

# SCHOOL EDUCATION SYSTEM DEVELOPMENT IN INDIA: PROGRAMMES, POLICIES AND PLANS

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## Abstract:

The present research is centered upon the aspects of development of education system in India. The system of education in India has gone a long way, with development from the pre-historic period the education system has been developing through various ages till the present era. The education system and school functioning goes, hand in hand for the betterment of the child. The rulers and governments of times have provided their contributions to let the system develop in full bloom. The schools have developed from traditional 'Gurukuls' to present era modern schools such as smart schools and English medium schools with international credentials. The development of the child along with providing a congenial environment for 'drawing out, what is hidden inside' is given preference. Education has become child centered with 'teacher' and 'child environment' being perceived as an assistance for child development.

## 1.0 Introduction

Education in developing country is meant for the benefit of all. Education is needed to make democracy work effectively. It is not just any kind of education, but it is an education which may discipline the mind and heart along with providing opportunities to develop in life. The ultimate aim of education is to progress the humanity. It is meant for the development of the body, mind and soul. The unity with the Ultimate – The Almighty, is the only thing sought after in this world such aim can only be realized with attainment of education leading to revelation of the world truths.

After Indian independence, several efforts were made to uplift the level of education with special emphasis being given upon the development of the school education. The school education is considered as a base of the entire education system across the world. So much emphasis has been given upon it from the beginning, along with the higher education. Several commissions and committees were framed from time to time and their recommendations were followed in relation to the social and philosophical requirement of the Indian society.

## 2.0 Initial Stages of Education Development

Education has been developing with the passage of time. In the pre-historic times man learnt from nature and his environment. The environment of man included the environment of his home and surrounding. With the dawn of Middle Ages education was provided in Ashrams by the Gurus. It was the first and foremost effort by the humanity to provide education. It helped to streamline human efforts to educate humanity. After Middle Ages the concept of education developed more. The establishment of Nalanda and Takshashila as the centre of learning is the highest proof of advancement of Indian Education System. People visited Indian continent from all over the world to gain education. India was considered as the cradle of the ancient system of education. The development of Indian education system was at the peak at that time (Sharma and Sharma 1996).

The Indian system of education walked a long distance to reach the present times. The education system of India passed from the religious and spiritual period of medieval age to Mughal and British period of development of education. The modern Indian education system is a progeny of the British Education System in India. Various education commissions before and after independence helped to develop a proper system of education. Introduction of English by Lord Macaulay in 1835, Woods Despatch in 1854, Hunter Commission 1882, Educational reforms under Lord Curzon including Indian Universities Act 1904, Sargent Commission Report 1944 (Gktoday, 2016), all helped to develop the school and higher education system before independence. The introduction of various articles and policies after independence such as Article 45, Kothari Commission 1964, Policy of Education 1968, National Policy of Education 1986 (Walia, 2004), Programme of Action 1992, Introduction of Mid-Day Meal 1995, Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan 2001, National Curriculum Framework 2005 and Right to Education Act 2009, all helped to move the school and higher education with a boost. India tried to improve the system of education with various policies and efforts made to uplift the national literacy.

### 3.0 School Education System Development in India

The Indian Education Commission (1964-66) also known as Kothari Commission was set up on 14 July 1964 by the Indian Government. The Kothari Commission gave several recommendations on education which were later adopted in India's first National Policy on Education 1968. The Indian Education Commission gave recommendation for free and compulsory education for all with the directive principle of Article 45 of Indian Constitution. Reducing the child wastage and stagnation in the schools was suggested. The Commission gave the idea of three language formula in schools with mother tongue of the child as a medium of instruction. The commission suggested for providing equal educational opportunities to all with a Common School System throughout the nation, keeping in view the needs of backward classes, girl child, physically and mentally handicapped children. It also suggested promotion of school education for science, agriculture, industry and research and to improve the quality of school books and examination system (Walia, 2004).

The first National Policy on Education (1968) was framed upon the recommendations of the Indian Education Commission (1964-66). This policy on Education laid stress upon school education, technical and agricultural education. It asked for providing equal educational opportunities to all the sections of the society. The policy stressed upon the idea of universal school education for all. The policy advocated the idea of providing compulsory education to all upto the age of 14 years. Three language formula and other recommendations of the Indian Education Commission were advocated by the policy (Notification Government of India, 1968).

