the ratio of 5.53 and needs improvement.

The density of primary schools per 10 km has reached from 3.22 to 3.35; for upper primary schools, it has reached 1.50 from 1.34. Average number of classrooms per primary school was 2.4 in 2006-07 which improved to 3.2 in 2009-10. In the case of elementary schools, there was marked progress from 2.7 to 4.5 during the period. Chandigarh (20.5), Delhi (16.0), Lakshdweep (11.1) and Pondicherry (12.4) have good average numbers of classrooms. Average number of classrooms is more in privately managed schools than in government managed schools.

Average student-classroom ratio has improved from 36 to 32. The percentage of single teacher schools have decreased during the period from 11.76 to 9.33, resulting in improvement in teaching-learning process. Chandigarh and Lakshdweep has no single teacher schools; the maximum number of single teacher schools are in Arunachal Pradesh, which is a serious concern. Percentage of single teacher schools with 15 and more students have also come down from 10.49% to 8.14%. Enrolment in single teacher schools has gradually declined from 4.92% to 3.65% during the period.

The falling enrolment in such schools states that learners and parents are not interested in single teacher schools. In Assam, enrolment in single teacher schools has come down from 14.55% (2007-08) to 6.81% (2009-10). In Delhi it is zero percent. Andaman and Nicobar Islands, Daman & Diu, Gujarat, Kerala, Maharashtra, Pondicherry, Sikkim, Tamil Nadu & Tripura has less than 1% enrolment in such schools.

Schools having pupil teacher ratio ≥ 60 has also come down from 15.94 in 2006-07 to 12.21 in 2009-10. The maximum number of such school are in Bihar (45.23%) and Uttar Pradesh (25.56) which need remedial attention. Andaman and Nicobar Islands and Lakshdweep have no schools with PTR ≥ 60 . Percentage distribution of schools having enrolment ≤ 50 has gradually increased from 25% to 27.10%. Percentage of schools with female teachers has increased over the years from 71.74% to 74.48%. Maximum number of female teacher school are in Chandigarh (99.43%), Goa (98.34%), Kerala (99.45%), Pondicherry (97.83%), minimum number of female teacher schools is in Jharkhand (54.78%).

Facility Based Indicators**Table 2: Facility based Indicators**

S.No.	Indicators		2006-07	2007-08	2008-09	2009-10
1.	% of Schools having Drinking water facility	All Schools	84.89	86.75	87.77	92.60
		Primary Schools	-	84.18	85.33	91.51
2.	% of Schools having Common Toilet	All Schools	58.13	62.67	66.84	54.31 +
		Primary Schools	-	58.62	62.81	54.14 +
3.	% of Schools having Girls Toilet	All Schools	42.58	50.55	53.60	58.82
		Primary Schools	-	41.95	44.37	50.99
4.	% of Schools having boundary wall	All Schools	49.26	50.22	51.02	51.45
5.	% of Schools having Computer	All Schools	13.43	14.25	14.12	16.65
6.	% of Schools having Ramp	All Schools	26.61	34.43	40.39	47.09
7.	% of Schools having kitchen-shed (Govt. and Aided Managements)	All Schools	29.36	36.06	43.44	48.81

Source: DISE data 2006-07, 2007-08, 2008-09 and 2009-10

Basic facilities available in schools attract more and more children to schools, enhance teaching-learning process and help in improving retention rate. The basic facilities have improved. In 2006-07, 84.89% schools in India were having drinking water facility which reached 92.60% in 2009-10. All the schools in Chandigarh, Daman & Diu, Delhi, Lakshdweep and Punducherry have been provided with the drinking water facility. During the period schools having facility of common toilet increased from 58.13% to 85.35%. Similarly schools having facility of girls' toilet have also increased from 42.58% to 58.82%. Schools having boundary walls have increased from 49.26% to 51.45% in these years. Schools having computer facility have increased to 16.65% from 14.25%. In Chandigarh 90.34%, Delhi 82.41%, Kerala 86.86%, Lakshdweep 93.18% and Punducerry 79.91% schools have computer facility.

In 2009-10 access ramp facility was available in 47.09%; in 2006-07 ramp facility was available only in 26.61% schools in India. Schools having kitchen-shed facility have increased from 29.36% to 48.81% during the period and in 2009-10, though 87.45% schools of India were providing Mid-day Meal. Above 90% government and aided schools in 24 States and Union Territories were providing Mid-day Meal.

In 2007-08, 81.42% of government schools received development grant and 78.70% of government schools received TLM grant. In 2008-09, 81.27% schools received school development grant and 72.83% of government schools received TLM grant.

