



Status of Primary Rural Education in Bankura, West Bengal

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Abstract: *This article aims to focus on the status of primary education in the district of Bankura, West Bengal. Along with the status of the primary education the related problems and the measures taken by government are also major concern of this study. The Indian constitution clearly stipulates that primary education is a fundamental right of children aged 6 to 14 years. However, the majority of them drops out of school or do not attend on a regular basis. So, despite the government's best efforts to provide universal access to basic education, several concerns remain unresolved. Primary education is seen as a springboard for secondary education. The analysis indicates that, although the situation seems to be dire, beneficial improvements over the previous several years cannot be ignored. Aside from raising awareness about the need of education, providing facilities, and ensuring excellent education, the usefulness of education must also be assured.*

Keywords: *Primary Education, Problems, Government Measures, Bankura.*

Introduction:

Education is unanimously recognised in a large body of literature as a crucial component in the process of national development (UNESCO, 2005; GEC, 2000; UNESCO, 1997; TGE, 1993; Lockheed & Verspoor, 1991; Psacharopoulos, 1985). Today, with a better awareness of the role that education plays in society and the country as a whole, the globe is working to provide elementary education to all children. This aim has been on the international agenda since 1948, when the Universal Declaration of Human Rights stated that basic education should be free and obligatory for all children in all countries. This request was recently reiterated by the Jomtien and Dakar framework for action Education for All (EFA) conferences and declarations. As a result, all countries, whether developed and developing, must priorities the provision of universal elementary education.

Good quality elementary education is widely seen as a crucial foundation for economic growth and a key component in achieving other development goals. As the saying goes, "Give a man a fish and he will eat for a day; teach him how to fish and he will eat for life". People who have acquired a great education may not only reach their full potential, but also contribute to their communities. Quality education is crucial and challenging in the twenty-first century, as nations face new economic, social, and cultural issues in which knowledge, skills, values, and attitudes will play an important role. With the massive increase in school enrollments throughout the globe, past priorities for educational expansion and access are being replaced by plans and policies pushing for better quality education. Concerns about increasing the quality of education in schools have become the top concern in practically every country on the planet. This worry has become

universal in both rich and developing nations, in those that have achieved entire access as well as those that are still working for it (Reddy, 2007).

Objectives: This article aims to focus on the status of primary education in the district of Bankura, West Bengal. Along with the status of the primary education the related problems and the measures taken by government are also major concern of this study.

Method: This study is carried out on the basis of a survey conducted on different primary schools located in the rural areas of Bankura districts. A total of 20 schools were visited and required data were collected on the enrolment status, basic abilities etc. The researcher has also followed some secondary sources in terms of books, journals etc. for required information.

Analysis and Interpretation:

Table 1: Children aged 4-8 Enrolled in Pre Schools and Schools

Age	Pre-school			School		Not enrolled	Total
	Anganwadi	Govt pre-primary	Pvt LKG/UKG	Govt	Pvt		
Age 4	77.8	6.4	10.1	0.0	0.0	5.7	100
Age 5	58.6	16.1	13.1	6.8	0.0	5.5	100
Age 6	5.5	40.2	11.1	38.6	3.1	1.5	100
Age 7	0.7	5.5	4.8	83.7	5.3	0.0	100
Age 8	0.0	0.6	0.7	90.6	7.7	0.4	100

From the above table it is clearly noted that 77.8% children aged 4 years got admitted in the Anganwadi centres and 6.4% in the Govt. Pre primary schools where as 10.1% in the Pvt. Schools at LKG level. It indicates that at the age of 4 5.7% students did not get admitted in the school. At the age of 8 only 0.6% students got admitted in the pre primary schools. 0.7% students were admitted in the private pre primary schools. 90.6% students started their schooling in the government schools and 7.7% in the private schools at this age.

Table 2: Children having ability of cognitive, early language and early numeracy

Age	Cognitive					Early language		Early numeracy	
	Sorting	Spatial awareness	Seriation	Pattern recognition	Puzzle	Picture description	Listening comprehension	Counting objects	Relative comparison (objects)
Age 4	66.8	56.4	35.9	48.6	35.7	64.0	22.9	27.5	44.3
Age 5	80.9	76.3	43.2	51.0	56.5	73.1	31.9	52.8	67.2

The above table shows the basic abilities of children at the age of 4-5. The table shows that by the age of four, 66.8% of children can sort, 56.4% have spatial awareness, 35.9% have seriation ability, 48.6% recognize patterns, and 35.7% can solve puzzles. On the other hand, 64.0% can describe an image, and 22.9% can listen. 27.5% have the ability of counting objects and 44.3% have relative comparison ability.

