

ELEMENTARY EDUCATION IN INDIA: HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVE

Digambar Durgade, Ph. D., Associate Professor, Tilak College of Education, Pune

Dipak Chavan, Ph. D., Associate Professor, Tilak College of Education, Pune

Abstract

Education does bring nothing new into being, but it is the means by when the sleeping essence is awakened. Elementary Education is the basic platform for this. At this level child is developed by the all aspects. This is the preparation for the life. In the globalized and technological world we have to face so many problems to survive. To prepare a competent citizen primary education plays vital role. Due to global education reform and the social pressure, on 1st April 2010 India joined a group of few countries in the world with a historic law making education as a fundamental right of every child i.e. Right to Education!

UNESCO also believes that education is an essential human right and achieving this for all children is one of the biggest moral challenges. The Right to Education expresses equal opportunities for Education for all.

Taking this into consideration, the objectives of this study were to trace out the route of Elementary Education as fundamental right, to analyze the provisions about Elementary education and to study the role of concerns for Elementary Education as Education for all.

During the World Education forum held in Dakar, Senegal in 2000, the Right to Education was strongly re-affirmed through the Education for All.

With the help of analytical method various documents, Government Resolutions and references were analyzed and the qualitative were organized and analyzed. As per objectives of this study, the conclusions were -

1) As per the guiding principle of Indian constitution Article 45, it was the responsibility of state government for free and compulsory Elementary education, but from 1st April 2010 it is fundamental Right of child to free and compulsory elementary education and Education for all.

2) To provide quality Elementary Education or fundamental Right and Education for All, the constitutional provisions are as follows -

a) Special provisions for children not admitted or who have not completed, elementary education.

b) Duties of appropriate government, local authorities and parents have been defined.

c) Responsibilities of schools and Teachers have been decided.

d) Reform in curriculum and evaluation.

e) For effective implementation of Elementary Education as Education for all, the integral efforts should be taken at different level of Management, Administrators, Teacher Educators, Teacher Trainee, School Teacher and Society.

The integrated efforts will develop new learning community which will be competent in the global era.

Keywords: *Elementary Education in India, Historical perspective, Right to Education.*

Introduction: Elementary schools exist worldwide as the basic foundational institution in the formal educational structure. Elementary schooling, which prepares children in fundamental
Copyright © 2017, Scholarly Research Journal for Interdisciplinary Studies

skills and knowledge areas, can be defined as the early stages of formal, or organized, education that are prior to secondary school. An important part of elementary schooling is socialization with peers and the creating of an identification of the child with the community and nation.

UNESCO believes that education is an essential human right and achieving this for all children is one of the biggest moral challenges of our times. The Right to education is an integral part of the Organization's constitutional mandate which expresses 'the belief of its founders in full and equal opportunities for education for all' and 'to advance the ideal of equality of educational opportunity'. In addition, the right to education is enshrined in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights and the Convention on the Rights of the Child.

In comparing elementary schools in the United States with those of other countries, some distinctions in terminology are necessary. In the United States, *elementary* education refers to children's first formal schooling prior to secondary school. In school systems in many other countries, the term *primary* covers what in the United States is designated as elementary schooling. In American elementary schools, the term *primary* refers to the first level, namely kindergarten through grades one, two, and three.

Goals of Elementary Schools

Elementary schools in the United States, as in other countries, have the goals of providing children with fundamental academic skills, basic knowledge, and socialization strategies. They are key institutions in instilling a sense of national identity and citizenship in children.

In the United States, elementary schools prepare children to use language by teaching reading, writing, comprehension, and computation. Elementary schools worldwide devote considerable time and resources to teaching reading, decoding, and comprehending the written and spoken word. Globally, around 89% of primary-age children are enrolled in primary education, and this proportion is rising. Under the Education For All programs driven by UNESCO, most countries have committed to achieving universal enrollment in primary education by 2015, and in many countries, it is compulsory for children to receive primary education. The division between primary and secondary education is somewhat arbitrary, but it generally occurs at about eleven or twelve years of age. Some education systems have separate middle schools, with the transition to the final stage of secondary education taking place at around the age of fourteen.

Regarding the universalization of the primary education Gopalkrishna Gokhale told that, "In individual instances primary education may not show very decided results but taken in the mass it means for the bulk of the community a higher level of intelligence, a greater aptitude for skilled labour and a higher capacity for discriminating between right and wrong. It raises in fact, the whole line of the life or the large numbers."