The second National Policy on Education (1986) was given as second National Policy of Education (NPE 1986) by the Government of India in 1986. The NPE 1986 introduced the 10+2+3 system of education. The NPE 1986 stressed upon all round development of the child in the school environment. The minimum level of learning was adopted as upto the age of 14 years for the child. It stressed upon early childhood care and education. The elementary education was stressed to be child center, NPE 1986 stressed upon the education for equality for all. Special stress was laid upon the education of backward classes, SC/ST, girl child and special need child. The NPE 1986 stressed upon the need for the Formal and Non-Formal education. Child education was advocated in formal schools and non-formal schools. NPE 1986 advocated the idea of making the system work for school education, higher education and technical education. It stressed upon the recruitment of skilled and professional teachers in schools. Establishment of DIET, NCTE took place under NPE 1986 to promote education. It advocated upon the mobilization of resources for the development of school education system.

The Revised National Policy on Education also called the Programme of Action POA (1992) advocated the idea of making the system work. The Programme of Action POA (1992) helped to achieve the targets of NPE 1986 in real sense (MHRD, 1986). It stressed upon education of women, minorities, schedule caste, schedule tribes, other backward classes, handicaps and others. The focus was laid upon school education including the elementary education and secondary school education. Opening of Navodaya Vidyalayas for providing better school education was proposed. The idea of vocational education, open school education and higher education was set as an objective in Programme of Action POA (1992). Manpower planning, development of youth with science and technology was proposed. It stressed upon quality teachers with better teacher training and examination reforms. It made the system work with an overall educational reform of the whole system (MHRD, 1992).

The first national policy on education NPE (National Policy on Education) was formulated by the Government of India, in 1968, based on the recommendation of the Indian Education Commission (1964-66) also known as Kothari Commission. The NPE (National Policy on Education) was adopted by the parliament in May, 1986 (Walia, 2004). The NPE of 1986-1992 was followed up by a 'Programme of Action' accounted by the Human Resource Development Ministry, since the adoption of the 1986-92 NPE the Central Government has launched several schemes or programs, for example- Operation Blackboard (1987), Non Formal Education Scheme (1986), Mahila Samakhya (1988), (Mahila Samakhya Programme, 1988), District Primary Education Programme (DPEP 1994), Mid-Day Meal Scheme (1995) and then Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan (2001), was launched for the progress towards universal school education.

Ministry of Human Resource Development (2008) in a study on "Educationally Backward Blocks" found that Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan had improved the student attendance in the classroom. Student was found more willing to attend school classes under Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan. The nutritional status of the children had improved with the Mid Day Meal Scheme under Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan. It was further revealed that the number of students attending elementary stage school education increased with implementation of Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan. The country has witnessed a rise in the enrolment of elementary stage school education and there is a decline in dropout rates after implementation of Mid-Day Meal under Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan (Ministry of Human Resource Development, 2008).

### 3.1 Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan (2001-02)

After independence much effort were done to uplift the levels of education in India. Several schemes and programmes were launched for the universalisation of elementary education. Efforts were made in the field of primary education and upper primary education in the past decades. However several things need to be done for the quality improvement in the field of education. The focus needs to be put upon special groups at lower primary and upper primary level education. It was the reason to start a holistic programme named Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan. It got its idea from District Primary Education Programme (DPEP) 1994, (SSA, 2014). Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan was launched in the year 2001 for the universalisation of elementary education, under the leadership of the then Prime Minister of India Shri Atal Bihari Vajpai.

“Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan is Government of India’s flagship programme for the achievement of universalization of elementary education in a time bound manner (SSA, 2014)” as mandated by the 86th constitutional amendment of India making free and compulsory education of age group 6-14 years.

In order to rectify the defects in the primary and upper primary school education, which were made in the previous programmes or schemes, Government of India started holistic programme named Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan (SSA). Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan was launched with a view to achieve the universal access and retention of the child and to provide free and compulsory education to children of age group 6-14 years. Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan got its idea from District Primary Education Programme (DPEP) 1994, (SSA, 2014). Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan was launched in the year 2001 for the universalisation of elementary education throughout nation. It was further strengthened with implementation of Right to Education Act 2009. Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan provided the teaching learning material, infrastructural facilities, Mid Day Meal, opening and maintenance of schools, appointing quality teachers, in-service teacher training and boosting the education sector a lot.

Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan moved with the slogan – ‘Sab Paden, Sab Badhe’, which means education for all, (Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan, April, 2004). "Sab Paden, Sab Badhe", (Padhe Bharat Badhe Bharat, 2014) is the motto of the Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan which means to learn and to develop in life. Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan has given the slogan "School Chale Hum" to encourage all children for schooling. It acted as a major instrument to achieve the universalization of the education. It helped to achieve the goal of ‘Education For All’. "Padhe Bharat Badhe Bharat", was introduced as a sub-programme of Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan in the year 2014 (Padhe Bharat Badhe Bharat, 2014). It helped to uplift that child who fails to read in early stages of education. When the child is unable to read, he may lag behind in other school subjects. 'Padhe Bharat Badhe Bharat' helped to improve early reading, writing and early mathematics. It caters to the need of class I and II children. It introduced an appraisal system, timely distribution of books and other learning material in schools (Padhe Bharat Badhe Bharat, 2014).

### 3.2 Education Guarantee Scheme (EGS) 2001-02 and Alternative and Innovative Education (AIE) 2001-02

Education Guarantee Scheme (EGS) and Alternative and Innovative Education (AIE) were introduced under Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan in the year 2001-02. Under Education Guarantee Scheme (EGS) more funds were given in the year 2004-05 to open education centre in backward areas. Funds were provided for opening education centre under rural areas with potential for excellence (Mohanty & Mohanty 2011). Children with age group 6-14 years were given learning material – books, uniform, Mid-Day Meal. The EGS centres were opened as informal schools in the inaccessible habitats where formal primary schools were not opened under SSA, within the radius of one kilometer of the home of the child and at least 15 children were available within the age group 6-14 year. The fund sharing pattern was 75:25 between centre and state for all Education Guarantee Scheme (EGS) and Alternative and Innovative Education (AIE) centers, (MHRD, 1990). These EGS and AIE centres were later upgraded to the SSA schools. Education Guarantee Scheme (EGS) and Alternative and Innovative Education (AIE) volunteer teachers were motivated to open school as a centre even at their home or common village land. Teachers were provided in-service educational training under state and district educational institutes such as District Institute of Educational Training (DIETs). These trained teachers were later induced as regular teachers under the state government to run the educational center already started successfully by them. All this helped to educate the children of the backward areas throughout the nation, (MHRD, 1990).

### 3.3 National Curriculum Framework (2005)

The National Curriculum Framework recommended the universalization of elementary education for child upto the age of 14 years. The National Curriculum Framework laid emphasis upon the universal access and universal retention of the child in schools. It emphasized upon identification of basic learning needs, providing minimum essential school facilities, providing competent and qualified teachers. The National Curriculum Framework stressed upon the idea of alternative and open schooling for the promotion of the non-formal education. No upper age limit is laid for the learner in the open school system. The instructional material is stressed to be different for the formal and non-formal system of

schooling. The National Curriculum Framework asked for reducing the curriculum load upon the child in school. Child is considered as the constructor of the knowledge and child centre education is stressed. The National Curriculum Framework divided elementary education of eight years into two parts – primary stage (five years) and upper primary stage (three years). The primary stage is divided into two segments – class I, II and class III, IV, V. The first segment of class I, II includes the curriculum as one language (mother tongue/regional language), mathematics, art of healthy and productive living. The second segment of class III, IV, V includes the curriculum as one language (mother tongue/regional language), mathematics, environmental studies and art of healthy and productive living. The upper primary stage of the school education fosters the curriculum for classes VI, VII, VIII with addition of mathematics, three languages, social studies, science and technology, work education, art education, health and physical education. The National Curriculum Framework stressed upon the national open schools and state level open school system for the development of the non-formal education system (National Curriculum Framework, 2005).

### 3.4 Inclusive Education (2009-10)

The inclusive education includes educating children with special needs in normal classroom, with normal children. It was launched in the year 2009-10 to provide education to differently abled children in the IX-XII class (Disabilities Act, December 28, 2016). It helped children with special needs to join the mainstream of education and to learn socialization from the normal schools. The scheme was later merged under Rashtriya Madhyamik Shiksha Abhiyan from the year 2013, (Inclusive Education, 2017). It covered all the Government, Government aided schools and local body schools. It covered all the children with disability such as visual impaired, low vision, leprosy, hearing impaired, locomotory disability, mental retardation, mental illness, autism, cerebral palsy, speech impairment, learning disability and special attention was given to girl child with disability, (Inclusive Education of Disabled, March 1, 2017).

