"Primary Education In India: An Analysis Of Policy Initiatives, Successes, And Contradictions"

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The United Nations Millennium Declaration was endorsed by 191 countries in September of 2000; India was one of them. India's main priority has been implementing the free and mandatory education mandated by the plan of Action of a World Suitable for Children by 2015. India has taken several steps in the last decade and a half, particularly in the realm of education, with the goal of accomplishing the country's educational goals. The study's overarching goal is to evaluate the relative performance of various initiatives undertaken by the Indian government to improve elementary education in the country with the goal of achieving the "Education for All" goal. There have been several improvements to India's elementary education system during the last decade. Gender, caste, and demographic inequalities in elementary education have shrunk considerably on a national, state, and local scale. Nonetheless, considerable barriers remain in the way of reaching the universal objectives of primary education in India, such as universal enrollment, universal retention, the dropout rate, and quality education. The political will and administrative commitment of educational authorities must be strong if these challenges are to be addressed. With the goal of achieving universal primary education in India, this paper attempts to discuss the policy initiatives taken by the Government of India to shed light on the successes achieved, the challenges faced, and the solutions implemented for the achievement of a retention rate and enrollment rate of one hundred percent in primary education.
Key words: Education for All, Primary Education, Educational Growth

INTRODUCTION

Education has a key role in all aspect of a person's development, from their physical and cerebral maturation to the development of their emotional and moral character. Educating oneself is a key factor in this movement. That's why providing every child with a high-quality early education is so crucial. A child's experience in elementary school is formative in determining whether or not he or she will become a productive adult who makes positive contributions to society. Since children are a country's greatest hope for the future, every child deserves the chance to learn as much as possible. The primary school years are crucial in shaping a child into an adult who takes their civic duties seriously. As a result, it is essential for the growth of one's personality, as well as the development of one's talents, one's understanding of the world, and one's sense of social responsibility. Humanity should recognise access to elementary education as a basic human right since it has the potential to improve people's lives and offer them greater choice and control over their destinies. All other human rights depend on it, and it provides access to a broader variety of social, economic, political, and cultural rights and benefits, thus it is not just important in and of itself. Primary education is responsible for making sure that children are safe, healthy, stimulated, and supported, and that they learn to actively participate in their surroundings (UNESCO 2007) Two of the various ways in which education helps to build more egalitarian societies are through reducing poverty and bridging economic disparities. No country has ever developed economically or socially without also investing heavily in its children's education [1].

OBJECTIVE

This article's goals are to (a) describe the many distinct national initiatives undertaken by the Government of India to improve primary education in India and (b) analyse the impact that the international campaign Education for All has had on the state of primary education in India.

METHODOLOGY

Analysis of the global campaign for the Education for All project and of the effectiveness of several national attempts to promote primary education in India have both made use of secondary data. Information used in this review of elementary education in India was culled from the UNDP, the World Bank, the Ministry of Human Resource and Development, and the National Educational University of Planning and Administration websites (NEUPA). This is due to the fact that the current discussion centres on a dissection of basic education in India. The data collecting process will also include a review of relevant news articles and verified online data. According to the latest statistics, this article will also describe the growth of elementary education in India during the last decade.

