

# **CASE STUDY**

## **Primary Education in India**

**Name-Mayank Lowanshi**

**Name-Mridul Singh Rana**

**Enrollment-0186CS171050**

**Enrollment-0186CS171051**

**Branch-Computer Science Engineering**

**Sem-VI**

**Subject - Knowledge Management**

**Year-3<sup>rd</sup> Y**

**Submit to -Dr. Kapil Chatruvedi**

## **Introduction**

Development of education is important for ensuring over all development of a country.

For developing countries it is more or less mandatory to focus on the development of education sector. However, within the education sector, the level of education which is supposed to be compulsory in the country becomes a priority sector. This is the reason that in India priority in the field of education has been given to elementary education right from the time of independence. It was perceived that every citizen of the country should be able to participate in basic education and complete at least elementary education i.e. eight years of schooling.

One the most important goals in the education sector in India has been to universalize elementary education and thus it was expected that elementary education should be compulsorily provided to all children free of cost till they attain the age of 14 years. It was the directive of the Constitution of India, as per Article 45, to the government to provide free education to all children of the country till they attain the age of 14 years. The government had to therefore make all provisions for elementary schooling in all nooks and corners of the country so as to enable all children to attend schools irrespective of their caste, class or place of residence.

Further, in 1993 the Supreme Court judgment made education a fundamental right of every child of the country up to 14 years of age and now it has become an Act popularly known as 'right to education act'. Constitutional directive and international commitments to achieve the goal of Universalization of Elementary Education (UEE) mandated the Government of India and State governments to make provisions for all children of the country to have access to elementary education. Issues such as in equal access, high dropout rates and poor quality of education in elementary education sector took the centre stage in formulation of educational policies, plans and programmes in India.

## Size of Primary Schools in India

As mentioned above a primary school is generally expected to have about 40 or 50 children and it is perceived that if the number of children available for schooling is less than 40, a formal primary school may not be viable and therefore the provision may be made for opening alternative schools such as EGS and AIE centres. But if we look at the size of primary schools in the country the DISE data reveals that primary schools in India are of all sizes i.e. from very small to very large size if we take enrolment as an indicator of the school size.

In the DISE reports the schools, both primary and upper primary, have been classified into 5 categories viz.

- (i) schools having only primary section,
- (ii) schools having both primary and upper primary sections,
- (iii) schools having primary, upper primary and secondary / higher secondary sections,
- (iv) schools having upper primary section only, and
- (v) schools having upper primary with secondary / higher secondary sections.

If we look at the data related to the first category of schools i.e. primary only, which means the schools that have only primary section, we find the following scenario

. According to 2009-10 DISE data, there were 4.25 percent primary schools where the enrolment was more than 300. There were another 5.11 percent primary schools where the enrolment was reported between 221 and 300. In about 13.38 percent primary schools the enrolment was between 141 and 220. In another 13.16 percent primary schools the enrolment was in the range of 101 and 140. Further, in about 27.81 percent primary

schools the enrolment ranges from 51 to 100 students. There were 23.36 percent primary schools where number of students was found to be between 26 and 50. As against the general perception it is surprising to note that about 12.55 percent primary schools in the country were those where the enrolment was only 25 or less than 25 students.

The DISE 2009-10 data reported above reveal that about 36 percent primary schools in India have maximum enrolment of 50 students. It may further be noted that about 12.5 percent primary schools have only 25 students or even less than that. This means that on an average 1 out of every 8 primary schools in India had maximum enrolment of 25 students. The figures are revealing as these data put a question mark on the sanctity of population norm for the provision of primary schooling facilities. It seems important to probe further about these small sized primary schools.

# Present Study: Rationale

In the country, the DISE data for the year 2009-10 show that, there were about 0.80 million, 791997 to be exact, schools that have only primary section which there by means that the number of standalone primary schools was about 7.92 lakh in the country. Out of these about 12.55 percent schools have 25 or even less than 25 children enrolled.

However, in absolute terms number of these schools is as many as 99388 where the enrolment is 25 or even less than that. These data indicate that about one out of every eight primary schools in India has a maximum enrolment of 25 students. This is contrary to the population norm kept for the provision of viable primary school facilities. It seems important to understand various issues surrounding the functioning of these small schools.

It may be noted that there is lack of studies that probe into the functioning and efficiency of small schools in the Indian context. The lack of literature highlighting the problems faced by small schools makes it difficult to understand the context of their existence in a country with a large growing population. This study is a humble attempt to investigate about the functioning of small primary schools in the country and it is expected that this study will further increase the current understanding about the functioning of these schools in India.