At the age of 5, 80.9% children can do sorting, 76.3% have spatial awareness, 43.2% have seriation ability, 51.0% pattern recognition, 56.5% puzzle solve. On the other hand 73.1% can do the picture description and 31.9% have listening comprehension ability. 52.8% have the ability of counting objects and 67.2 % have relative comparison ability.

Table 3: Children of Std I & II having ability of cognitive, early language tasks

Std	Cognitive			Early language
	Seriation	Pattern recognition	Puzzle	Listening comprehension
Std I	66.7	59.2	49.8	53.9
Std II	72.5	66.0	61.8	59.0

This table shows the abilities of standard I & II in respect of cognition and early language. We can see that in standard I, 66.7% have serration ability, 59.2% have pattern recognition ability, 49.8% have puzzle solving ability, and 53.9% have listening comprehension ability, whereas in standard II, 72.5% have serration ability, 66.0% have pattern recognition ability, 61.8% have puzzle solving ability, and 59.0% have listening comprehension capability.

Table 4: Reading ability of children standard I & II

Std	Not even letter	Letter	Word	Std I level text	Total	Of those who can read a Std I level text, % children who can answer both comprehension questions
Std I	18.8	23.5	27.7	30.1	100	
Std II	10.6	18.9	23.9	46.6	100	86.5

The above table shows the reading ability of the students of standard I & II. We can see that in class I standard 18.8% children cannot even read the letters, 23.5% can read letters, 27.7% can read words, 30.1% can read text of their level. However, in standard II, 10.6% of students are unable to read letters, whereas 18.9% can read letters, 23.9% can read words, and 46.6% can read standard texts.

Problems of Primary Education:

Poverty and Ignorance: Even now, the country's financial situation does not allow for the provision of basic food and clothes to all citizens. Even today, a family of up to 10 people relies on one person to provide for them. In many houses, it is considered socially unacceptable for women to work even if the whole family cannot afford two meals every day. Furthermore, due to ignorance, the majority of individuals are unaware of the value of education. As a result, rather than enrolling their children in school, many parents attempt to expose them to a profession at a young age in order to augment their income.

Shortage of Infrastructural facility and Their Unsuitability: Due to a lack of money, the school building development project was unable to keep up with the increase of elementary education. As a result, arrangements for teaching have been developed in a variety of settings, including temples, public buildings, and instructors' homes. Such a school has no playground and an unhealthy climate. Unsuitable structures, as well as a crowded and loud environment, have hampered elementary education's progress.

Stagnation and Wastage: Inadequate and inappropriate reading materials, unappealing school buildings, and a tough curriculum are some of the reasons why schools do not attract a sufficient number of students. Furthermore, impoverished parents, in order to augment their income, induct their children into the family company at a young age, and either do not send their children to school at all or force them to quit before finishing their elementary education. In this sense, wasting money and stagnation impede progress towards the objective.

Lack of Teachers: Teacher shortages are a major reason for the delayed development of compulsory education, and they are caused by low pay. No highly qualified individual wants to work as a primary school teacher because of the low pay. In metropolitan locations, the teacher shortage is less significant since alternative means for supplementing the teacher's salary are accessible; nevertheless, in rural areas where such avenues of augmenting income do not exist, the teacher shortage is extreme. This issue is particularly problematic for female instructors. This condition is especially bad for India, which is mostly rural. To some degree, the absence of teacher training schools contributes to the stagnation of compulsory education. However, considerable progress has been made in addressing these issues.

Conclusion: Over the course of seventy-two years of independence, various concerns and difficulties have been tackled with greatest priority by successive administrations. However, we must continue to work hard to address the concerns and challenges that exist in the primary education sector. Based on these facts, it is possible to conclude that the Indian government has a long way to go before meeting the Education for All (EFA) objectives within the period specified. Poor quality schools jeopardise the whole system of human capital development because they produce pupils who are unprepared for secondary and university education and ill-equipped for lifetime learning. As a result, boosting the quality of education for elementary school kids is essential for establishing the human resource base necessary to meet the changing needs of the twenty-first century.

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