



Progress of Primary Education in India

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Abstract:

This paper provides an overview of the progress of primary education in India. Firstly, it places India's educational achievements in international perspective, especially against countries with which it is now increasingly compared such as BRIC economies in general and china in particular. India does well relative to Pakistan and Bangladesh but lags seriously behind china and the other BRIC countries, especially in secondary school participation and youth literacy rates. Secondly, the paper examines schooling access in terms of enrolment and school attendance rates, and schooling quality in terms of literacy rates, learning achievement levels, school resources and teacher inputs.

Keywords: Primary Education, Educational Achievements, School Resources, Teacher Inputs

Introduction:

The main aim of education is the all round development of the student. The important elements of the educational process are the teachers, students and the curriculum. Now days we often stress on “Quality education” in the primary school level. To achieve quality education the teacher should be able to decipher the curriculum correctly and disseminate the content to pupils in the most effective manner. The Education commission has emphasized that education is the one and only instrument that can be used to bring about a change towards the social and economic betterment of India. As cited in Agarwal (1983, pg. 203), J. P. Naik, an eminent educationalist has described the importance of elementary education in the following words, “The progress of primary education is one important index of the social, general and economic development of the country as a whole.” Such progress of education certainly focuses on teaching learning process in the classroom.

At higher primary level, the students are taught three languages along with Science, Maths, History and Geography. The teaching process in the classroom can be broadly classified into teacher centered method and student centered method. NEP has laid great stress on developing a student centered and activity based process of learning (Vas, 1986, p12). As the researcher is teaching in a D.Ed College, she has to go to various schools for lesson observation. It is realized that while teaching, the teacher centered method, i.e. the lecture method, is used more often, thereby making the learning process boring for the students. History as a subject is very interesting due to its rich cultural and historical content, which forms the foundation of our beliefs and ideas. But the manner in which History is taught makes it monotonous and boring for the students, thereby making it an unpopular subject among students. Our present beliefs are based on historical events which make it important that the students assimilate the concepts and values appropriately. So, teaching has to be made vitally more interesting when teachers use student-centered methods. For achieving this, the teacher has to use various techniques and methods of teaching. We all are aware that in a class, students show individual differences in terms of intelligence, likes and dislikes, hobbies, learning styles, etc., so it is very important for the teacher to teach in a way that each student in the class finds the content interesting and appealing.

The subject of History has a lot of importance in the school curriculum. The study of History plays a very important role in the achievement of aims and objectives of the educational policy of the government. Because of this, the learning of History should be impressive to be more effective. So, the researcher decided to conduct research in the area of innovative teaching-learning methods of History.

Importance of using Different Methods of Teaching

A famous proverb says, “Give me a fish and I eat for a day, teach me to fish and I eat for a long time.”

This proverb beautifully explains the concept of learning. It says that if you teach something, the utility will be less and for a shorter duration. But if you make them learn, the utility increases tenfold and lasts for the rest of their lives. It goes to show the importance of proper teaching methods.

Henderson (1963,) defines method as a pattern, that is, a set of common properties that a set of behavior manifests.

According to Bloudy (1963,), method refers to the formal structure of a sequence of acts, commonly denoted by instructions.

Method is a procedure which the teacher follows to make learning easy and effective. Methods include various steps. It is the process of planning, guiding, sharing and evaluating learning with a group of students. (Puppalwar, 2007.)

It is said that every teacher has his or her own method of teaching. But the method should always be in accordance with the requirements of the age of students, their psychological level of understanding and their physical environment. A method is not merely a device adopted for communicating certain items of information to students. In the words of Pestalozzi, "Education is a drawing out process and not a pouring out process, that the basis of all education is the nature of the child and that method of instruction must be sought and constructed to the end."