AN OVERALL WORLD WIDE EDUCATION CAMPAIGN

In 1990, in Jomtien, Thailand, at the very first Global Declaration of Education for All assembly, it was agreed that all children should be able to attend a public elementary school. This choice has been made. That's why it's been around the longest of all the Millennium Development Goals. India was an integral component of the international "Education for All" movement and a vocal supporter of the cause (EFA). When the EFA campaign met again in April of 2000, it did so in the Senegalese capital of Dakar. The gathering's purpose was to review the EFA campaign's accomplishments to that point and to plan for future moves. India not only sent delegates to the meeting, but also updated its national education policy to conform to the tenets of the Dakar Declaration and the Plan of Action (2001). Figure 1 displays the primary objectives agreed upon after this discussion.
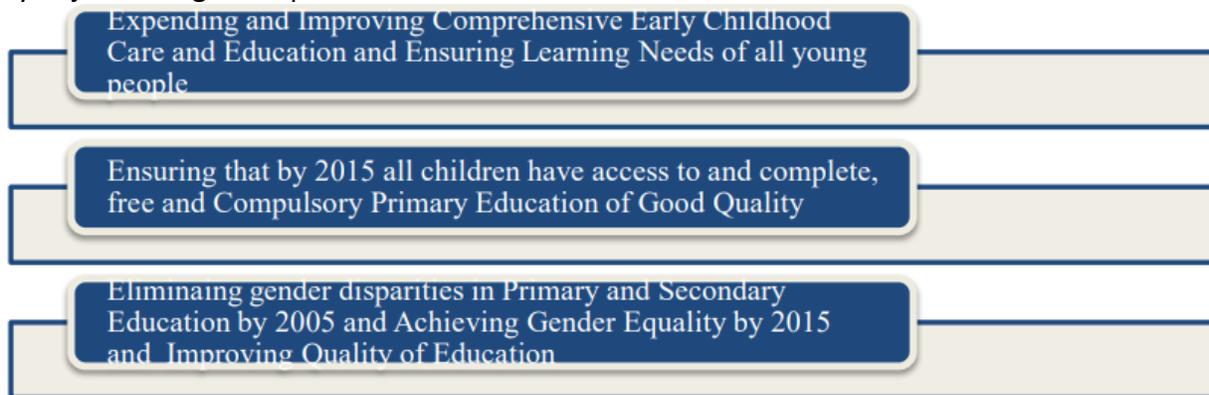

Expending and Improving Comprehensive Early Childhood Care and Education and Ensuring Learning Needs of all young people

Ensuring that by 2015 all children have access to and complete, free and Compulsory Primary Education of Good Quality

Eliminaing gender disparities in Primary and Secondary Education by 2005 and Achieving Gender Equality by 2015 and Improving Quality of Education

Figure 1: Declaration of Dakar Framework for Action [2]

- The "Education for Everyone" movement promotes universal access to elementary education on the grounds that everyone should have the chance to do so. The rights of children are defined in both the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child. Primary education in India is the initial formal schooling that children and adolescents get from the ages of 6 to 14. Preschool, kindergarten, and grade school are all required for children ages 6 to 11. To prove its dedication to the "Education for Everyone" purpose, India has been implementing a wide variety of techniques and processes since 1990 with the aim of reaching the goal of "Education for All" as quickly as feasible.
- Campaign for Universal Secondary Education in India from a National Perspective
- Without educated and informed citizens, a flourishing democracy is impossible to achieve. More than 85% of Indians were illiterate in 1947, the year the country gained independence, and only around 31% of children between the ages of 6 and 11 were enrolled in school at that time. The current percentage is quite close to 90.0. As stated in Article 45 of the Indian Constitution, "The state should attempt to provide within a period of 10 years from the start of this Constitution for the free and compulsory education of all children till they finish the age of fourteen." Ten years after the Constitution goes into

effect, this clause must be enacted. Article 46 of the document states, in part, that "The State shall protect the weaker sections of the people from social injustice and all forms of exploitation, an equal opportunity to participate in the political, economic, and social life of the country, and equal protection under the law." This provision was included in the document because of this mandate. The provision is warranted by the fact that education is one of the most potent means through which health, gender equality, peace and stability, and the alleviation of poverty may be promoted and achieved. Since 1976, education in India has been one of the topics on the country's "Concurrent List." Positive outcomes occur from collaboration between the federal and state levels of government. In the interest of the country as a whole and for its welfare, the Constitution provides rules and methods for the consolidation of resources, coordination of planning, allocation of responsibilities, and harmonisation of the many roles that make up the government. Article 5 of the Constitution details these procedures and regulations. The Indian government has recently taken some significant measures towards fulfilling the constitutional mandate for free and compulsory primary education. Recent initiatives have been motivated by this aim (UEE). Not only did the Constitution place a premium on schooling, but so did a number of other world leaders. Each succeeding development plan, strategy, and Five Year Plan has prioritised strengthening the country's existing educational infrastructure.

MARKERS OF PROGRESS MADE BY INDIA PRE-COLLEGE EDUCATION

The government of India initiated many initiatives, one of which was the establishment of the education Commission. Moreover, a large number of programmes and policy initiatives were also developed. In order to provide a countrywide standard education strategy, the Kothari Commission was established in 1964 and operated until 1966. As a result of its exhaustive investigation, this Commission has concluded that the Indian education system requires significant restructuring and renovation. The Commission made a number of recommendations and ideas meant to enhance India's current educational system. Furthermore, the Indian government implemented its plans under the banner "The National Policy of Education (NPE) 1968" to demonstrate its political might.