For the present study only primary schools are taken into account and these are the schools which have only primary section i.e. classes I to V or in some states only I to IV. It is a study of small primary schools in India and for the purpose of this study *small primary schools are defined as those primary schools where the enrolment is 25 or less than 25 students* as per 2009-10 DISE data. The reason for taking enrolment as a criterion to define small school in this study is that it is the size of the school in terms of number of students studying that generally decides about the number of teachers to be appointed, building to be made available and infrastructure and other facilities to be provided to the school.

## Review of Literature

As mentioned above studies on small schools have been conducted in several developed countries and these studies pertain to primary schools as well as secondary schools and these studies have probed about the viability, functioning, effectiveness and efficiency and the quality of education imparted in these schools. However, a very few studies in the Indian context have also been undertaken by researchers on the functioning of small schools and therefore this is an area which is least researched in the country.

## International Context of Small Schools

In other countries and especially in European countries, numerous studies have been conducted to evaluate the functioning and efficiency of small schools. There are diverse views on the existence of these small schools so much so that some researchers have advocated the small schools while some others think that these small schools are burden to the education system. In this regard it is worth mentioning that in United Kingdom a paper was published in British Journal of Educational Studies in 1997 entitled 'A

Critique of Existing Research into Small Primary schools' authored by Emma Philips. The author has evaluated major studies carried out in United Kingdom on small primary schools and is of the view that research in this area is flawed for the reasons like; there is no agreed definition of a 'small primary school'; investigations have been biased in their favour as a result of problems in research design and the ways in which data have been analysed; and there has been a neglect of certain key issues, notably those affecting pupil grouping.

## **The Indian Context**

Small schools have generally not been explored in depth in the Indian education system. This is despite the fact that existence of small schools is not a recent phenomenon in the country and such schools have been functional in India from the time immemorial but these schools have been overlooked by the researchers in the past. One of the reasons for this may be that there is no clear definition of a small school. The lack of a clear definition of a small school makes it difficult to even synthesize the available literature. However, a common trend observed in the country is that small schools are usually prevalent in rural regions, and flung areas, scattered habitations and in difficult mountain and hill areas. Though developing nations like India are often faced with the challenge of addressing the issues associated with small schools but nevertheless they are often overlooked by not only planners and policy makers but even by the researchers also. The lack of attention for these schools could be attributed to the fact that these schools are often not viewed as viable solutions to address issues faced in the education sector and these schools may be considered as simply temporary arrangement for making provision for education. However, the DISE data quoted above negate all these contentions even if the definition of a small school at primary level is as conservative as the enrolment of only 25 children.

## **Objectives of the Study**

As mentioned above this study aims at analyzing the status of small primary schools in selected states and districts of the country and also carry out an in depth analysis of 24 selected schools in these states and districts. More specifically the following are the main objectives of the study.

1. To examine the status of small primary schools in selected districts.
2. To investigate in to the reasons of having small primary schools, and
3. To analyze a few items related to provision and participation as collected in the DISE report cards of all the small primary schools.

## **Research Questions**

The study seeks to address the following questions that emerge out of the rationale of the study.

- Why are there so many small primary schools in the selected districts?
- What facilities are available in these schools in terms of teachers as well as building, infrastructure etc?
- What problems are faced by these small schools in managing their affairs

- efficiently and effectively?
- What problems are faced by the teachers of these small schools?
- What is the performance of these small schools in terms of utilization of facilities and the funds made available to the schools?
- Are these small primary schools viable or the need is only for opening alternatives schools in these areas?

## Methodology

The study has mostly used the secondary data available in DISE reports for the year 2009-10 and focused on analyzing the report cards of all the small primary schools of selected districts for the same year. However, in addition to the secondary data primary data were also collected from the field and that was done by undertaking survey of a sample of small schools in the selected districts.

## Limitations of the Study

The present study on small schools covers only those schools that have only primary sections and thus the scope of this study is limited to stand alone primary schools as it does not cover schools that have primary section but are attached to middle or secondary or higher secondary schools. Though it is a limitation of this study but this has been done because the definition of the small schools used for this study i.e. schools having 25 or less than 25 students enrolled will hardly be applicable to the schools which have both primary and upper primary sections leaving apart the schools where primary section is running along with upper primary and secondary or primary section running along with upper primary, secondary and higher secondary sections.

Though it claims to be a national study it covers only four states of the country that represent four regions namely north, east, west and south region. Further from each region the study covers only one state and it cannot be claimed that one state represents the whole region and thus the four states may not be representative to the whole country. So, the findings of this study may not be applicable to the whole country i.e. all the states and union territories.

