



AN EMPIRICAL STUDY ON QUALITY OF EDUCATION IN INDIA- A CASE STUDY OF KASANA VILLAGE

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ABSTRACT Education imparts knowledge whereas the quality of education gives opportunities to individuals to learn and develop. The researcher aims at understanding the quality of education imparted both at the micro and macro dimension. At the macro level, the initiatives that have been undertaken by government for improvement of quality of education imparted have been examined. Further to understand, if there is any gap between the initiation and penetration of the policies initiated, an empirical study is done of a peri-urban region in Uttar Pradesh.

Additionally, comparisons have been drawn between the Indian Standards for schools and the schools set up in Kasana Village and stark differences have been witnessed between the desired and actual level of quality of education. Research findings indicate that there is no proper linkage between planning and efficient implementation of the government policies and this is preventing rapid development of the peri urban areas.

KEYWORDS : primary education, physical capital, human capital

1.0 INTRODUCTION

In the recent years education has been given a lot of importance by the government in order to ensure that it is accessible and available by all sectors of the economy. The fact that education is one of the fundamental factors that is taken into consideration while measuring the Human Development Index (HDI) highlights the importance of education in improving the wellbeing of a country. Educational index significantly affects the HDI and therefore the ranking of the country against the global competitors in terms of development. It is hence considered an important factor wherein constant investments and transformations should take place so as to improve the global competitiveness of nations.

Currently, there are 2 things working in favour of the Indian economy. Firstly, with the constant increase in population India is gaining comparative advantage in terms of human resource. Secondly, there is emergence of a completely new sector in the economy that encompasses the characteristics of both rural and urban region called the peri urban region. These zones are in the transitional stage from rural to urban region wherein maximum capacity is present for growth. Peri-urban regions can be categorised as fast growing areas where modernisation is penetrating at a very high rate. As the urban areas are at the epitome of habitation, peri-urban regions are the new hubs for habitation of major proportion of the population. Significant policies, investments and alterations in the working of this region can help in improving the standard of living of people. As these areas are constantly increasing in their size, importance and contribution to the overall GDP of the country, the level of education imparted in this area is scrutinised for analysis.

1.3 OBJECTIVE

- 1). To understand the changes in the public investment and initiatives in the education sector at the macro dimension (2014-15 to 2019-20).
- 2). To estimate the gap between the initiation of policies and their penetration in the peri-urban region on the basis of the following parameters:
 - a) Physical capital/Infrastructural facilities
 - b) Human Capital

2.0 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

In the analysis both primary and secondary data have been used to understand the level of quality of education imparted. While interpreting the secondary data, all India average was calculated corresponding to the investment incurred by the government sector for primary education. Percentage changes were estimated for the time period taken into consideration (2014-15 to 2015-16) regarding the

government expenditure in the educational sector. Further comparisons were drawn between the school scrutinised in the peri-urban area (Kasana village) and Indian Standards of School.

METHOD OF DATA COLLECTION -

The data was collected during the fieldwork undertaken in Kasana Village using a structured questionnaire. All the parameters were taken into consideration while preparing the questions. Interview method was used to understand the gap between the allotment of funds and actual penetration of these funds for improvement of human and physical capital within the school premises. First-hand information was collected on the basis of interactions and discussions with the school authorities.

METHOD OF ANALYSIS-

The method used for analysis is descriptive in nature as it includes surveys and fact-finding enquiries of different kinds. For understanding the findings of the macro level of study, simple average method is used to determine the changes in the level of investment done in the education sector over the two-time frames considered. For understanding the results of the government initiatives, purposive sampling was used to see the impact of such changes at the grass root level.

The purpose of the study was to present a description of the state of affairs as it exists at the present and takes into consideration the changes as and when they took place. The improvements and problems faced by the students and school authorities was collected through discussions and informal interviews.

Area of study-

Kasana is a peri-urban region in Gautam Buddha Nagar district of Uttar Pradesh state in India. Majority of the population in the village has migrated from rural areas in search of better opportunities. The local language of this region is Hindi. Kasana is 435 km from state capital Lucknow with proper connectivity to urban areas.

