



## AN OVERVIEW OF STRENGTHENING ELEMENTARY EDUCATION FOR NATIONAL DEVELOPMENT: A LITERATURE REVIEW

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### ABSTRACT

This paper focused on empowering elementary education as an effective tool for national development. The purpose of the study is to find out the strategies to strengthen elementary education. Education is an overall process of not only personal growth but an enriching growth of society and nation. It is the foundation of development of any nation. Educated youth have the ability to think beyond their stagnating lives and contribute to the development of their societies. Education arms individuals with the knowledge of their rights and duties. It is informed citizenry which forms the base for the development of any society (Ram 2020).

**KEYWORDS :** Elementary Education, Nation, Development

### INTRODUCTION

A nation's growth and prosperity depends on the development of its future generation through a vibrant education system. So, Education plays a major role in a nation's development and is a basic right of every human being (Urwashi Rana 2021). In that, Elementary education is the first stage in formal education. It refers to the stage of formal education where learners learn how to think rather than gaining information about new facts. Elementary education does not require any prior formal education. It offers learners basic knowledge about various subjects and fosters their learning process. Then, creating a good education and learning system and providing better opportunities to the youth will make them secure a good future for themselves and the country. In this connection, researcher mentioned that in the words of W. B. Yeats "Learning is not the filling of a pail, but lightening of a fire."

#### Conceptual Framework:

Elementary Education in India

**Elementary education**, also called **primary education**, the first stage traditionally found in formal education, beginning at about age 5 to 7 and ending at about age 11 to 13.

The primary education in India is divided into two parts, namely Lower Primary (Class I-IV) and Upper Primary (Middle school, Class V-VIII). The Indian government lays emphasis on primary education (Class I-VIII) also referred to as elementary education, to children aged 6 to 14 years old.

The apex body for deciding the curriculum of elementary education in India is the National Council of Education Research and Training. Other bodies which decide the curriculum are:-

- Central Board of Secondary Education.
- Education departments of the State Governments.
- Council for the Indian School Certificate Examination.
- National Institute of Open Schooling.
- State councils.

#### Structure of Elementary Education in India

The elementary education structure of India consists of private schools, state-funded schools, and semi-aided schools. In India, elementary education is a five-year cycle from the first standard to the fifth standard. Despite the measures being taken by the government to offer free and compulsory education, elementary education continues to pose a challenge. As per law, many children are still being denied this fundamental right.

#### Aims of Elementary Education in India

The main aims of elementary education in India are as follows:

1. It aims to give the learner an individual identity.
2. It aims to foster the all-round development of all learners.
3. It aims to facilitate the harmonious and successful development of the children.
4. It aims to make the children ready for future responsibilities, experiences, and opportunities in adult life.
5. It aims to foster the spiritual, moral, cultural, mental, and physical development of learners in school and society.
6. It emphasizes the acquisition of basic reading, arithmetic, and literacy skills.
7. It aims to instill and enhance the development of life skills of the learners so that they can be responsible citizens.

#### Curriculum at the Elementary School

Teachers at the primary school level play constructive role in molding the career of young children. A wide range of grade levels encompasses the elementary school. Mostly, elementary school teachers concentrate on a particular grade level, teaching different fundamental subjects ranging from mathematics, social studies, science, music, physical education, and language arts.

Primary school dwells on laying the foundation for an all-rounded education. Besides the numeracy and literacy skills, there is pressing need for our children to become:

- a. **Confident**- who can judge right and wrong, can think on his own, reasons and can communicate
- b. **Active Contributor**- who innovates, works well with teams and learns to contribute and exercises, and strive towards excellence
- c. **Self directed learner**- who questions and explores, perseveres and takes responsibility for his own learning
- d. **A concerned citizen** - who is concerned about his country, has strong sense of civic responsibility and takes an active part in betterment of people around him.

It is vital that curriculum at primary schools should be based on- fit individual needs, be tailored to age and ability and attitude. Besides gaining skills, pupils are able to understand what is taught, how it is taught, and how it can be applied to the world at large.

#### Statement of the Problem

"Education is the main tool for realize and the holistic approach of nation development. It is possible when, Quality Elementary Education for all should be the primary focus as it is the only gateway for sustained development and all round progress of our nation." In other words, Education is the art of

developing and enhancing the cultivation of various physical, mental and moral powers of the child.

### Working Definition:

The International Standard Classification of Education: "Primary education as a single-phase where programs are typically designed to provide fundamental reading, writing, and mathematics skills and establish a solid foundation for learning. This is ISCED Level 1: Primary education or first stage of basic education."