## Development of Primary Education in India since Independence

India has a long tradition of imparting education to its people though initially the facility of imparting education was provided to selected few only. The development of education was the responsibility of kings and they use to make arrangement for imparting education to their children and other people. For this purpose there were *Gurukuls* established by them where the teacher was totally paid by the king's government. These were the educational institutions which were residential in nature and where the teacher i.e. 'guru' and the pupils live together. Here there was no fixed timing of the instructions and the teacher used to impart not only education but also several types of training to their pupil so as to develop their skills for various jobs. Even military training was also imparted to the children so that they can become soldiers to defend the empire from any kind of aggression. Such training was mainly imparted to the children of royal families so that

they can take the responsibility of defending their subject.

Even during the British period the education could not expand properly as it was the deliberate policy of Britishers to impart education to only a selected few people who can help them in establishing their empire and running the day to day affairs of the country under their guidance. However, several social reformers on their own took up the responsibility of expanding education in the country to the extent possible so that the benefits of education reach the masses and they become aware about their rights and responsibilities. As a result during pre-independence period a large number of educational institutions were established across the length and breadth of the country. However, this expansion was relatively more with respect to primary education. Despite all these efforts the participation rate of children at primary level was quite low and even the literacy rate was very low.

## Expansion in Primary Education

Primary education facilities have grown many fold in the country during last more than five decades. Whether it is the number of schools, number of teachers or number children enrolled in the primary classes the increment has been tremendous. The number of schools imparting primary education has increased almost four times, the number of teachers has also increased more than four times and the enrolment in primary classes has increased to almost seven times during 1950-51 to 2007-08. The following table 2.02 presents data about the number of schools, teachers and number of students enrolled in primary schools and sections in the country

## Infrastructure Facilities in Small Primary Schools

Each school need to have appropriate infrastructure as it facilitates in proper transaction of lessons in the class rooms and ensure that the teaching learning process goes on smoothly in the schools. However, the small schools that obviously have less number of students and teachers perhaps cannot be expected to have proper infrastructure and facilities. This study tries to explore whether in these small primary schools such facilities are available or not and if available, to what extent.

The following table presents data on availability of facilities like boundary walls, furniture for teachers, electricity and playground in small primary schools of the four sample districts.

### Table -Small school according to availability of Facilities

S. District Boundary Wall Furniture for

Teachers

Electricity in

school Playground Total

No Name

No. % No. % No. % No. % No.

1 JAMMU 202 30.65 432 65.55 192 29.14 374 56.75 659

2 JORHAT 60 8.84 355 52.28 104 15.32 205 30.19 679

3 MANDYA 102 18.85 0 0.00 454 83.92 249 46.03 541

4 RAIGAD 151 13.18 319 27.84 618 53.93 619 54.01 1146

Total 515 17.02 1106 36.56 1368 45.22 1447 47.83 3025.

## **Findings regarding Management of Small Primary Schools**

In many countries of the world it is perceived that the small schools are better managed and are better performing schools as teachers are able to pay personal attention to almost all the students in the classroom. In this study it was examined whether the small primary schools are managed better than other schools. Some findings related to the management of small schools are given below.

The most prominent problem reported by the small primary schools is the lack of basic facilities in the school. Second problem faced by the small schools is found to be lack of enough space/building in the school. The third problem faced by the small schools is the lack of teachers in the schools. One problem reported by some small schools is the low enrolment i.e. less number of students enrolled in the school. Lack of support from the local community and parents is another problem faced by some 16 schools in the four districts (i.e. about 7.58 percent small schools).

The study reveals that as many as 15 small schools have very frankly accepted that they have not thought of any concrete steps or proposal to address the problems faced by their school. It shows that these schools are not very active and they are not much sensitive to solve the problems faced by the school and are not much bothered about the proper management of and ensuring good performance of their schools.

It has been found that the small schools in Jammu district are not sensitive enough to be bothered about the efficient functioning and better performance of their schools while small schools in Mandya are much aware about the deficiencies in their functioning and performance.

214Some steps reported by the small schools of the four districts to improve the functioning and performance of schools include increasing students enrolment and attendance (mentioned by 17 schools), reducing non-academic work of teachers (15 schools), harness community and parents support (15 schools), separate management for MDM (12 schools), better training of teachers (11 schools), plantation and schools beautification (11 schools), extra coaching to students (10 schools), and authorities' regular visits o the schools (5 schools).

It has been found in this study that these small schools are not necessarily small by design i.e. these schools were not necessarily established as small schools in the beginning but many of these schools have become small in due course of time because of declining enrolment. The main reason for this declining enrolment in these schools is attributed to the decline in the population of the habitation they serve because of migration of people to the towns and cities in search of jobs. The other reason for decline in the enrolment in



these schools is faster growth and mushrooming of private schools in the vicinity of these schools and migration of children from government schools (as all the small primary schools are government schools) to private schools.

