

ISSN 2278-8808

An International Peer Reviewed

**SCHOLARLY RESEARCH JOURNAL
FOR INTERDISCIPLINARY STUDIES**



Alternative Education: Home Schooling

Priyanka Y. Valhe,
Student (M.Ed.)

Department of Education & Extension,
University Of Pune.

priyankadhikale@gmail.com

Dr. Geeta Shinde
Asst. Prof.

Department of Education & Extension,
University of Pune.

drgeetalis@gmail.com

Abstract

Under its “SarvaShikshaAbhiyan (SSA) policy”, the Government of India, Ministry of Human Resource Development (MHRD) has been endeavoring to provide Basic Education to all children, youth and adults in the country. There has been a lot of educational research and experimentation just to provide best of the education to the children throughout the world in second half of the twentieth century. The National Institute of Open Schooling (NIOS) has launched the Open Basic Education (OBE) Programme, as an alternative educational programme, equivalent to the Elementary Education Programme of the formal education system. The OBE Programme explores and makes use of the potentialities of Distance Education Mode (DEM) for reaching the unreached. The Foundation Course of NIOS has been subsumed into the Open Basic Education (OBE) Programme. OBE Programme provides an elementary education at three levels, for school drop-outs and neo-literates, out of school learners (e.g. home-schoolers) through Accredited Agencies. There are many new policies and practices are being practiced to overcome the present problems. But still there are many questions are remaining unanswered and thus giving new approaches to the educational research. Thus to overcome the problems related to three areas - Dropout prevention, special education and At-risk youth the alternative methods to traditional education system aroused. The alternative education could be given within or outside the Public School System. In Modern time the alternative education is considered to be the nontraditional education system which includes charter schools, alternative schools, independent schools, and home-based learning which often emphasize the value of small class size, close relationships between students and teachers, and a sense of community. Modern forms of alternative education fall in four major categories: school choice, alternative

school, independent school, and home-based education(Home-Schooling). Homeschooling or homeschool (also called home education or home based learning) is the education of children at home, typically by parents but sometimes by tutors, rather than in other formal settings of public or private school. Homeschooling is a legal option for parents in most countries to provide their children with a learning environment as an alternative to public or private schools outside the home. Homeschools use a wide variety of methods and materials. Children after homeschooling till secondary education can join regular college or the university after acquiring the required criterions.

Key Words: Alternative Education, Home Schooling

Introduction:

Under its “**SarvaShikshaAbhiyan (SSA) policy**”, the Government of India, Ministry of Human Resource Development (MHRD) has been endeavoring to provide Basic Education to all children, youth and adults in the country. The National Institute of Open Schooling (NIOS) has launched the Open Basic Education (OBE) Programme, as an alternative educational programme, equivalent to the Elementary Education Programme of the formal education system. The OBE Programme explores and makes use of the potentialities of Distance Education Mode (DEM) for reaching the unreached. The Foundation Course of NIOS has been subsumed into the Open Basic Education (OBE) Programme. OBE Programme provides an elementary education at three levels, for school drop-outs and neo-literates, out of school learners (e.g.home-schoolers) through Accredited Agencies.

There has been a lot of educational research and experimentation just to provide best of the education to the children throughout the world in second half of the twentieth century. There are many new policies and practices are being practiced to overcome the present problems. But still there are many questions are remaining unanswered and thus giving new approaches to the educational research. As per the educational history of America it shows lot of reformation in the educational sector due to high accountability. So many practices are followed so that the children will reach their educational potential. In spite of these many reforms some students are notreaching the academic goals desired by parents, educators, and the public.

Through the past few decades, some educators and policymakers have contended that, if an alternate educational option is provided for students at risk of school failure, they will be able to succeed. Advocates argue that alternatives to the traditional school model are imperative to meeting the needs of all students.

As per the views of Raywid (1994) alternative schools are a “cutting-edge” educational reform, even though they have been in the educational arena for decades. In his words,

Amid all the current talk of school restructuring, alternatives are the clearest example we have of what a restructured school might look like. They represent our most

definitive departure from the programmatic, organizational and behavioral regularities that inhibit school reform. Moreover, many of the reforms currently pursued in traditional schools—downsizing the high school, pursuing a focus or theme, students and teacher choice, making the school a community, empowering staff, active learner engagement, authentic assessment—are practices that alternative schools pioneered (p. 26).

There is no precise number but it reach to around 20,000 alternative schools and programs in operation (Barr & Parrett, 2001)

If the educational history of America is studied the alternative education system arises for the three areas—Dropout prevention, special education and At-risk youth. As America wanted to overcome the poverty, President Johnson named the public school system as the front line of attack in the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965. The emphasis on excellence, Young says, was at this point replaced by the humanistic goal of equity. With government backing and funding, a new wave of alternatives was spawned that was meant to offer equal and meaningful education to disadvantaged and minority students. By the late sixties, the alternative movement had arguably split into two broad categories: alternatives outside of public education and those within the public school system.