The National Policy of Education (NPE) of 1968 was crucial because it called for "radical restructuring," equalised educational opportunities, and a dedication to the universalization of basic education. India earned its independence in 1947, and the implementation of the National Policy on Education (NPE) in 1968 was a watershed moment in the country's educational history. Promoting competency in both the social and economic realms was central to the government's strategy to achieve its goal of making education more responsive to the changing environment. From its inception in 1968, the National Policy of Education (NPE) has shown the government's dedication to the idea that all children should have access to elementary education. As the NPE has laid out in a clear and simple way, the NPE puts the biggest priority on the broad implementation of primary education, and this process of putting the NPE into action began in 1985 with the announcement of the programme of action (POA) (UEE). Many procedures were taken by the Indian government to officially implement the NPE. All students are enrolled and stay in school; all schools have the same resources; curriculums are improved; teachers are given the tools they need to teach well; and there is an emphasis on social awareness and enlightenment. In 1992, a substantial update was made to the National Policy on Education [3]. The "policy" was a major advancement in realising the goals of India's "education for all" initiative. According to this national vision, "Education is fundamentally for everyone." The primary aim of the National Policy of Education of 1986/1992 (Programme of Action, 1992) was to create a national system of education that would allow the country's distinct sociocultural identity to be expressed and provided for while also addressing the challenges of the modern period. This was done so that students of various backgrounds (race, socioeconomic status, sexual orientation, and religion) may benefit from a

first-rate education. The strategy placed heavy emphasis on the need to increase the overall amount of financial aid that was made available to the education sector. During the time that the National Policy on Education (NPE) 1986–1992 was in existence, India initiated a number of national efforts to improve K–12 education. Several programmes were put into place as a direct result of this initiative, including the National Literacy Mission (1988), the Minimum Levels of Learning (MLL)Programme (1991), the Programme of Action (POA) (1992), the National Advisory Committee (1992), the District-Specific Programmes (1993), the District Institute of Education and Training (DIETs), which were structured according to the needs of the district and the efficacy of the institutions, and the State Literacy Mission.

- **Major Findings and Rebuttals on Primary Education in India**
- India's documentation of its success in achieving the EFA's goals and the country's varied development rates are also sources of great pride. Since 2015, the year of the EFA agenda's expiration, rapidly approaches, this is extremely gratifying. India has, without a question, achieved substantial progress towards its EFA goals during the last twenty years. All of the State Governments and Union Territory Administrators in the country, whose educators, teachers, academics, and communities have contributed unreservedly to this massive national endeavour of reaching the EFA goals in the country. The report provides a short analysis of the progress made towards each of the EFA goals and the challenges that remain. According to the 2014-15 Annual Report of "Education for All," school enrollment in India has increased dramatically. This expansion may be evaluated in a number of ways, including the number of institutions and facilities, the number of students enrolled, and the percentage of students who continue their studies. Women's rights have made significant gains at the federal, state, and local levels in India. Primary School Enrollment Increases: Between 2002–03 and 2013–14, 1,98,493 new schools were established in India, demonstrating a steady increase in enrollment. Taking into account all elementary schools in the nation, this accounts for 24.41 percent. More than 95% of classrooms in schools are housed in permanent buildings. [10] Virtually all of the brand new schools (96%) were created in more remote areas. There is a wide variety of educational facilities from which to choose in India. The number of schools in India has risen dramatically in recent decades. Primary schools (schools with just a primary portion) increased by 34.5% between 2000–01 and 2013–14, from 6,38,738 to 8,58,916 [11]. You may see this for yourself in Chart 1.
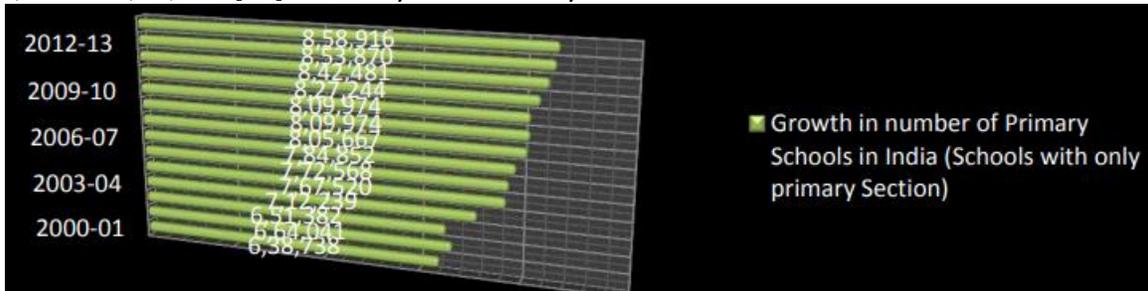
Source: Statistics of School Education, 2007-08, MHRD, Goi and Unified System of Education U-DISE), National University of Educational Planning and Administration (NEUPA)

