



EDUCATION FOR ALL (EFA) IN INDIA: ISSUES, CHALLENGES AND STRATEGIES

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Abstract

There are many people in the world who are not able to receive basic education. Education is the sea of knowledge and it makes people rich and superior to other forms of living things. Its aim is to give everyone a chance to learn. The Education For All movement is a global commitment to provide quality basic education for all children, youth and adults. Education makes people educated, acquaints them with some need based skills. According to the millennium Report, Education is a lifelong process and the ultimate aim of Education For All (EFA) is sustainable development. India has keenly pursued the Education For All goals that are defined in the area of the early childhood care and education, primary education, gender, youth and adult education, and quality of education. Therefore in recent past, India has made progress in terms of increasing primary education enrolment, regular attendance rate and expanding literacy to approximately three fourths of the population. But this time, we should be achieved cent percent literacy after a long journey of independence and huge investment in elementary education. This paper describes the major challenges facing in achieving goals of EFA in India and suggest some strategies for providing education to everyone.



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Introduction

India has a long tradition of community-supported education. In the nineteenth century, village communities supported the village schoolmaster for teaching their children. The Gurukulas, pathshalas, Maktabs and Madarssahs were community supported institutions. It was only with the advent of the British that a state system of education was founded and Directorates of Public Instruction were set up after 1854 when formal education became open for all regardless of gender, caste, class or religion in which Christian missionaries led in setting up of private schools. A major achievement of the Indian social reformers, who formed the vanguard of Indian renaissance in the nineteenth century to the British initiative, was setting up of educational institutions in all parts of the country.

Education is an important agency of social control and social transformation. Therefore opportunity of education must be given to everyone. In this regard, the world declared on 1948, 'Everyone has a right to education'. In the year 2000, the world's governments adopted the six EFA goals and the eight Millennium Developments goals, the two most important frameworks in the field of education. The report to UNESCO of the International Commission on education for the twenty-first century promoted a holistic view of education consisting of four pillars namely learning to know, learning to do, learning to be and learning to live together. The education priorities of UNESCO are shaped by these objectives. In response to this situation, the global Education for All (EFA) movement aims to meet the learning needs of all children, youth and adults by 2015. The text was widely adopted by the India and other many countries. In accordance with the Constitutional commitment to ensure free and compulsory education for all children up to the age of 14 years, provision of universal elementary education has been a salient feature of national policy since independence.

In modern India, Globalization is inevitable and universal with both benign and malignant implication. The educational scenario today is experiencing and evolutionary imperative of global society with all its positive and negative influence. The changing scenario brings forth many challenges and also opportunities for Indian education. The opportunity is in term of increase in the accessibility of information and knowledge due to innovations in technology and benefits of international co-operation. In globalized world, education being the most potent instrument of creation, assimilation and transmission of knowledge. Education aims at making us civilized human beings conscious of our moral and social responsibilities which leads to all around developments of the students. Education dispels darkness from human life. It enlightens man and society. It is the integral part of whole life cycle. Without education man's life is meaningless and futile. (National Policy for the Empowerment of Women 2001).

Education for All (EFA)

All over the world, education is recognized as a key indicator of socio-economic, political, cultural, and technological development. The need to eradicate illiteracy in the world has however been attracting the attention of those in governments. Many conferences, seminars and workshops had been convened at international level where the issue was a theme such as:

- World conference on Education for All held in Joemtien, Thailand in 1990 and advocates the right of all people to education and knowledge. That year, in Thailand, delegates from

155 countries, inter- governmental organizations and NGOs agreed to universalize primary education and reduce illiteracy massively before the end of the decade.

- World summit for Children in New York in 1990.
- Education for All Summit of nine countries with the highest illiteracy rate in the world held in New Delhi in 1993 which requires the countries to drastically reduce the illiteracy within the shortest possible time frame.
- Pan Africa conference on Education for Girls, held in Ouagadougou in 1993.
- World education Summit, held in Dakar, Senegal in 2000 where the need to achieve Education for All by 2015 was emphasized.

At the World Education Forum in 2000, the international community defined the global Education For All (EFA) agenda as relating to six areas: early childhood care and education, primary education, youth and adult learning needs, literacy, gender equality and quality in education. Three goals were set for 2015 having the number of illiterates, universal primary education and gender equality, the latter two being reiterated in the Millennium Development Goals.

As the lead agency, UNESCO has mandated to coordinate the international efforts to reach Education for All. Governments, development agencies, civil society, non-government organizations and the media are working toward reaching these goals. In India the SarvaShikshaAbhiyan (SSA) is India's flagship elementary education programme. With over 194 million children in some 1.1millionhabitations to be brought into the fold of education, the SSA is one of the largest programmes of its kind in the world. The Government of India is putting major financial and technical resources into theprogramme for achieving the goals of EFA.