Teacher Related Indicators**Table 3: Teacher related Indicators**

S.No.	Indicators	2006-07	2007-08	2008-09	2009-10	
1.	No. of Teachers	5218578	5634589	5789898	5816673	
2.	% of Teachers in govt. schools	69.14	69.28	68.56	68.01	
3.	% of Teachers in aided schools	11.25	10.35	9.97	8.83	
4.	% of Teachers in unaided schools	19.52	20.65	21.45	23.08	
5.	Average number of teachers per school	4.4	4.5	4.5	4.5	
6.	Average number of teachers per govt. school	3.7	3.9	3.8	3.8	
7.	Average number of teachers per Pvt. aided school	8.5	8.3	7.9	7.2	
8.	Average number of teachers per Pvt. Un-aided school	6.5	6.7	7.0	7.3	
9.	Pupil-teacher ratio (PTR)	All schools	34	33	32	32
		All govt. Schools	36	34	34	33
		All aided schools	34	30	31	33
		All un-aided schools	30	29	30	30
		Primary level	36	34	34	33
		Upper Primary level	32	31	31	31
10.	% of Teachers involved in non-teaching assignments to total teachers (in previous academic year)	% Teachers	11.36	10.84	8.59	9.55
		No. of Days	16	14	15	14
11.	% distribution of professionally trained teachers (all schools)	78.21	77.68	81.89	81.01	
12.	% distribution of teachers received in-service training (during previous academic year)	All schools	31.45	36.81	35.08	35.03
		All govt. Schools	40.46	43.44	46.06	46.67
		All aided schools	26.25	27.80	30.17	32.42
		All un-aided schools	2.51	2.32	1.93	1.68
13.	% distribution of contractual teachers in total teachers	9.86	10.48	9.39	10.97	

Source: DISE data 2006-07, 2007-08, 2008-09 and 2009-10

To impart quality education and motivate learning, availability of teachers is critically important. The number of teachers in 2006-07 was 5,218,578. This number has increased to 5,816,673 in 2009-10. The maximum number of teachers' are in government schools. The number of teachers is increasing but the percentage of government teachers' share to total teachers is gradually decreasing. The percentage of teachers in aided schools is also decreasing, but there is gradual increase in percentage of private school teachers over the years. Pupil-teacher ratio has gradually improved during the period.

Trained teachers are highly important for effective teaching. Over the years, the percentage of professionally trained teachers have increased from 78.21% to 81.01%; in Delhi and Punjab 100% of teachers were professionally trained in 2009-10. In other states, 97.62% in Andaman and Nicobar Islands, 94.60% in Andhra Pradesh, 98.82% in Chandigarh, 96.11% in Dadra and Nagar Haveli, 96.70% in Goa, 96.83% in Gujarat, 94.81% in Himachal Pradesh, 95.84% in Karnatak, 97.20% in Kerala, 97.97% in Lakshadweep, 99.15% in Maharashtra, 97.69% in Punducherry and 96.06% in Tamil Nadu were professionally trained teachers. Teachers who received in-service training have also increased from 31.45% to 35.03%.

Enrolment Based Indicators

Table 4: Enrolment based Indicators

S.No.	Indicators	2006-07	2007-08	2008-09	2009-10	
1.	Enrolment	Classes I-V	131853637	134132183	134377324	133405581
		Classes VI-VIII	47489180	50911110	53350189	54467415
2.	% of CWSN Enrolment in elementary classes	All		0.84	0.74	
		Primary level			0.75	0.75
		Upper primary level			0.71	0.74
3.	% of Girls Enrolment	Classes I-V	48.09	48.22	48.38	48.46
		Classes VI-VIII	46.51	46.99	47.58	48.12
4.	Gender Parity Index	Classes I-V	0.93	0.93	0.94	0.94
		Classes VI-VIII	0.87	0.93	0.91	0.93
5.	% of enrolment in Schools with student-classroom ratio above 60	31.13	27.30	26.05	25.02	
6.	% of share of enrolment in Pre-primary classes to total enrolment in primary classes	8.62	10.01	8.69	7.19	
7.	% of SC enrolment: Classes I to VII/VIII	19.87	18.83	19.72	19.81	

S.No.	Indicators	2006-07	2007-08	2008-09	2009-10	
8.	% of SC Girls enrolment: Classes I to VII/VIII		47.76	48.09	48.36	
9.	% of ST enrolment: Classes I to VII/VIII	10.69	10.95	11.04	10.93	
10.	% of ST Girls enrolment: Classes I to VII/VIII		47.64	48.01	48.33	
11.	% of OBC enrolment: Classes I to VII/VIII	Primary level	42.18	42.35	42.39	42.15
		% of Girls enrolment		48.35	48.57	48.65
		Upper Primary level	41.23	41.86	41.93	41.98
		% of Girls enrolment		46.67	47.30	47.87
		Elementary level			42.26	42.10
12.	% of Muslim enrolment: Classes I to VII/VIII	Primary level	9.39	10.49	11.03	13.48
		% of Girls enrolment		48.67	48.93	48.96
		Upper Primary level	7.52	8.54	9.13	11.89
		% of Girls enrolment		49.40	50.03	50.41
		Elementary level		9.95	10.49	13.02
13.	Apparent Survival Rate: Ratio of grade V to grade I enrolment		73	72	76	78
14.	Transition Rate from primary to upper primary level	81.13	82.68	83.53		
15.	Average Repetition Rate	Primary Classes	6.11	5.24	3.88	
		Upper primary Classes	6.02	4.69	2.75	
16.	Average Drop-out Rate	9.36	8.02	9.11		
17.	Retention Rate at Primary level	70.26	73.71	74.92	74.01	