3.0 Changes in educational sector- Macro Dimension Analysis

3.1. Institutional Provision

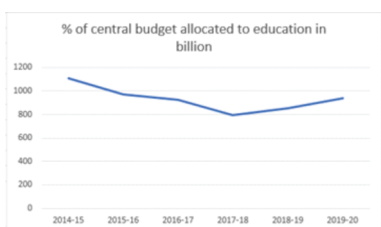
A constant emphasis is laid on the upliftment of the primary education. A number of standards, guidelines and Initiatives like Rashtriya Madhyamik Shiksha Abhiyan, Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan have been introduced and implemented by the government which aim at providing unbiassed access to quality education across the length and breadth of the country. These schemes have been initiated to help in realisation of the Right of the child to free and compulsory education

Act. Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan has been initiated by the government for achieving universalisation of education at elementary level. This scheme has been conceptualised with the aim of providing free and compulsory education to the children between the age group of 6-14 years. The scheme further aims at strengthening the existing school structure of the Indian economy with the pursuit of setting up schooling facilities in those habitations where it does not exist. Equal importance is also given to secondary education by the government and schemes like Rashtriya Madhyamik Shiksha Abhiyan These initiatives aim at improving infrastructural setup, enhancing the curricular and assessment structure and upgrading the teaching and learning framework at the schools.

But the question that arises is whether these initiatives are leading to any fruitful results or not? Are the impacts of these actions penetrating to the grassroot levels or are the initiatives of the government going in vain?

3.2 Investment directed towards improvement of Quality of Education

Figure 1



Investment in the progress and development of education from the very beginning is extremely important. It is believed that primary education can stimulate the intellectual, cognitive, social and physical skills of an individual and can encourage attitudinal and behavioural changes which can efficiently contribute to the economic growth of the country. To measure the impact of government initiatives in this aspect, the time frame from 2014-15 to 2019-20 was studied extensively to estimate the changes in the outlook of the government towards the importance of investment in primary education. The time period was divided into three fragments and simple average method was used to analyse the changes in the outlook of the government.

Figure 1 shows us the changes in the budget allocated towards the education sector in the last six years. The average amount of investment decreased from 1035.3538 billion (2014-15 to 2015-16) to 861.06458 billion (2016-17 to 2017-18). However, it increased to 897.275 billion (2018-19 to 2019-20). This highlights that fact that the importance of primary education is now being realised by the country and the government. By investing more within this sector, the government aims at increasing its accessibility to all sections. The level of investment decreased by 19.42% between the first and second time period. However it increased by approximately 4% between the second and third time period. This specifies the initiatives undertaken by the government in now ensuring that primary level of education is accessible by all sections of the society. In the Financial Year 2019-20 alone the budget allocated for the sector was approximately Rs. 94,000 crore which was 10 percent higher than the allocation in FY 2018-19. Out of the total budget allocated, Rs. 56,386 crores have been earmarked for school education whereas Rs. 38,000 crores have been allocated for improvement of the higher education. This highlights the fact that Investment in early education has been gaining importance as it affects an individual's learning capacity and determines the way his thinking will be structured. By increasing the investment within the sector, the government aims at opening avenues for accessing basic level of education in the early years.

3.2 MICRO LEVEL

Prathmik Vidhyalaya situated in Dankaur Block, Gautam Buddha Nagar District was scrutinised over a time period of 6 months, changes were observed and comparisons were made against the Indian standards for schools in order to get an idea about the functioning of the primary school backed by government. As a student grows, the education structure becomes more demanding in order to cater to their needs. A number of facilities have to be made available for the students in terms of their environmental and spatial needs. Moreover, constant efforts have to be put in order to revamp the learning structure so as to impart maximum knowledge to the students.

3.2.1 Quality of Education in Peri Urban Region

From March 2019 to September 2019, a series of changes have been observed within the school. What was a Hindi medium school in March 2019, in a time span of merely 6 months has been restructured into an English Medium school laying major emphasis on the need to impart equal quality of education among different domains. This move by the government has not only benefitted the students but has also helped in creating employment opportunities by increasing the employable staff from 3 to 17 with a majority of teachers being proficient in the English language. This speedy development in the curricular aspect highlights the effort of the government in transmitting inclusive knowledge.

3.2.2 Physical and Human Capital Bottlenecks

Necessary infrastructural facilities have still not been setup within the school premises. According to the Indian Standards for school building, there is a defined set of norms and guidelines which need to be followed before construction of a school building and most of these standards have not been met by the school in Kasana Village. Moreover, no improvements have been witnessed in its physical structure in the past 6 months and the condition has only worsened.