I. Most kids today have easier access to education since schools of all sorts are conveniently located (within three kilometres) in practically every town (such as community schools, mobile schools, distance learning, and through contracting out their responsibilities to various types of Non Government Organizations etc.). The most recent data available (NUEPA, 2013) indicates that there are around 14.1 lakh primary schools that are responsible for the education of 137.1 million children throughout both the

basic and upper primary levels. According to the 2014-2015 Annual Report of EFA, India's Mid-Day Meal programme is one of the world's largest, providing a hot lunch to 108 million schoolchildren every day.

II.   A. Necessary School Resources

III.   The annual report of EFA for 2014–15 states that many schools' most basic services have seen significant improvements. Physical, ancillary, and classroom facilities at India's schools have all received significant upgrades in recent years. Many indicators show this trend. Key features that many schools provide include the ones listed below. Utility for the Provision of Potable Water: The proportion of schools with clean drinking water was almost unchanged between 2012-13 and 2013-14 [13], and it was much higher than in 2005-06 [14]. Toilet Access: 94.45% of schools report having boys' restrooms, with 92.675% of those reporting that they are in working order. Comparatively, just 91.62 percent of the bathrooms in schools that provide them for females are really usable. Almost half of classrooms have a sink for washing hands near the restroom. [14]. School Computer Access: During 2004-05 to 2013-14, the percentage of Indian schools having access to computers increased from 8% to 23% [15]. One of the government's lofty goals is to ensure that every kid in the country has access to a healthy noon meal. Just 29% of government-run and assisted schools had a kitchen shed in 2006-2007 [16]. Donations to Schools: Over time, the number of schools receiving school development and TLM money has increased dramatically. During 2003-2004, 7,24,682 schools applied for and received school development grants. In 2007–08, there were 8,82,745 schools participating (79.67 percent), while in 2012–13, the number peaked at 10,11,788 schools (69.84 percent). Proper Instruction: There is no doubt an increase in the number of people receiving an education, but whether or not that increase is of high quality is still up for debate. Pratham claims that there is a dearth of high-quality education in India, especially in rural areas, however this is generally an exaggeration. The kids' proficiency in both language and mathematics is quite low. Some large-scale schemes have been launched in India with the aim of capacity development, but this progress has lagged behind the pace of legislation. The "gaps" in this area's capacity for planning and policymaking dominate the discourse. These "gaps" are associated with insufficient monitoring and assessment tools and inadequate high-quality data. As important, however, is the possibility that poorly designed bureaucratic procedures, organisations, or institutions can stymie efforts to get things done [22].

IV.   CONCLUSION

Several of the problems with India's policies and programmes, such as weak administration, inadequate funding, and low educational levels, might be easily remedied if the country's governance were improved. It is critical for India to achieve MDG 2 at the national level. Lack of administrative responsibility, failure to react to the demands and requirements of the people and society, corruption, and other negative features are all possible indicators of poor governance. These pose serious challenges to achieving the goals set for primary and secondary education. A strong political will and administrative accountability may be crucial to the advancement and achievement of the desired level of education in India. It might be due to a shortage of resources or an inequitable distribution of instructors; it could be due to insufficient preparation of teachers (including those already on the job); or it could be due to a failure to provide a high-quality education. Directly or indirectly, everything relies on the government's commitment and political will. The problems associated with primary schools may have very simple answers, such as a more thorough monitoring system, more transparency, greater accountability, and a greater sensitivity to students' educational needs. Increasing funding is critical for closing resource shortages and improving service delivery via more effective policies and more robust institutions. Money allocation changes might help achieve this goal. Targeted investments of appropriate resources with

disaggregated activities are necessary to reduce regional and interstate disparities. To achieve the central education goal of "learning for all" in a post-2015 India, it is crucial to focus on a results-based approach to education.

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