

Present Status of Universal Primary Education in India in the context of Millennium Development Goal

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Abstract- The Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) are targeted at eradicating extreme hunger and poverty, achieve universal primary education, promote gender equality and empower women, reduce child mortality, improve maternal health, combat HIV/AIDS, malaria and other disease ensure environmental sustainability and develop a global partnership for development in the 191 member countries of the United Nations (UN). INDIA as the member of the United Nation targeted to implementations of the framework of the goals by formulating various schemes and policies. This paper is discussed the Millennium Development Goal and Present Status of Universal Primary Education: in The Context of Indian Perspective, where it is also discussed the progress, growth of enrolment, completion rates for males and females, level-wise enrolment, Gross Enrolment Ratio in Primary, Upper Primary and Elementary Education in India .This study is done with Documentary Analysis as well as Qualitative Method. In the context of Qualitative Method the data is collected from various sources like Books, Magazines, Research Journals, Published Articles, dissertation papers and Internet etc. In the context of Documentary Analysis method the data is collected from various statistical report done by various organizations in India as well as abroad. The study concludes with some suggestions and path ways to overcome the challenges of Universal Primary Education in India.

Keywords — *Universal Primary Education, Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), Achievements.*

I. INTRODUCTION

The Millennium Declaration was adopted in September 2000 by all 189 member states of the United Nations General Assembly, as the world leaders agreed to a set of time bound and measurable goals and targets for combating extreme poverty, hunger disease, illiteracy, environmental degradation and discrimination against women (by the year 2015). The goals, which have been part of the global development objectives for a number of years as endorsed by member states of the United Nations, are called Millennium Development Goals (Kaur. A, & Singh. K, 2014). All 191 United Nations members including 147 states and government and at least 22 international organizations, committed to help achieve the following Millennium Development Goals by 2015:

- Goal 1:** Eradicate extreme Poverty and Hunger
- Goal 2:** Achieve Universal Primary Education
- Goal 3:** Promote Gender Equality and Empower Women
- Goal 4:** Reduce Child Mortality
- Goal 5:** Improve Maternal Health
- Goal 6:** Combat HIV/AIDS, Malaria and TB
- Goal 7:** Ensure Environmental Sustainability
- Goal 8:** Develop Global Partnership for Development

Globally eight goals and eighteen targets were set up as quantitative benchmarks for attaining the MDGs. In 2003

The United Nations Development Group (UNDG) provided a framework of 53 indicators (48 basic and 5 alternative) which are categorized according to the targets, for measuring the progress towards the individual targets. But India's MDG framework is based on UNDG's MDG 2003 framework, and it includes all the eight goals, 12 targets out of the 18 targets (targets from 1 to 11 & 18) which are relevant for India and the related 35 indicators (MSPI, 2011). Second goal of the MDGs was to Achieve Universal Primary Education. In India, considerable progress has been reported to be made in the field of basic universal education (Kaur. A, & Singh. K, 2014). Even though the government has been implemented a wide array programmes, policies, various schemes to combat these challenges, further intensification of efforts and redesigning of outreach strategies are needed to give momentum to the progress towards to Achieve Universal Primary Education.

To universalize elementary education, Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan (SSA) is one of the major schemes introduced by the government in 2002. Education Guarantee Scheme (EGS) and Alternative and Innovative Education are the components of SSA. Universal enrolment is one of the specific objectives of SSA. The strategy of implementation of Mid-Day Meal Scheme has also played a role in enhancing the enrolment and retention of the students. To focus on girls' education, several schemes have been

incorporated within SSA. National Programmes for Education of Girls at Elementary Level (NPEGEL) and Kasturba Gandhi Balika Vidyalaya Scheme (KGBVS) focus on primary education for girls. In order to achieve this, there is need to ensure sufficient number of schools along with adequately trained teachers for quality instruction and effective functioning of primary education programmes. This is truer in the context of RTE- 2009. Achieving universal schooling requires cent percent enrolment and it also means ensuring that all children continue to attend classes till completion of eight years of schooling (6-14 years) in the near future. Education benefits not only at the individual level but also for the development of country as a whole. Further gender inequality in education has a direct impact on economic growth through lower levels of quality of human capital. In the light of these emergent issues in school education there is need to develop a sense of higher levels of commitment and sincerity among the prospective teachers. The teacher education programmes need to be reoriented to look into the issues related to enrolment and retention of children along with ensuring quality inputs in teaching - learning process. Hence an effort has been made to address to these issues in school education for the effective designing of on-going teacher education programmes to enable the prospective teachers as well as those in schools for effective implementation of different interventionist programmes (Kaur. A, & Singh. K, 2014).

II. OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

- To study the progress of Universal Primary Education in India.
- To study the level-wise enrolment in primary education.
- To study the level-wise enrolment in upper primary education.
- To study the Gross Enrolment Ratio in primary education.
- To study the Gross Enrolment Ratio in upper primary education.
- To study the number of female per hundred of male enrolled in primary education.
- To study the number of female per hundred of male enrolled in upper primary education.
- To study the Gross Enrolment Ratio in elementary education.
- To study the Dropout Rate in primary education.
- To study the Dropout Rate in elementary education.

III. METHODOLOGY

The study is done with documentary analysis as well as qualitative method. In the context of qualitative method the data is collected from various sources like Books, Magazines, Research Journals, Published Articles, dissertation papers, and Internet etc. In the context of

Documentary analysis method the data is collected from various statistical report done by various organizations in India as well as abroad. This documents includes World Bank Report, UNDP Reports, ASER Reports, Census 2001 & 2011 and Indian Human Development Reports etc.

IV. UNIVERSAL PRIMARY EDUCATION IN INDIA

The 86th Constitutional Amendment Act, 2002 has made elementary education a Fundamental Right for children in the age group of 6-14 years by providing that “*the State shall provide free and compulsory education to all children of the age of six to fourteen years in such manner as the State may, by law, determine*”. This has been a path breaking legislation in India, where such a major commitment to the cause of elementary education has bound governments, community based organizations and civil society into a common resolve to achieve universal elementary education (MSPI, 2011). The second goal of MDGs was to Achieve Universal Primary Education. It also requires a 100% primary school completion rate, that all students entering grade 1 are retained until grade 5. The MDG couched in these terms reflects recognition of the importance of basic (primary) education. This is particularly pertinent in India where primary education has historically been neglected by the state, with educational expenditures being concentrated on the tertiary sector (e.g. Dreze and Sen 1995). It had one major target, “ensure that by 2015, children everywhere, boys and girls alike, will be able to complete a full course of primary education”.

These major target had three indicators those are 1) Net Enrolment in primary education 2) Proportion of pupils starting Grade 1 who reach Grade 5. 3) Literacy rate of 15-24 year olds. To universalize elementary education, Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan (SSA) is one of the major schemes introduced by the government of India in 2002. Education Guarantee Scheme (EGS) and Alternative and Innovative Education are the other components of SSA. Universal enrolment is one of the specific objectives of SSA. The strategy of implementation of Mid-Day Meal Scheme has also played a role in enhancing the enrolment and retention of the students. To focus on girls' education, several schemes have been incorporated within SSA. National Programmes for Education of Girls at Elementary Level (NPEGEL) and Kasturba Gandhi Balika Vidyalaya Scheme (KGBVS) focuses on primary education for girls. To enhance access to secondary education and for quality improvement, Rashtriya Madhyamik Shiksha Abhiyan (RMSA) has been launched in 2009 (Bhalotra, S. and Bernard, Z., 2008).

V. ACHIEVEMENT

To achieve universalize elementary education, Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan (SSA) is one of the major schemes

introduced by the government in 2002. Education Guarantee Scheme (EGS) and Alternative and Innovative Education are the other components of SSA. Universal enrolment is one of the specific objectives of SSA. The strategy of implementation of Mid-Day Meal Scheme has also played a role in enhancing the enrolment and retention of the students. To focus on girls' education, several schemes have been incorporated within SSA. National Programmes for Education of Girls at Elementary Level (NPEGEL) and Kasturba Gandhi Balika Vidyalaya Scheme (KGBVS) focus on primary education for girls. To enhance access to secondary education and for quality improvement, Rashtriya Madhyamik Shiksha Abhiyan (RMSA) has been launched in 2009. Further gender inequality in education has a direct impact on economic growth through lower levels of the quality of human capital. Women in India are still far from making the best of the employment and entrepreneurial opportunities. They are lacking in skills, encouragement, support, and above all education. A major factor in the growth of an individual or section of society is literacy.