Being a Teacher Educator, to study the historical development of elementary education as a fundamental right & education for all is necessary. By this study we wanted to know the constitutional provisions about the elementary education as fundamental right and education for all.

Significance of the Present Study

- i) This study focuses historical development towards Elementary Education as a fundamental Right. By this pre-independence & Post-Independence movements also focused.
- ii) This study considered various schemes adopted by the Government of India for the Universalization of Elementary Education which has been considered in Article 45 of our constitutions.
- iii) The responsibilities of the concerns i.e. Government, local body, Teachers, Teacher Educators, School managing committee & parents and the society has been defined in this study. It will be helpful to sensitize the concerns for the implementation the act as Education for all.
- iv) This study also gives the information regarding the constitutional provisions made for the fundamental Right.

Objectives

- i) To study the historical development of Elementary Education as fundamental right in India
- ii) To analyze the constitutional provisions about the Elementary Education in India.

Elementary Education is the fundamental right. Though it is a fundamental right, more than core children are deprived of by elementary education. The policy Education for All (EFA) supports for the universalization of elementary education. The Right to education expresses equal opportunities for Education for All. The constitutional provisions are not sufficient for Universalisation of Elementary Education. On the basis of these facts the study has been undertaken

a) Fundamental rights: Rights mean those freedoms which are essential for personal good as well as the good of the community. The rights guaranteed under the Constitution of India are fundamental as they have been incorporated into the "fundamental Law of the land" and

are enforceable in a court of law. However, this does not mean that they are absolute or that they are immune from Constitutional amendment. They also protect cultural and educational rights of ethnic and religious minorities by allowing them to preserve their languages and also establish and administer their own education institutions.

b) The six fundamental rights recognized by the constitution are: Right to equality, Right to freedom of speech and expression, Right against exploitation, Right to freedom of conscience and free profession, practice, and propagation of religion, Right of any section of citizens to conserve their culture, language or script, and Right to constitutional remedies for enforcement of Fundamental Rights

c) Historical development towards Fundamental Right in India: Fundamental Right to Elementary Education in India has a great history for the establishment. Its journey starts during British rule & stops in the year 2010 in the form of Right to Education Act.

The demand for free and compulsory education in the pre-independence era:

- 1870 - The U.K. Govt. agreed the law of free and compulsory education for all the citizens.
- 1880 - On the basis of U.K. Govt. there was a demand for free and compulsory education in India.
- 1882 - Hunter commission was established for the establishment of educational system in India. Mahatma Phule had suggested very important recommendation that, There should be the compulsory primary education for the boys and girls up to minimum 12 years.
- 1883 - In Baroda, the king had started free and compulsory education for Amrali Tahesil.
- 1906 - The above scheme was adopted for whole Baroda Sanstan.
- 1913 - Gopal Krishna Gokhale had suggested for free and compulsory education.
- 1918 - Vallabhbhai Patel had successor to pass the bill for free & compulsory primary education in Mumbai.
- 1918- - British Govt. Pass this bill for all states of India.
- 1930
- 1944 - It was decided to achieve the goal of free and compulsory education within 40 years (1984).

- 1947 - Free and Compulsory primary education as a fundamental right was refused by the constitutions advisory body and the decision was taken to consider this as a directive principle
- 1950 - Directive Principle: Article 45 was come into existence for FCE, in which state will endeavor to provide free and compulsory primary education to all the children up to the age of fourteen within ten years of the adoption of the constitution.

At International level :

- 1990 - The EFA movement is a global commitment to provide quality basic education for all children youth and adults. The movement was launched at the world conference on Education for all in 1990. In Jomtin conference Education as a fundamental Right was accepted.
- 1993 - Child Right conference was organized by United Nations. According to that conference, education is the International Right of every child in the world.

d) The demand for a fundamental right to education: On the basis of National & International background of movements of Elementary Education in 1993 the Hon. Supreme court gave the decision: The citizens of this country have a fundamental right to education. The said right flows from Article 21. This right, however, is not absolute right. Its contents and parameters have to be determined in the light of Article 45 & 47.

“Every child/citizen of this country has a right to free education until he completes the age of fourteen years. There-after his right to education is subject to the limits of economics capacity and development of the state.”