The ISCED definition in 1997 posited that primary education normally started between the ages of 5 – 8 and was designed to give a sound basic education in reading, writing, and mathematics along with an elementary understanding of other subjects. By 2011 the philosophy had changed, the elementary understanding of other subjects had been dropped in favour of "to establish a solid foundation for learning".

### Elementary Education in National Education Policy (NEP) 2020

The NEP 2020 is a comprehensive framework for elementary education to higher education as well as vocational training in both rural and urban India. The main objective of the policy is to transform India's education system by 2040. The policy aims at making "India a global knowledge superpower".

The NEP 2020 enacts numerous changes in India's education policy. Some of the Major Highlights of the National Education Policy 2020 are:

#### School Education

The "10 + 2" structure will be replaced with "5+3+3+4" model. All schools' exams will be semester wise twice a year. This will be implemented as follows:

1. Foundational Stage: This is further subdivided into two parts - 3 years of preschool or anganwadi, followed by classes 1 and 2 in primary school. This will cover children of ages 3-8 years. The focus of studies will be in activity-based learning.
2. Preparatory Stage: Classes 3 to 5 will cover the ages of 8-11 years. It will gradually introduce subjects like speaking, reading, writing, physical education, languages, art, science and mathematics.
3. Middle Stage: Classes 6 to 8, which will cover children between ages 11 and 14. It will introduce students to the more abstract concepts in subjects of mathematics, sciences, social sciences, arts and humanities.
4. Secondary Stage: Classes 9 to 12, which will cover the ages of 14-19 years. It is again subdivided into two parts i.e. classes 9 and 10 will cover the first phase while classes 11 and 12 will cover the second phase. These 4 years of study are intended to inculcate multidisciplinary study, coupled with the depth and critical thinking. Multiple options of subjects will be provided.

School students will only attend three exams, in classes 3, 5 and 8 instead of exams being held every academic year. Board exams will be continued to be held for classes 10 and 12 but will be re-designed. Standards for this will be established by an assessment body, **Performance Assessment, Review, and Analysis of Knowledge for Holistic Development (PARAKH)**.

To make them easier, these exams would be conducted twice a year, with students being offered up to two attempts. The exam itself would have two parts.

They are:

1. Objective
2. Descriptive.

- Report cards will be "holistic", offering information about

the student's skills.

- Coding will be introduced from class 6 onwards and experiential learning will be adopted.
- The aim of the new policy is the universalization of education from pre-school to secondary level with 100% Gross Enrolment Ratio (GER) in school education by 2030. Through the open schooling system, the NEP 2020 will bring 2 Crores out-of-school children back into the mainstream.
- The Midday Meal Scheme will be extended to include breakfasts. More focus will be given to students' health, particularly mental health, through the deployment of counselors and social workers.

### Objectives of the Study

1. To find out the strategies to strengthen elementary education

### Review of Literature:

Zakira Jahantab (2021) did a study on 'Role of Education in National Development' pointed as, Education is one of the most important tools that play their part in the country's human development, capital formation and producing responsible citizens. Hence, since its creation, education has always been the main concern of successive governments in country. Globalization has created many opportunities and challenges only those nations can take advantage of the opportunities that have developed the knowledge and skills needed. Relevant quality education and training, prevalent in the new environment, fosters a successful and educated citizenry and provides opportunities for socially and economically deprived sections of society.

Sebak K. Jana (2020) did a study on 'Education in India: Goals and Achievements' found as The role of education in facilitating social and economic progress is well recognized. It opens up opportunities leading to enhancement of both individual and group potentials. Education, in its broadest sense, is the most crucial input for empowering people with skills and knowledge, giving them access to productive employment opportunities. Improvements in education are not only expected to enhance efficiency but also to augment the overall quality of life. It also aims to build and upgrade education facilities to ensure that all learners acquire knowledge and skills needed to promote sustainable development. The targets to be achieved by 2030 relate to all girls and boys with complete free, equitable and quality primary and secondary education, access to quality early childhood development, supply of qualified teachers etc. The study aims to address the current status of education sector in India with respect to SDG-4 goals. The proposed variables for assessing the quality of education are enrolment ratio, learning outcomes, pupil-teacher ratio, gender parity index, education expenditure etc.

Geetanjali Patel and M.S.Annapoorna (2019) conducted a study on 'Public Education Expenditure and Its Impact on Human Resource Development in India: An Empirical Analysis' stated as Societal and global advancement increasingly depends upon research, invention, innovation and adaptation; all of these are products of educated mind. Education is public good in LDCs and need Government involvement to function effectively. National Education Policies of India in 1968, 1986 and 1992 (revised) have recommended 6% of GDP to spend on education which unfortunately was on an average 3.77% in last one and half decade. This insufficient funding can be considered as one of the factors for India's low ranking in terms of Human Development Index.