Curriculum and methods are closely interconnected with each other. Even the best curriculum will remain ineffective unless it is activated by dynamic methods of teaching. A curriculum programme is brought into action only through appropriate method of instruction. With the impact of modern technology along with its hard and software and also with rapid strides of development in educational psychology, sociology and other related disciplines, there is a strong urge to refine and improve our teaching strategies and instructional techniques with a view to realizing the fullest potentialities of the individual learner. In a country like India, where the problem is to educate a large number of learners, methods and procedures suited to large classes with wide individual difference are also to be evolved by research. The use of audio visual aids or a particular instructional procedure may increase the effectiveness of teaching. But this is one aspect of development concerning research on methods. Another new development is that more and more interactional approaches are incorporated into teaching methods to make them effective in different learning situations.

Various useful methods for History teaching are as follows:

- Story telling method
- Narration method
- Discussion method
- Project method
- Source method
- Dramatization method
- Self study method
- Play way method
- Problem solving method

Taking cognizance of the vital role of History in the school curriculum, it would be worthwhile to catch a glimpse of the present conditions of how History is taught in schools.

The secondary education commission noted that the present practice of teaching mechanically and applying the same methods to dull, average and bright students is responsible for much of the ineffectiveness of instruction given in the school. It suggests the adaptation of methods of instruction to suit the needs of individual student as much as possible. In the educational system today, there is excessive competition for obtaining marks rather than knowledge. This forces the students to learn for the moment and then forget it, thereby not imparting knowledge in its true sense. Everyone agrees that the individuals in the classroom are different. Our present educational system tries to deny this by forcing each student to progress by using the same traditional method.

In our schools there are teachers who believe in the transmission of unrelated historical facts to the child rather than teaching History. They do not care to base these facts on

psychological principles. They emphasize the oral work, cramming of facts without understanding. (Arora, 1979,)

After reviewing the related researches on History the status of the current trends in the subject was studied.

The following tables describe the difficult subjects in accordance to the students and the preference shown by the students to the subjects in percent:

Table 1: Preference shown by the Students to the Subjects in Percent

Sr. No	Subject	Preference percentage	Sr. No	Subject	Preference percentage
1	Science	57.85	7	Sanskrit	21.05
2	Maths	55.26	8	History	17.11
3	Kannada	48.11	9	Drawing	2.63
4	Hindi	32.89	10	Economics	1.32
5	English	28.95	11	Civics	1.32
6	Geography	23.68			

Source: Education Survey - 2008

History occupies the 8th place in the preference list of the students which shows that it's not favored.

Difficult Subjects in Accordance to the Students

Table no 2 shows that History has been rated as the 3rd most difficult subject by the students.

Sl. No.	Subject	Frequency	Percentage	Sl. No.	Subject	Frequency	Percentage
1	English	33	43.42	7	Economics	7	9.21
2	Maths	30	35.47	8	Civics	7	9.21
3	History	18	23.68	9	Hindi	4	5.26
4	Geography	12	15.79	10	Sanskrit	2	2.63
5	Science	10	13.16	11	Drawing	2	2.63
6	Kannada	8	10.53				

Source: Education Survey – 2008

Conclusion:

A few schools still do not have school buildings and other teaching-learning facilities. The number of teachers and pupil-teacher ratio over time has improved significantly but still there are schools that do not have adequate number of teachers and instructional rooms. The number of female teachers over time improved significantly but still their number is far less than their male counterparts. Except the northeastern part of the country, majority of teachers are trained. The responsibility of training is entrusted to District Institutes of Educational Training. But the majority of DIETs are not fully equipped to handle this mammoth task mainly because of the shortage of faculty and lack of expertise. Below the district level, Block Resource Centre, Cluster Resource Centre and Village Education Committees have been formed in the DPEP districts but such bodies (except VECs) are not yet envisaged in non-DPEP districts. VECs are yet to be fully entrusted powers and responsibilities as envisaged in the Panchayati Raj Institution Bill. With the creation of the State Institute of Educational Management and Training (SIEMT) in DPEP states,

training activities are expected to get momentum. In non-DPEP states, there are no such proposals.

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