By this decision of Supreme Court, the developments towards fundamental Right were happened.

e) Fundamental Right of Elementary Education 2001: The 83rd Bill was amended and reintroduced as Constitution (93rd Amendment) Bill 2001 in the parliament with the following provisions:

- After Article 21, 21(A) is added : The state shall provide free and compulsory education to all children of the age 6-14 years in such a manner as the state may by law determine.
- Article 45 - The state shall Endeavour to provide early child care and education for all children until they complete the age of six years.

- Article 51 (A) - (K) who is a parent or guardian to provide opportunities for education to his child or as the case may be, ward between the age of 6 to 14 years.

By the Fundamental right of elementary education 2001, It is mandatory to us to provide quality elementary education the strength of the children is increased. With the provision made in this bill child can appeal in the court for its justice.

f) Right to free and compulsory Education: Right to Education Act:

With reference to Fundamental right of Elementary Education & in Article 21, The Right to protection of life and personal liberty is referred. To fulfill the expectations mentioned, Government of India has been taken the efforts to access, participation and Quality. Though the Govt. of India has been taken efforts, we are far away in the universalization & education for all! To make the provisions by law, Government of India thought about RTE. In 2005 the first draft about RTE was designed. By the various phases and parliamentary procedures on 27th Aug 2009. RTE was published in Gazette. It was noticed as a law on 3rd Sep. 2009 as the children's Right to free and compulsory Education Act. The law came into effect in the whole of India except J & K from 1st April 2010.

The First time in the history of India a law was brought into force by a speech of Prime Minister, he stated that, "We are committed to ensuring that all children irrespective of gender and social category, have access to education, An education that enables them to acquire the skills, knowledge, values and attitudes necessary to become responsible and active citizens of India."

Sam Carlson, the World Bank education specialist for India has observed that: The RTE Act is the first legislation in the world that puts the responsibility of ensuring enrollment, attendance and completion on the Government. It is the parent's responsibility to send the children to school in U.S. and other countries.

g) Special features & Provision in Fundamental Right: RTE ACT 2009

- i) Right to free and compulsory education
 - Special provisions for children not admitted to, or who have not completed elementary education.
- ii) Duties of appropriate Government, local authority and parent.
 - to establish school
 - to share financial responsibilities
 - to provide free and compulsory elementary education to every child
 - to admit or cause to be admitted his or her child to an elementary education.

iii) Responsibilities of school & Teachers

- No donation or capitation fees & no interview of the child or parent for admission.
- No child shall be held back, expelled
- Quality education
- Active participation to school development plan

iv) Protection of Right of child

- Monitoring of child's right to education
- Constitution of state & national advisory council

v) Curriculum & Completion of Elementary Education.

- Curriculum & evaluation procedure
- Continuous comprehensive evaluation

h) Aspects of Fundamental Right

- The Constitutional enactment for the right to education would demonstrate the necessary political will and administrative resolve of the country to achieve UEE and eradication of illiteracy.
- The legislation would spur the governmental and non- governmental sectors to take necessary measures to provide universal access to elementary education and to ensure universal retention and achievement.
- The provision for making elementary education a fundamental right would create the required pressure on the central and state governments to focus on the special needs of the undeserved and unserved population and regions.
- The government's commitment to provide 6 % of GDP for education and to earmark 50 % for primary education should provide the requisite financial back up and support to the constitutional enactment.
- Revitalization of Panchayat Raj Institutions (PRIs), in the wake of the 73rd constitutional amendment, provides an opportunity to bring about effective devolution and decentralization of authority for planning and management of elementary education to give effect to the constitutional enactment.
- The proposal is expected to have a positive impact on eradication of child labour.
- The spread of elementary education would have a good impact on other social indicators like population growth, health and women's development, as well as enhancement of productivity of the economy and reduction in unemployment.

The government would continue to strengthen the consensual approach and social mobilization for UEE. The constitutional enactment is expected to provide further momentum to the nation's efforts to achieve UEE at a faster pace.

i) Elementary Education as Education for All : Global Movement

The Education for All (EFA) movement is a global commitment to provide quality basic education for all children, youth and adults. At the World Education Forum (Dakar, 2000), 164 governments pledged to achieve EFA and identified six goals to be met by 2015. Governments, development agencies, civil society and the private sector are working together to reach the EFA goals.