Alternative Education Outside of the Public School System:

Freedom Schools: Schools intended to provide high quality education to minorities in response to the substandard education they were afforded in the public system. They were developed as a community-school model and were run outside of the public education system in settings ranging from church basements to store fronts.

Free School Movement: it was based on *individual* achievement and fulfillment, instead of emphasizing community. These schools were founded on the notion that mainstream public education was inhibiting and alienating to many students and that schools should be structured to allow students to freely explore their natural intellect and curiosity. Free Schools were intended to give children the freedom to learn and the freedom from restrictions. Several characteristics set Free Schools apart for this purpose.

- There was no required learning and no set discipline or controls imposed on students (natural consequences were assumed to prevail).
- The only moral value taught was that “everyone has an equal right to self-determined fulfillment.”
- Evaluation did not consist of assessing progress toward learning goals, but of the “learning environment in its ability to facilitate the investigations the student’s desire and find rewarding” (Hopkins 1979, p. 48).

Alternative Education Within the Public School System:

Open Schools: These schools were characterized by parent, student and teacher choice; autonomy in learning and pace; non-competitive evaluation; and a child-centered approach. The existence of the Open Schools greatly influenced the creation of public alternatives at all levels of education, including the following (Young, 1990):

- Schools without Walls – emphasized community-based learning; individuals within the community were brought in to teach students.
- Schools within a School – intended to make large high schools into smaller communities of belonging; individual groups were designed to meet educational needs and interests of students.
- Multicultural Schools – designed to integrate culture and ethnicity into the curriculum; some had a diverse student body and some catered to a specific ethnic group.
- Continuation Schools – used as an option for those who were failing in the regular school system because of issues such as dropout, pregnancy, failing grades; these schools were less competitive and more individualized.
- Learning Centers – intended to meet particular student needs by including special resources, such as vocational education, in the school setting.
- Fundamental Schools – emphasized a *back to basics* approach in reaction to the lack of academic rigor perceived in the Free Schools.
- Magnet Schools – developed in response to the need for racial integration; offered a curriculum that emphasized themes meant to attract diverse groups of students from a range of racial and cultural backgrounds.

Over the period of time the approach to this alternative education changed from more progressive to the more conservative and remedial one. Raywid (1981) says that during this time, alternative schools became increasingly interested in teaching basics while decreasing their emphasis on collective decision-making (decision-making that included both students and teachers in the process).

Today's status of Alternative Education:

Alternative schools and programs have evolved over the years to mean different things to different audiences. It is considered to be non-traditional education or educational alternative including a number of approaches to teaching and learning other than mainstream or traditional education. Educational alternatives, which include charter schools, alternative schools, independent schools, and home-based learning vary widely, but often emphasize the value of small class size, close relationships between students and teachers, and a sense of community.

Modern forms of Alternative education:

A wide variety of educational alternatives exist at the elementary, secondary, and tertiary levels of education. These generally fall into four major categories: *school choice*, *alternative school*, *independent school*, and *home-based education (Home-Schooling)*. These general categories can be further broken down into more specific practices and methodologies.

Home-Schooling: -

Introduction:

Families who seek alternatives based on educational, philosophical, or religious reasons, or if there appears to be no nearby educational alternative can decide to have home-based education. Some call themselves unschoolers, for they follow an approach based on interest, rather than a set curriculum. Others enroll in umbrella schools which provide a curriculum to follow. Many choose this alternative for religious-based reasons, but practitioners of home-based education are of all backgrounds and philosophies.

Homeschooling or homeschool (also called home education or home based learning) is the education of children at home, typically by parents but sometimes by tutors, rather than in other formal settings of public or private school. Although prior to the introduction of compulsory school attendance laws, most childhood education occurred within the family or community, homeschooling in the modern sense is an alternative in developed countries to attending public or private schools.

Homeschooling is a legal option for parents in most countries to provide their children with a learning environment as an alternative to public or private schools outside the home. Parents cite numerous reasons as motivations to homeschool their children. The three reasons that are selected by the majority of parents in the United States are concern about the traditional school environment, to provide religious or moral instruction, and dissatisfaction with academic instruction at traditional public and private schools. Homeschooling may also be a factor in the choice of parenting style. Homeschooling can be an option for families living in isolated rural locations, living temporarily abroad, and to allow for more traveling; also many young athletes and actors are taught at home. Homeschooling can be about mentorship and apprenticeship, where a tutor or teacher is with the child for many years and then knows the child very well.

Homeschooling may also refer to instruction in the home under the supervision of correspondence schools or umbrella schools. In some places, an approved curriculum is legally required if children are to be home-schooled. A curriculum-free philosophy of homeschooling may be called *unschooling*, a term coined in 1977 by American educator and author John Holt in his magazine *Growing Without Schooling*.

Methodology in Home-Schooling:-

Homeschools use a wide variety of methods and materials. There are different paradigms, or educational philosophies, that families adopt including unit studies, Classical education (including Trivium, Quadrivium), Charlotte Mason education, Montessori method, Theory of multiple intelligences, Unschooling, Radical Unschooling, Waldorf education, School-at-home, A Thomas Jefferson Education, and many others.