Sylvie Kobzev Kotásková et al, (2018) did a study on 'The Impact of Education on Economic Growth: The Case Of India'

expressed as There exists an enormous interest in clarification of the relationship between education and economic growth. Over the past 30 years, there have been conducted studies by economists about the connection between education and economic growth. There are actually many publications which provide strong evidence that suggests a correlation between the two. The findings of this work show that there is compelling evidence proving a positive connection between education levels and economic growth in India which might influence governmental actions and shape the future of India.

Beena Indrani (2016) conducted a study on 'Quality Improvement Approaches in Primary Education' the reality is that there are over 100 million children out of the school and of those in school, a substantial proportion of them either do not complete the cycle or leave without being permanently literate and numerate. Therefore primary education continues to be a priority for all. Early childhood education in India is subject to two extreme but contrary deficiencies. On the one hand, millions of young children in lower income groups, especially rural and girl children, comprising nearly 40% of first grade entrants' never complete primary school. Even among these who do poorly qualified teachers, very high student ratios, inadequate teaching materials and out-mode teaching methods result in a low quality of education that often imparts little or no real learning. It is not uncommon for students completing 6 years of primary schooling in village public schools to lack even rudimentary reading and writing skills.

## Research Methodology Secondary Sources

The present study used secondary sources like journals, reports, Internet sources, articles in blogs, Wikipedia, books, newspapers etc.

## Strategies for Strengthening Elementary Education (The International School of Thrissur)

### 1. Constant electric supply-

Children going to primary school should be given the utmost care by the school authorities. Therefore, it should be seen that there is no deprivation of electricity supply in the school and lights, fans, and air-conditions are always in working condition.

### 2. Use of technology-

These days almost all schools use smart boards, desktop computers, and video conferencing for imparting education. I remember when I was studying my 12th standard; I saw one higher secondary school has the facility of a seminar hall. Today, a primary school should also think about such facilities, for inviting teachers from other primary schools to deliver lectures.

### 3. Training teachers-

Only improving the technologies to impart education is not enough. The educators who would be using such technologies should also be trained. If possible, all primary schools should organize an annual orientation program for the teachers. This would encourage the teachers to learn about new technologies to teach the students.

### 4. Cultural activities-

*"All work and no play, makes Jack a dull boy."* A primary school will be successful in imparting education if and only if the process of delivering classes is interjected with annual social functions, weekly music and dance classes, and art seminars. The children will be able to apply all their potential properly in school and enjoy the educational process.

### 5. Organize motivational talks-

It is not always necessary that a teacher always has to give motivation to the students. Any person from some other genre

of the profession who is a good speaker and can properly mix up with students can be given a chance to provide some motivation to the students in the seminar halls of the primary schools. They can share their struggles, their likes, their dislikes, and their mistakes when they studied in primary school.

### 6. Constant monitoring of the faculties: -

The teachers and non-teaching staff of any school are not all alike. They come from different backgrounds and cultures. Therefore, some of them might be friendly, while others may be too strict with the children. A school needs to eliminate the flaws of the personal traits of the individual faculties and use each one's best traits to improve the education facilities of the school.

### 7. Counseling of students:-

Not all students are the same and neither can they all take the pressure of the school similarly. A primary school should sympathize with the fact that these children are staying a lot of time away from their parents in their institution. Therefore, they should organize regular psychological counseling sessions for them to unload their mental pressure.

### 8. Parent-Teacher meetings-

A school will never be able to improve if it doesn't listen to the parents and teachers and be informed about the latest challenges and problems. Therefore, the highest authority of the school should organize regular parent-teacher meetings to listen and understand the challenges and threats of each side. The decision for the changes in the future administration of the primary school to impart education should be based on the resolutions taken in those parent-teacher meetings.

### 9. Keeping street vendors away from the school premises-

This also indirectly helps to improve the education level of a primary school. A lot of parents don't prefer to take their children to a school which is infested by street vendors selling chat masala, bhelpuri and other unhealthy food for children. The children force their parents to buy that food or buy themselves out of their pocket money and thus get diseases and don't attend important classes.

## CONCLUSION:

Finally, Education has played a major role in modern life for all individuals in society, because it provides us with knowledge for the future, promotes employment, earnings, and health, creates a way for a good career and leads to enlightenment. Whereas, Elementary education is regarded as the foundation on which learning, growth and development of individuals take place. So, strengthening elementary education is the need of the hour for national development.

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