However, the second reason mentioned here show the low efficiency and performance of these small (government) schools because of which parents prefer to send their children to private schools and even withdraw their children from government school the moment they get an opportunity to get admission in these private schools even if its means addition financial burden on them. This also shows that the people in general have almost lost faith in the government schools and they rely more on the private schools for getting better quality of education.

Keeping in view the above findings it can be concluded that the small primary schools covered under this study show that these schools, in general, are neither very well managed schools nor very good performing schools. It may therefore be inferred that the golden opportunity these schools had, because of quite small number of children enrolled, could not be grabbed by the schools to their advantage and that is the reason that these 215 small schools are not showing good results in terms of better management of schools or showing better performance of these schools. This is despite the fact that these small schools are very costly and perhaps these are not financially viable as per pupil cost of running these schools is relatively very high. The educational planners and administrators as well as policy makers of the states need to seriously look at this aspect of small schools and ensure that their efficiency and performance is improved if continuing with such small schools is essential for universalizing access to elementary education as a result of implementing right to education act.

# Conclusion

## Primary data analysis of sample Small Schools

In the four selected districts survey of about 10 percent small primary schools has been conducted for the study. Total schools covered under this survey were 285 small primary schools. These include 61 small primary schools from Jammu district, 60 small primary schools from Jorhat district, 110 small primary schools from Raigad and 54 small primary schools from Mandya district. Data collected from these schools have been analyzed and the findings of this data analysis are presented below.

The study reveals that in Jorhat district the responsibility of managing small primary schools has been entrusted to senior and very experienced teachers while in Raigad and Jammu the responsibility has been given to relatively junior and less experienced teachers.

Average experience of head masters of small primary schools is reported to be



lowest in Mandya where it is only 2.68 years. In Jammu district the average experience of a small primary school head master is found to be about 5.06 years followed by Raigad where it is about 5.90 years. Head masters of small primary schools in Jorhat are most experienced as the average experience of head masters here is found to be about 9.48 years which is highest in these four districts.

207 Average number of years a small school head master stayed in the present school is as much as about 13.55 years in Jorhat which is highest among the four districts. In other three districts the average stay of the head master in the present schools ranges between 4.54 years in Raigad and 6.46 years in Mandya district. Small primary schools in these four districts are of all ages from as old as more than 60 years to as new as less than 20 years. However, in Jammu the small primary schools are generally new ones as a majority of schools were established after 1990 while in rest of the three districts majority of small schools were established before 1970.

In these four districts a little more than 90 percent small primary schools are either single teacher or two teacher schools. However, there are about 6 percent small primary schools that are three teacher schools also in these four districts. Out of the four districts covered under this study two districts, namely Jorhat and Mandya, do not have any para teacher while in other two districts i.e. Jammu and Raigad also the para teachers in the small primary schools are rarely found.

In the four districts covered about 9.12 percent small primary schools are in fact too small to be called a schools because these schools have less than 6 children enrolled. Further about 29 percent schools (having maximum 10 children enrolled) are so small in size that these may not be economically viable. About 57 percent schools have maximum 15 children enrolled and about 85 percent schools have maximum 20 children enrolled.

About one-third small schools in Mandya district have no child enrolled in grade V. In Jammu district these small schools (having zero enrolment in grade V) are about 8.20 percent. For small primary schools of Jorhat and Raigad district 208 enrolment in grade V is insignificant as the primary schools in Assam and Maharashtra comprise of grades I to IV only.

The study reveals that participation of girls is best in the small primary schools of Jorhat district where 47.60 percent schools have majority of girls in enrolment. However, the position is relatively worst in Jammu where only about 36 percent small primary schools have more girls in primary classes than boys. In Raigad and Mandya about 40 percent and 37 percent small schools respectively have more girls enrolled than the boys at primary level.

The data show that about 3.16 percent small primary schools in these four districts do not have building at all while about 2.81 percent schools have rented building. Percentage of schools not having building at all are highest in Jammu (9.84

percent) while Raigad has highest percentage of schools (6.36 percent) having rented building.

Data reveal that about one third (about 34 percent) of the total small primary schools in these four districts have less than two class rooms each that includes zero class room and one class room schools.

It is very disappointing to find that such a basic facility like black board is not available in some small schools of these four districts. It has been found that only about 82.46 percent small primary schools in these four districts have provision for drinking water which means about 18 percent schools do not have even this basic facility.