The total literacy rate according to 2001 census was 64.83 percent out of which male literacy rate was 75.26 percent and that of female was 53.67 percent with a gender gap of 21.59 percent. Total literacy rate has increased to 74.04 percent (census 2011) out of which male literacy rate is 82.14 percent and female literacy rate is 65.46 percent with a gender gap of 16.68 percent. In spite of all concerted efforts, there is gender gap in mass education, both in formal education (elementary to secondary to tertiary) as well as adult education (non-formal sector). The launching of Saakshar Bharat Mission in 2009 is an endeavour to raise adult female literacy to 80% by 2017 from 64% (2011 census), encompassing more than 265 educationally backward districts of the country. In order to achieve this, there is need to ensure sufficient number of schools along with adequately trained teachers for quality instruction and effective functioning of primary education programmes. This is truer in the context of RTE- 2009. At all India level, children's attendance shows a decline from 73.4 percent in 2007 to 70.9 percent in 2011 in rural primary schools. Achieving universal schooling requires cent percent enrolment and it also means ensuring that all children continue to attend classes till completion of eight years of schooling (6-14 years) in the near future.

Table 1: Level- wise Enrolment (In lakh)

Year	Primary (I-V)			Upper Primary (VI-VIII)		
	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total
2000-01	640	498	1138	253	175	428
2005-06	705	616	1321	289	233	522
2006-07	711	626	1337	299	246	545
2007-08	711	644	1355	311	262	573
2008-09	706	647	1353	314	270	584
2009-10	697	639	1336	317	278	595

Education, being a public good, must include principles of non-discrimination, equity and justice.

It must be an entitlement and a right that is guaranteed by the state. It should be visualized as a milestone for women's development, leading to National Development, enabling women to respond to challenges to secure better lives for them and for their children. These realities cannot be disassociated from the planning and implementation of educational policies.

Therefore, in the absence of constructive, objective and progressive legislative reforms, which are mutually articulate and consistent, and can effectively address these facts and realities, the Goal of Millennium Development would remain an illusion. India is poised to become a super power; a developed country by 2020, and this aspect must be supported by ensuring universalized gender free education.

"India has successfully moved towards reaching the EFA goals, especially in ensuring near Universal Elementary Education and enrolment of girls. India's efforts have been backed by the Right of Children to Free and Compulsory Education Act, 2009 and the national Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan programme. To ensure continued participation of girls in education, Beti Bachao Beti Padhao (Save the Girl, Educate the Girl) initiative has recently been launched in India." - **Minister Smriti Zubin Irani, Minister of Human Resource Development, India**

VI. PRESENT STATUS

➤ Indicator 1: Net Enrolment in primary education:

Net Enrolment Ratio in primary education is universally taken as the major indicator to assess whether the country is tending to achieve 2015 target of universal primary education for all children aged 6-10 years. Although, the estimate of this indicator is not readily available in the existing official statistical system, District Information System on Education (DISE) data shows that the NER in Primary Education is the total number of students in the official age group for a given level of education enrolled in that level, expressed as a percentage of the total population in that age group.

2010-11	701	646	1347	327	292	616
2011-12	726	672	1398	331	299	630
2012-13*	696	652	1348	333	317	650
2013-14*	686	638	1324	341	323	664
2014-15*	676	629	1305	345	327	672

Source: i. Statistics of school education, 2000-14, MHRD, GOI, ii. Educational Statistics at a Glance, 2015, iii. Statistics in School Education, 2014-15, MHRD, GOI, NUEPA. * Figures related to School Education are provisional.

Table 1 shows that during 2000-01 the level-wise enrolment at primary education was 1138 lakh, whereas during 2014-15 the level-wise enrolment at primary education was 1305 lakh. It is seen that the level-wise enrolment at primary education increased from 2000-2015 by 167 lakh.

Table 1 also reveals that the level-wise enrolment of male at primary education was 640 lakh during 2000-01, whereas the level-wise enrolment of male at primary level was 676 lakh. It is also seen that the level-wise enrolment of male is increased by 36 lakh during 2000-15.

Table 1 further shows that the level-wise enrolment of female at primary education was 616 lakh during 2000-01, whereas the level-wise enrolment of female at primary level was 629 lakh. It is also seen that the level-wise enrolment of female is increased by 13 lakh during 2000-15.

Table 1 shows that during 2000-01 the level-wise enrolment at upper primary education was 428 lakh, whereas during 2014-15 the level-wise enrolment at primary education was 672 lakh. It is seen that the level

wise enrolment at upper primary education increased from 2000-2015 by 244 lakh.

Table 1 also reveals that the level-wise enrolment of male at upper primary education was 253 lakh during 2000-01, whereas the level-wise enrolment of male at upper primary level was 345 lakh. It is also seen that the level-wise enrolment of male is increased by 92 lakh during 2000-15.