Major steps taken by the Constitution of India

- In the beginning education including technical education, medical education and general higher education was in the State List in the Constitution subject to the provisions of entries 63,64,65,66 of the Union List and vocational and technical training.
- Education was brought on the Concurrent List as per the 42ndConstitution Amendment Act 1976, Entry 25 making it a joint area of responsibility for the centre and the states.
- Article 45 of the Directives Principles of the Constitution of India enjoined on the state to endeavor to provide free and compulsory education to all children up to the age of 14, a promise we have failed to keep. Education is now a fundamental right for children in the age group 6-14 years.

- The 86th Constitutional Amendment Act 2002 has added a new Article 21 (A) to direct the state to provide free and compulsory education to all children of the age of 6-14 years in such a manner as the state by law determines. The said act also substitutes Article 45 with a directive to the State to provide early childhood care and education for all children till they attain the age of 6 years. It has also been made a part of the fundamental duties enjoining the responsibility of the parents to send their children to school.
- By virtue of the introduction of a new Fundamental Duty Article 51 A (k) in part C4 of the Constitution, the onus of providing elementary education to all children now lies on the state and the parents both.
- The Tenth Five Year Plan (2002-07) had proposed to provide education to all children who were never enrolled or dropped out without completing eight years of elementary schooling as a fundamental right; expand the support services of creche /day care services and thus help reduce the burden of working ailing mothers and relieving the girl child from the burden of sibling care; encouraging both family community participation; protect children from all types of exploitation through strict enforcement of the Immoral Traffic (Prevention) Act, 1956; Child Labour (Prohibition and Regulation) Act, 1986.

Current EFA strategies in India

- Government of India and the state governments are actively engaged in preparing contextual action plans which would be implemented through the programmes of **SarvaShikshaAbhiyan(SSA)** and National Literacy Mission (NLM). The focus is on reaching the unreached through innovative and alternatives models of schooling. Decentralized district wise planning introduced in the 1990s is expected to address local needs and demands more effectively.
- Actively involvement of the people at the grassroots level through democratic devolution of powers. Though there are variations across the states, there is a decisive move towards decentralization of educational governance all over the country. In some states, this is done by transferring powers to the Panchayati Raj institutions (local self-governing bodies) while in others it is done through the creation of empowered Village Education Committees and school management bodies Macro-planning and participatory school mapping exercises, as in LokJumbish, are other means of involving people in the local level planning for EFA. (National Policy of Education,1986 and POA(revised in 1992).
- While recognizing that the problem is closely linked to poverty and deprivation, employment of children in work is viewed as a direct denial of their fundamental right to

education. Though direct action from the State has been slow to come, it has become a major plank of action in several parts of the country due mainly to the significant role played by the NGOs. But greater support and cooperation from parents and employers is critical for achieving success in this area.(Rao 2009).

- Another policy level action with far-reaching impact is the effort to remove legal hurdles in according elementary education a fundamental right. Towards this, the Indian Constitution has been amended, making basic education a justifiable right in line with the international convention on child rights.
- Social mobilization and eradication of adult illiteracy are attempted through mass literacy campaigns, largely as a national programme but planned and implemented at the district level. These are complemented by actions initiated by state governments such as the Jan Sampark Abhiyan (people's contact campaign) of Madhya Pradesh and by civil society organizations such as Prajayatna (people's effort) in Karnataka (Govt. of India (2003): National of Action on Education for All)
- Recent years have seen much greater coverage of elementary education in the media, particularly TV, thereby helping to articulate public perceptions and mobilizing public pressure groups. This has been coupled with an important move in many states toward 'right to information' which has helped to place facts related to elementary education in the public sphere. Many state governments are attempting to use ICT capabilities for this purpose.
- Emergence of grass root level community action groups and their coalitions at the national and state level to articulate the voice of the civil society in favour of EFA is also a significant development (Rao,2009).

Major Schemes for Elementary Education in India

- Operation Black Board
- Education Guarantee Scheme & Alternative and Innovative Education (EGS & AIE)
- Mid-day meal Scheme
- SarvaShikshaAbhiyan (SSA)
- Kasturba Gandhi Balika Vidyalaya (KGBV)
- District Primary Education Programme (DPEP)
- National Programme for Education of Girls at Elementary Level (NPEGEL)
- Janshalaprogramme

Major Schemes for Secondary Education

- Access and Equity
- Quality Improvement in Schools (QIS)
- ICT in schools
- Integrated Education for Disabled Children (IEDC)
- Vocationalization of Education

Major issues and challenges in implementing EFA in India

Educational problems in India have been in existence for some time in India. India has reached remarkable existent and achievement in economic sector and this has brought a lot of change in the education sector. These changes have not turned to be sufficient to solve the ever existent and ever changing education problem in India (Hassan,2009). The problems of education system in India are grave concern and this concern has not been ignored. A country with more than 1 Billion populations has just one third population which can read. India accounts for world's 30% literate (Census Report,2001) . In order to achieve our goals successful following difficulties before us: (Govt. of India, Selected Educational Statistics 2008 2009).