The Dakar Framework for Action mandated UNESCO to coordinate these partners, in cooperation with the four other conveners of the Dakar Forum (UNDP, UNFPA, UNICEF and the World Bank). As the leading agency, UNESCO focuses its activities on five key areas: policy dialogue, monitoring, advocacy, mobilization of funding, and capacity development.

In order to sustain the political commitment to EFA and accelerate progress towards the 2015 targets, UNESCO has established several coordination mechanisms managed by UNESCO's EFA International Coordination Team.

As the lead agency, UNESCO is mobilizing and harmonizing the international efforts to reach Education coordination for All. Governments, development agencies, civil society, non-government organizations and the media are but some of the partners working toward reaching these goals.

j) Development towards "Education for all" in India

Free and compulsory education for all children up to the age of fourteen years is the Constitutional commitment in India (Article 45). At the time of the adoption of the Constitution in 1950, the aim was to achieve the goal of Universalisation of Elementary Education (UEE) within the next ten years i.e. by 1960. Keeping in view the educational facilities available in the country at that time, the goal was far too ambitious to achieve within a short span of ten years. To facilitate the achievement of UEE goal, the National Council of Educational Research & Training (NCERT), the National Institute of Educational Planning & Administration (NIEPA) and many other institutes were set up in 1960's as resource, research and training centers. In order to give access to elementary education for all children up to 14 years of age and for universal participation till they complete the elementary stage of educational programs, the National Policy on Education (NPE) in 1968, the NPE in 1986, the

Program of Action (POA) elaborated in the NPE of 1986 and the updated form of the NPE in 1992 gave an unqualified priority to the Universalization of Elementary Education (UEE) program.. The POA, 1992 emphasized three aspects: universal access and enrollment; universal retention of children up to age 14 years; and a substantial improvement in the quality of education to enable all children to achieve essential levels of learning at the primary education levels.

The Scheme of SSA, a national flagship programme of India is being implemented in all districts of the country. The aim of SSA is to provide useful and relevant elementary education for all children in the 6-14 age groups by 2010. The scheme of SSA was launched in 2001.

Conclusions

- 1) The journey of Fundamental Right to Elementary Education in India starts during British rule (1880). In post independence era, due to social demand, Court order, the recommendations made by different committees & global pressure the Right To Education Act for free and compulsory education came into effect from 1st April 2010
- 2) As per the directive principle of Indian constitution Article 45, it was the responsibility of state government for free and compulsory Elementary education, but from 1st April 2010 it is fundamental Right of child to free and compulsory elementary education and Education for all.
- 3) To provide quality Elementary Education or fundamental Right and Education for All, the constitutional provisions are as follows -
 - Special provisions for children not admitted or who have not completed, elementary education.
 - Duties of appropriate government, local authorities and parents have been defined.
 - Responsibilities of schools and Teachers have been decided.
 - Reformation in curriculum and evaluation.
- 4) For effective implementation of Elementary Education as Education for all, the integral efforts should be taken at different level of Management, Administrators, Teacher Educators, Teacher Trainee, School Teacher and Society. The integrated efforts will develop new learning community which will be competent in the global era.

References:

- Ganga, R. & Suputhai M., (2007). *Children's Rights As Basic Human Rights*. New Delhi: Reference Press.
- Report: *Education for All: The Indian scene* (IInd edition), MHRD, Govt. of India, Oct, 1993.
- Report: *EFA Global Monitoring Report, 2007*, Regional overview: South 45 and West Asia, UNESCO.
- Report: *Gender and Education for All -THE LEAP TO EQUALITY*, in Regional Overview – EFA Global Monitoring Report- 2003-04, UNESCO.
- Report: Goals and objectives of Education for All in India, MHRD, Annual Report: 1997-98.
- Mehta, Arun C. *Elementary education in India- where do we stand?- state report card, 2005-06*, National University of Educational Planning and Administration, India.
- Mehta, Arun C. “Education For All in India with Focus on Elementary Education: Current Status, Recent Initiatives And Future Prospects”
- Padmalatha Ravi, “Mid- Day meals: school meals make slow progress”,
- R. Govinda, *Reaching the unreached through participatory planning: School Mapping in Lok Jumbish, India* IIEP, Paris, 1998.
- R. Govinda, “Lok Jumbish; An innovation in grassroots level management of primary education”, in *Change in Action* UNESCO, Paris, 1995.
- Sarada, D. & Rajani, N., (2009). *Child Rights And Young lives*. New Delhi: Discovery Publishing House Pvt. Ltd