### 3.5 Right To Education Act (2009)

1. The Right to Education Act 2009 (RTE Act, 2009) advocates for free and compulsory education for all upto the age group 6-14 years. It makes education as a birth right of every child. It asks for mandatory education to all children. The Act clarifies the meaning of compulsory education as the obligation of the Government to ensure elementary education of every child in the age group 6-14 years. The meaning of free education is clarified as the obligation of the Government to ensure the child shall not be made to pay any kind of charge or fees or fund to finance his/her education, as it hampers the child education. Any expenditure in the school not to be charged from the child. The receiving capitation fees and using screening procedure for admission in school is punishable under law. The admission, attendance and retention of every child should be ensured.
2. The RTE Act speaks about free and compulsory education upto the age group of 6-14 years. The child should complete the elementary education in a nearby school called as neighbourhood school. The neighbourhood school is defined as within a radius of 1 kilometer for lower primary classes (I-V classes) and within a radius of 3 kilometer for upper primary classes (VI-VIII). The child is entitled to continue his education in the school till the completion of the elementary education. Child with disability, special needs child, girl child and backward classes child such as SC/ST child shall have the right to pursue free and compulsory elementary education.
3. This Act also urges about the admission of a never admitted child in an age appropriate class in the school. It states that if a child is a dropout and is not able to complete the elementary education, then the child is admitted in an age appropriate class. It further provides the provision for a child to complete his free elementary education even after fourteen years. It will bring all children to the school. It will benefit all the sections of the society especially the deprived one such as SC/ST, girl child, special need children and weaker sections of the society.
4. The responsibility of the Government, parents, teacher and local authority is defined in the Right to Education Act 2009. The Government will ensure opening of new schools, maintenance and up gradation of the schools, providing facilities like learning material, appointing teachers etc. The role of the parents lies in sending their ward to the school with compulsory obligation and not to bar the child from school. The centre and state shares the financial responsibility of the education of the child. Various norms regarding school functioning are marked under it.
5. It prohibits the physical punishment and mental harassment to the child in the school. It strictly bans the corporal punishment to the child in the school and recommends action under law for breach. The screening procedure for child admission is prohibited. The school should not run without due recognition. The pupil teacher ratio for I-V class as 1:30 and VI-VIII class as 1:35 is defined. It asks for the appointment of trained teachers with required qualification and proper entry procedure to be followed. The teacher appointment and in service training should be given due importance. Private tuition by teacher is prohibited. A balance between rural and urban posting should be made. Non-educational works should not be given to teachers other than census, election duty and disaster relief.
6. To carry out the all-round development of the child, the curriculum should be developed in relation to it. The learning environment should be child centered. It advocates the creation of the child friendly environment in the school. The

child should be free from any fear, trauma and anxiety in the school. The child should be given a healthy learning environment in the school.

7. The RTE Act (RTE Act, 2009) ensures the admission of children of migrant children family. It asks for monitoring the functioning of the school within its jurisdiction. It decides the academic calendar. It states that the child should not be denied admission on the basis of lack of age proof. The child shall not be held back in any class nor expelled from the school, till the child completes the elementary education (RTE Act, 2009).

The Right to Education Act (RTE Act, 2009) in totality provided the necessary elements for the universalization of elementary education. It spreads the education with a legal force throughout the nation. One of the major hurdles in attainment of universalization of elementary education under Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan is the lack of awareness for gaining education in backward areas. Uneducated and poor families are not aware of the importance of elementary education in the life of the child. Lack of interest for gaining education among students is also a challenge. Child leaves study at early stage because of failure to read. To solve these problems a sub programmes named "Padhe Bharat Badhe Bharat" was launched in the year 2014. It helped the child to be able to read in the early classes I and II (Padhe Bharat Badhe Bharat, 2014).

## Conclusion

The education system in India moved with slow pace in the beginning, but led to some of the drastic changes required in the field of school education. The universalisation of the school education has proved to be a boon to out of school children. It attracted the underprivileged child from far flung areas to the school. The child enrollment improved with the implementation of the motivating schemes such as mid day meal. It is hoped that the future of the nation is safe in the hands of such active schemes launched from time to time for the betterment of the mankind. It is a harbinger of bright future of the nation. The children of a nation are the real assets and needs to be canalized from the beginning and the same efforts are being made in the field of school education.

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