Table 1 further shows that the level-wise enrolment of female at upper primary education was 175 lakh during 2000-01, whereas the level-wise enrolment of female at upper primary level was 327 lakh. It is also seen that the level-wise enrolment of female is increased by 152 lakh during 2000-15.

➤ **Gross Enrolment Ratio in Primary, Upper Primary and Elementary level of Education:**

The Gross Enrolment is the number of individuals who are actually enrolled in a particular level of education the number of children who are of the corresponding enrolment age. The 2015-16 enrolment data reveals that GER reduces with increase in level of education. The GER at Primary level is 110.8, the GER recorded at Upper Primary level is 102.4 and the GER at elementary level is 107.8.

Table 2: Gross Enrolment Ratio in Primary, Upper Primary and Elementary level of Education:

Year	Primary stage (I-V)			Upper Primary stage (VI-VIII)			Elementary stage (I-VIII)		
	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total
2000-01	104.9	85.9	95.7	66.7	49.9	58.6	90.3	72.4	81.6
2010-11	114.9	116.3	115.5	87.5	82.9	85.2	104.5	103.3	103.9
2011-12	105.8	107.2	106.5	82.5	81.4	82.0	97.2	97.6	97.4
2012-13*	104.8	107.2	106.0	80.6	84.6	82.5	95.6	98.6	98.6
2013-14*	100.2	102.6	101.4	86.3	92.8	89.3	95.1	99.1	97.0
2014-15*	98.9	101.4	100.1	87.7	95.3	91.2	94.8	99.2	96.9
2015-16*	109.5	112.4	110.8	97.8	107.6	102.4	105.2	110.7	107.8

Source: i. Statistics of school education, 2000-14, MHRD, GOI, ii. Educational Statistics at a Glance, 2016, iii. Statistics in School Education, 2015-16, MHRD, GOI, NUEPA. * Figures related to School Education are provisional.

Table 2 shows that the GER in primary education increased from 95.7 percent in 2000-01 to 115.5 percent in 2010-11 and then declined to 110.8 percent in 2015-16. The overall increase in enrolment ratio in primary education during the period 2000-01 to 2015-16 was 15.1 percentage points (from 95.7 percent to 110.8 percent).

The GER of male is increased by 4.6 percent, while the GER for female is increased by 26.5 percentage points.

Table 2 reveals that during the period 2000-01 to 2015-2016, the GER in upper primary education 43.8 percentage points. GER for male increased by 31.1

percentage points, while the GER for female is increased by 57.7 percentage points.

Table 2 further shows that the GER in elementary education has increased by 26.2 percent. GER for male increased by 14.9 percentage points, while GER for female increased by 38.3 percentage points during 2000-01 to 2015-16.

➤ **Number of Female per hundred male Enrolled by stages of Education:**

The number of female enrolled per hundred male enrolled is increasing over the years in Primary and Upper Primary levels of education. More than 90 female children were enrolled against 100 male children in Primary and Upper Primary education during 2015-16.

Table 3: Number of Female per hundred male Enrolled by stages of Education

Year	Primary (I-V)	Upper Primary(VI-VIII)
2000-2001	78	69
2010-2011	92	89
2011-2012	93	90
2012-2013*	94	95
2013-2014*	93	95
2014-2015*	93	95
2015-2016*	93	95

Source: Statistics of school education, 2000-14, MHRD, GOI, Educational Statistics at a Glance, Statistics in School Education, 2015-16, MHRD, GOI, NUEPA.*Figures related to School Education are provisional.

Table 3 shows that during 2000-01 number of female per hundred male enrolled at primary stage was 78, whereas

Table 4: Dropout Rate at Primary and Elementary Level of Education in India

Year	Primary(I-V)			Elementary (I-VIII)		
	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total
2000-01	39.7	41.9	40.7	50.3	57.7	53.7
2005-06	28.7	21.8	25.7	48.7	49.0	48.8
2006-07	24.6	26.8	25.6	46.4	45.2	45.9
2007-08	25.7	24.4	25.1	43.7	41.3	42.7
2008-09	29.6	25.8	27.8	41.1	36.9	30.3
2009-10	31.8	28.8	30.3	41.1	44.2	42.5
2010-11	29.9	25.4	27.4	40.6	41.2	40.8
2011-12	23.4	21.0	22.3	41.5	40.0	40.8

during 2015-16 number of female per hundred male enrolled at primary stage was 93. It is cleared that the number of female per hundred male enrolled at primary stage increased from 2000-16.