- Inadequate, improper distribution of funds
- Ever increasing population
- Experienced teachers and suitable academic atmosphere
- Demand for exceeds the supply
- Poverty and high fee
- Approach of educators and high authorities
- Non-involvement of citizens
- Selfish and ineffective supervisory bodies
- Political and bureaucratic involvement in education
- Indifferent attitude of rural people
- Privatization of education
- Corruption
- Dearth of good and qualified teachers
- Decline in children's attendance in schools
- Poor quality of primary education

According to findings of the Central Advisory Board of Education, over 12,000 new schools remain to be opened, while over 2,50,000 additional classrooms and a large number of toilets, drinking water facilities, and ramps are still under construction. EFA has still faces many

challenges. Current population of India is the second most populous country in the world, while China is on the top. India represents almost 17.31% of the world's population. Progress towards the EFA goals is not currently fast enough to meet them. It is therefore important that the government brings out a new realistic road map addressing 21 million out of school children instead of estimated 8 million on which the road map was developed earlier.

Some Strategies for Achieving EFA goals

The strategies for improving the quality of education is a recurrent theme of EFA plans, but it is certainly more difficult to state precise quantitative objectives on the subject. For lack of objectives, firm strategic orientations would be welcome in a field where progress is slow. The Education for All movement was conceived at the world conference in 1990 and by World Education Forum in 2000. Some of the major components of quality aspects of elementary education on which information may be collected are as follows:

- The SSA (SarvaShikshaAbhiyan) and the NLM (National Literacy Mission) should geared up their speed for achieving goals of EFA in India.
- Increasing the number and quality of teachers, improving school and education system management, reaching disadvantaged and marginalized groups- all this will require more intensive and innovative ways of delivering learning opportunities. Therefore appointment of more qualified teachers should be done for EFA goals.
- More funds should be invested in basic education to increase the quality of education such as the curricular reform, the pedagogical supports (school manuals, audio visual and computer material) and the pedagogical practices.
- The teachers' competency has a positive effect to prepare an effective plan which would help to improve the overall quality of teaching-learning inputs for achieving EFA goals.
- The use of teaching-learning material play a crucial role in actual curriculum transaction both at the primary and upper primary stage, and consequently on the quality of education. Hence various teaching-learning materials like blackboard, textbooks, workbooks, teaching aids, teachers' guides should be used to facilitate the planning of EFA.
- More effective classroom process provides better opportunity to the child for exploration, experimentation and communication outcomes. Hence classroom transactions, classroom environment and various teaching-learning strategies should be improved to attract to the children.

- The EFA goals can be achieved through the efforts of public authorities. It is well recognized that the NGO sector has tremendous potential to contribute towards the goal of EFA. It is envisaged that involvement of NGO will enlarge the network of agencies and individuals for implementation of basic education programmes.
- Several strategies such as school mapping and micro planning should be adopted to ensure participation by all members of the community in basic education in bringing all children to school and to articulate their demand for improved school services. Any plan for increasing learning achievement should focus on improving the quality of education which requires the knowledge about the factors affecting the child's learning.
- The resources should also tempt the wider use of non-traditional methods particularly the alternative delivery modes in formal basic education and informal systems for getting target of EFA.
- Adequate incentives should be given to the children of SC, ST and other backward sections in the form of scholarships, uniforms, textbook, stationery and midday meals, SSA focuses on bringing the hardest-to-reach children into school- especially girls. SC, ST, minorities, the urban poor and children of migrant workers. The SSA should increase its focus on teacher accountability and envisage an expanded role for communities to monitor quality and minimum learning levels.
- An important constraining factor for female education is the lack of women teachers in rural areas. Therefore, special efforts should be made to recruit women teachers and to augment teacher training facilities for women so that adequate numbers of qualified women teachers can available.

It is felt that India must revise its target date for achieving the goal of EFA at least once again and suggests that the Government should carefully monitor the implementation of policies and at the same time, enhance expenditure on education as early as possible.

Conclusion

Education is an important agency of social control and social transformation. India has keenly pursued the six EFA goals. The SSA is the government programme for the achievement of EFA in a time bound manner. The 86th amendment to the constitution of India declared making education to the children between the age group of 6-14 years a fundamental right. EFA and the Fundamental Right to education for all children as declared by the 86th Constitutional amendment in 2002 may be fulfilled in the long-term through the improved implementation of inclusive education.

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