Some of which can be explained as follows,

1. Unit Studies:

The unit study approach incorporates several subjects, such as art, history, math, science, geography and other curriculum subjects, around the context of one topical theme, like water, animals, American slavery, or ancient Rome etc.

Unit studies are particularly helpful for teaching multiple grade levels simultaneously, as the topic can easily be adjusted (i.e. from an 8th grader detailing and

labeling a spider's anatomy to an elementary student drawing a picture of a spider on its web). As it is generally the case that in a given "homeschool" very few students are spread out among the grade levels, the unit study approach is an attractive option.

Unit study advocates assert that children retain 45% more information following this approach.

2. All-in-one curricula:

Curriculum and homework of the student are similar or identical to what would be taught in a public or private school, the same textbooks used in conventional schools are often used. These are comprehensive packages that contain all of the needed books and materials for the whole year. These materials are based on the same subject-area expectations as publicly run schools which allows for easy transition back into the school system. These are among the more expensive options for homeschooling, but they require minimal preparation and are easy to use. Step-by-step instructions and extensive teaching guides are provided. Some include tests or access information for remote testing.

3. Student-paced learning:

Similar to All-in-one curricula are learner-paced curriculum packages. These workbooks allow the student to progress at their own speed.

4. Online Education:

Online resources for homeschooling include courses of study, curricula, educational games, online tests, online tutoring, and occupational training. Online learning potentially allows students and families' access to specialized teachers and materials and greater flexibility in scheduling. Parents can be with their children during an online tutoring session. Finally, online tutoring is useful for students who are disabled or otherwise limited in their ability to travel.

5. Community resources:

Homeschoolers often take advantage of educational opportunities at museums, libraries, community centers, athletic clubs, after-school programs, churches, science preserves, parks, and other community resources. Secondary school level students may take classes at community colleges, which typically have open admission policies. In many communities, homeschooling parents and students participate in Community Theater, dance, band, symphony, and choral opportunities.

Groups of homeschooling families often join together to create homeschool co-ops. These groups typically meet once a week and provide a classroom environment. These are family-centered support groups whose members seek to pool their talents and resources in a collective effort to broaden the scope of their children's education. They provide a classroom environment where students can do hands-on and group learning such as performing, science experiments, art projects, foreign language study, spelling bees, discussions, etc. Parents whose children take classes serve in volunteer roles to keep costs low and make the program a success.

6. Natural learning:

"Natural learning" refers to a type of learning-on-demand where children pursue knowledge based on their interests and parents take an active part in facilitating activities and experiences conducive to learning but do not rely heavily on textbooks or spend much time "teaching", looking instead for "learning moments" throughout their daily activities. Parents see their role as that of affirming through positive feedback and modeling the necessary skills, and the child's role as being responsible for asking and learning.

7. Autonomous learning:

Autonomous education helps students develop their self-consciousness, vision, practicality and freedom of discussion. These attributes serve to aid the student in his/her independent learning.

Autonomous learning is very popular with those who home educate their children. The child usually gets to decide what projects they wish to tackle or what interests to pursue. Example: a child that loves music will choose to learn or play a musical instrument. In home education this can be instead of or in addition to regular subjects like doing math or English. At University/College Students are expected to learn independently without constant support from lectures and tutors this is known as autonomous learning.

Further education after Homeschooling:-

In US according to sources, homeschoolers have now matriculated at over 900 different colleges and universities, including institutions with highly selective standards of admission such as the US military academies, Rice University, Haverford College, Harvard University, Stanford University, Cornell University, Brown University, Dartmouth College, and Princeton University, where they are evaluated using standardized test scores.

Why Home-Schooling:-

There are various reasons cited by the homeschoolers for accepting Homeschooling as an option. They can be listed as given in 'reason for homeschooling: 1999, National Center for Education Statistics (NCES)',

1. Can give better education at home
2. Religious reasons
3. Poor learning environment at school
4. Family reasons
5. To develop character, morality

6. Objection to what is being taught at school
7. If School does not challenge child
8. Other problems with available school
9. Child has special needs or disabilities
10. Transportation and convenience
11. Child is not old enough to enter school
12. Parents Career
13. Could not get into desired school
14. Other reasons

Homeschooling in India:

Home schooling can be practiced at home following any board like CBSE, NIOS or NOS and IGCSE.

NIOS provides the OBE (Open Based Education) at 3 levels-

OBE level A: equivalent to class I-III

OBE level B: equivalent to class IV-V

OBE level C: equivalent to class VI-VIII

After clearing these levels candidate is fit to take admission in any college or university.

References:-

1. Alternative Education: A Brief History and Research Synthesis, Cheryl M. Lange & Sandra J. Sletten, Feb-2002 Forum Publications, VA.
2. http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Alternative_Education
3. <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Homeschooling>
4. <http://www.nios.ac.in/obe.htm>