S.No.	Indicators		2006-07	2007-08	2008-09	2009-10
18.	Gross Completion Rate at Primary level			90.23	93.38	97.58
19.	Gross enrolment Ratio: Primary level		110.86	113.94	115.31	115.63
20.	Net enrolment Ratio: Primary level		92.75	95.92	98.59	98.28
21.	Enrolment Ratio at upper primary level	Gross Enrolment Ratio	64.72	69.88	73.74	75.80
		Net Enrolment Ratio	48.45	52.55	56.22	58.29

Source: DISE data 2006-07, 2007-08, 2008-09 and 2009-10

With the increase in the access to schools, enrolment has also significantly increased at the p

primary and upper primary level. At primary level, enrolment was 132,853,637 in 2006-07 and reached 133,405,581 in 2009-10; similarly in upper primary class enrolment increased to 54,467,415 from 47,489,180. The maximum enrolment is in government managed schools, but the percentage enrolment in these schools is gradually decreasing. In case of privately managed schools, though the percentage of enrolment is less, it is gradually increasing over the years. The percentage of CWSN enrolment to total enrolment has decreased.

The percentage of girl's enrolment is gradually improving. The Gender Parity Index (GPI) is continuously improving. In 2006-07, GPI at primary level was 0.93 reaching 0.94 in 2009-10; similarly in upper primary classes it increased from 0.87 to 0.93. Percentage of ST enrolment has gradually increased but that of SC has gradually decreased. There have been ups and down in the percentage of other backward classes (OBC) enrolment at primary level, but at Upper Primary Level the enrolment has slightly increased over the years. Muslim enrolment has also increased during the period. SC, ST, OBC and Muslim girl's enrolment is gradually improving over the years.

In order to achieve the goals of UEE, retaining students in the education system is an essential requirement. The apparent survival rate has improved to 78 from 73 during the period. High transition rate from primary to upper primary level is also important. Transition rate has also improved from 81.13 in 2006-07 to 83.53 in 2008-09, of 35 states and UT's, in 16 state and UT's transition rate is above 91. Average repetition rate at primary level has also improved and lowered down to 3.88 (2008-09) from 6.11. At upper primary level it has come down to 2.75 from 6.02. The average drop out rate has also come down to 9.11 from 9.36 during the period. Retention rate at primary levels estimated to be 74.01 in 2009-10. Gross completion rate has improved from 90.23 to 97.58. Gross enrolment ratio at primary level

has reached 115.65 in 2009-10 from 110.86 in 2006-07.

Net enrolment ratio (NER) at primary level was 92.75 in 2006-07 reaching 98.28 in 2009-10. At the upper primary level Gross enrolment ratio (GER) reached 75.80 from 64.72 and NER from 48.45 to 58.29 during the period.

S.No.	Indicators		2006-07	2007-08	2008-09	2009-10
1.	Students' performance: Grade IV/V (% of students secured 60% and above)	Boys	44.96	48.67	50.20	56.04
		Girls	45.12	48.80	50.51	55.76
2.	Students' performance: Grade VII/VIII (% of students' secured 60% and above)	Boys	38.83	43.02	42.55	49.19
		Girls	40.06	44.05	43.56	48.90

Source: DISE data 2006-07, 2007-08, 2008-09 and 2009-10

Students' performance

Table 5: Students' Performance

One of the important indicators of quality education is student's performance. Student's performance has gradually increased over the years. Nearly 56.04% boys and 55.76% girls secured 60% and above at primary level. At upper primary level 49.19% boys and 48.90% girls secured 60% and above in 2009-10.

III. Conclusion

India has made remarkable progress towards achieving the goal of Universalization of Elementary Education. Several states and Union Territories are very close in achieving the goal of UEE; on the other there are several states and UT's which need special attention. Sarv Shiksha Abhiyan (SSA) is playing a major role in this. Under SSA good numbers of teachers were appointed. This has improved the pupil-teacher ratio, but still there is a need to recruit more and more teachers in schools to bring every child to school. New schools were opened, many primary schools were upgraded to upper primary schools, and basic facilities are gradually improving under SSA. Free books, mid-day meals, and free uniform have motivated children to come to school.

Special provision and focus on girls' education and children with special needs have increased the enrolment. Increase in girls' enrolment has improved gender parity index. Periodic teachers in-service training under SSA has improved teachers teaching skills. This has motivated learning among children.

Still varying degrees of improvement is needed in every school and access ramps have to be available in all. Every individual child should be motivated to go to school. Alternate schools

should be established in places where needed and such schools should not be isolated from the mainstream of education. Non-conventional schooling should be strengthened and made easily available to those who cannot avail themselves of conventional schooling. The implementation of the Right to Education (RTE) Act begun in 2010 is a historic step in this direction. This Act requires that every child between 6-14 years of age should be admitted to nearby school, no fees should be charged from poor children, and no child be denied of education up to the age of 14. These measures will contribute further in achieving the UEE goals.

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