3.2.3 Teacher Student Ratio

There are over 400 students enrolled in the School with only 7 classrooms where teaching takes place. According to the standards specified, there is an upper limit on the number of students that can be encompassed in a class depending on the level of school. The number ranges between 20 to 40 and is also affected by the availability of area per classroom. Depending on any such restrictions, there has to be changes made in the number of students that can be accommodated in a classroom. Subsequently, the area available per student varies depending upon whether there exist infrastructural facilities or not. In the school, there was furniture available in some classes whereas in others students sat on floors or mats and classes were conducted in this manner. There was immense difference between the standards set by the government and reality that was witnessed at Kasana Village.

4.0 Comparison against Standards (Area Availability per student)

In almost all the aspects, the schools in the village did not meet the criteria specified by the Indian School Standards. The information collected has been presented below:

Category	Indian School Standards	Observation in Kasana Village
Area available per student Primary school:		
With Squatting	0.74- meter square per student	0.68-0.71-meter square per student (approximately)
With Furniture	1.11- meter square per student 40 students in an area of 44.53 square meter	32 students with every student having an area 0.452 square meter (approximately)
Height of the classroom	3.00 meters/ 9.84252 feet	Approximately 9 feet
Classroom Fittings	1200mm X 2400 mm	600mm X 1500mm
-Chalkboard		One cupboard
-Cupboard	1.5-meter square (Depth greater than or equal to 450 mm)	Did not exist
-Pinboard	At least one or more near the chalkboard	One
-Fans	At least 3	Did not exist
-Light Points	4	Fanlights were present
-Windows/Fanlights	One or more Apertures	
Headmistress /Headmaster Room/Teachers Room	1 (area of about 10-meter square should be provided)	1 room to accommodate approximately 15 teachers
General storage	10-meter square	Did not Exist

The above table highlights the basic ground level inefficiencies that existed in the school visited in Kasana Village. According to the Indian School Standards, the area available per person in the absence of any infrastructural equipments should be at least 0.74-meter square and 1.11-meter square in cases where proper furniture facilities exist where as in the School Visited, less than half of the area specified could be accessed by each student in the classrooms which had proper infrastructure facilities. Every student was limited to an area equivalent to 0.452-meter square which emphasizes on lack of availability of sufficient classrooms and overcrowding within a class. About 32 students were studying in a compact area which is fit and suitable for accommodating only 16-17 students approximately. This highlights non-fulfilment of spatial needs of the students. The classroom fittings were no way close to the specifications laid down.

4.1 Classroom Fittings

In the school administered, there was absence of cupboards in some classrooms and pinboards were not present in any of the classrooms. The chalkboard was half the size as against the required dimensions of 1200mm X 2400mm.

Another important aspect of construction of a classroom is installation of sufficient amount of electrical appliance. A standard classroom is expected to have at least 3 fan installations and minimum of 4 light points. In contrast to this only one fan was installed in every classroom and no light points were present. Daylight in classroom models is a crucial factor that needs to be taken into consideration while setting of the school design as it severely impacts students learning outcomes and health. Setting up of Adequate number of electrical appliances is mandatory to ensure there is proper ventilation and existence of sufficient lighting for undertaking visual tasks and maintaining attention levels within the classrooms. However, there were no such facilities available in the school. In some classrooms, proper cemented roofs had not been constructed completely which made it difficult to conduct classes in unfavourable climatic conditions. In addition to this, the washroom facilities

4.2 Sanitation Facility

Apart from this, the washroom conditions were such that it could not be accessed by the students and the faculty. Students were unable to use it due to lack of proper hygienic facilities. The toilets were not cleaned and sanitised on a regular basis. There was poor maintenance of this structure with the pipelines leaking and infrastructure not developed completely.

There were broken and DE structured doors with lack of basic amenities available inside the washrooms making it unfit for use. These basic services could not be availed by the students irrespective of the level of changes that were taking place in the level of education imparted.

CONCLUSION

Primary Schools play a significant role in the overall development of a child and government schools have the ability to ensure that students from all socio-economic backgrounds can access education. From the entire field research what can be comprehended is that government is setting up policies and taking initiatives but there is no proper linkage between planning and efficient implementation. The results of all the initiatives can be seen in the form of temporary patches which will be unable to provide fruitful results in the long run. A perfect balance therefore has to be established between effective learning and sufficient infrastructural facilities in order to ensure that quality education is imparted. Only when there will be proper management can the benefits of such initiatives be exploited.

If the situation of a peri-urban region is such, the condition of schools in rural and backward areas would be worse and this would prevent realisation of the main objective of the government i.e Right to education for all and this would further hamper the development of the individual and prevent him from contributing to his maximum ability.