On the other hand table 3 further shows that during 2000-01 number of female per hundred male enrolled at upper primary stage was 69, whereas during 2015-16 number of female per hundred enrolled at upper primary stage was 95. It is also cleared that the number of female per hundred male enrolled at upper primary stage increased from 2000-16.

➤ **Indicator 2: Proportion of pupils starting Grade 1 who reach Grade 5:**

The most tentative block in universalisation of primary education are the children, who remain out of school even during the primary school going age. A section of them do not get the opportunity to ever attend school due to social and /or economic obstacles. The other group might have got a chance to start schooling in the age-group, but were forced to drop out even before completion of primary grade classes often due to more or less same set of socio-economic hurdles. Although there are a number of sources from where one can get the number of children out of school even in the 6-14 years of age group, during which now they can claim their Right to Education as their Fundamental Right. But it is difficult to get the **survival rate** of children in the primary grade (i.e. the proportion of children starting Grade I who reach Grade V, the last grade of primary). Ideally this can be obtained accurately from a cohort study, which is at present not available in the official statistics of the country. The apparent **survival rate** at primary level up to Grade V based on DISE Statistics has risen from 62% in 1999 to 81% by 2002 and declined thereafter to 73% in 2004. According to DISE 2007-08, it further dipped to 72% in 2007-08. DISE 2009-10, indicated an improvement to 76 percent in 2008-09.

Source: statistics of school education 2011-2012

It is clear from table 4 that during the period 2000-01 to 2011-12, the overall dropout rate for class I-V declined by 18.4 percentage points. The decline in dropout rates for female (20.9 percentage points) was higher than that for male (16.3 percentage points). The dropout rates for elementary level declined by 12.9 percentage points during the period 2000-01 to 2011-12. The declined dropout rates for female (17.7 percentage points) was higher than that for male (8.8 percentage points).

VII. FINDINGS

- It is found that India moved forward to reaching the goal universal primary education. To reaching towards the goal India Govt. launched various programmes like SSA, EFA, Beti Bachao Beti Padhao (Save the Girl, Educate the Girl) etc.
- It is found that the Level-Wise Enrolment at primary education increased during 2000-15 of 167 lakh.
- At upper primary education it is found that the Level-Wise Enrolment also increased during 2000-15 of 244 lakh.
- Gross Enrolment Ratio at primary stage is increased by 15.1 (from 95.7 percent to 110.8 percent) percentage points during the year 2000-16.
- It is also seen that the Gross Enrolment Ratio at upper primary stage increased 43.8 percentage points during the year 2000-16.
- In Elementary education the Gross Enrolment Ratio is increased by 26.2 percentage points.
- Also it is found that the number of female per hundred male enrolled at primary education is increased during 2000-16.
- The number of female per hundred male enrolled at upper primary education also increased during the year 2000-16.
- The Drop-out Rates at primary education is decreased by 18.4 percentage points during 2000-12.
- It is found that the Drop-out Rates at elementary education is declined by 129 percentage points during 2000-12.

VIII. SUGGESTIONS

- ❖ Establishment of more primary school is highly needed, which will increase access to educational opportunities to all at primary level.
- ❖ It is need to remove disparities and inequalities through fostering various inclusive education policies and programmes.
- ❖ Providing access to schooling is not sufficient, the quality of education is to be improved.
- ❖ Professionally dedicated trained teacher need to recruit, who can teach the students with joy and dedication.

- ❖ Infrastructure development of school is greatly needed at primary level of schooling. It is known that infrastructure at primary level in India is so unhealthy.
- ❖ Parent's support and conscious to education is one of the major key aspect of universalisation of elementary education.
- ❖ A good communication is needed to the school going children, so that they can reach their school by the proper time.

IX. CONCLUSION

Education is a basic human right and is necessary for enjoying many other right. Primary education is a powerful driver for realization of all the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). To universalize elementary education Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan (SSA) is one of the major scheme introduced by government of India in 2002, which is the second goal of MDGs and it requires that every child enroll in primary education and completes the full cycle of primary education. India has been achieved considerable progress towards the goal of universal elementary education. It is found that India moved forward to reaching the goal universal primary education. The level-wise enrolment shows an increase trend during the period of 2000-2015. The Gross Enrolment Ratio also increased during the period of 2000-2016. The number of female per hundred male enrolled in primary, upper primary and elementary education has great increase. India is making great paces in order to achieve the goal of universal primary education, which yet to go for miles away to achieve the goal of "Education for All" and "Samagrah Shiksha."

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