11 important Problems of Universalization of Education and their Remedies

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Universalization of Elementary Education is Constitutional directive. Education is every body’s birth-right and it is binding on any government to provide facilities for education for children who are born and reach the school-going age.

It was stipulated to achieve Universalization within 10 years from the introduction of Constitution and that is by 1960. But it is now more than three decades after the scheduled time. Now the problems with certain possible remedies to solve them have been discussed as follows:

(1) Faulty Policy of Government:

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The constitutional directive is that states shall endeavour to provide free and compulsory education to all children until they complete the age of 14 years. But it is a matter of regret that the prescribed goal has not been reached as yet. The main cause for this is that the policy of Government was based on idealism.

Basic education was accepted as the form of national education. Being inspired with this aim, work started to convert the existing primary schools into basic schools. India is a vast country with a very large population. Money was too much in shortage for implementation of so expensive a scheme of conversion of a large number of Elementary Schools.

Government has also admitted this. In such a situation, the best policy would have been to make separate treatment for the basic schools along with the general primary and middle schools.

(2) Political Difficulties:

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Education is the basis of democracy. It is necessary to educate the citizens in order to make democracy a success. But so far the Government of India has not been able to devote their full attention towards education.

Main reason is that since the attainment of Independence, Government had to face the problems of food, of inimical neighbours, the problem of Kashmir, the problem of linguistic states etc. Those problems still exist and these problems have all along forced to allocate so much money that Government has not been able to devote their due attention for elementary education.

The Government is responsible to solve the political problems; the Government is also duty-bound for smooth progress of public education. On no account, this indifference of Government towards universal primary education could be justified.

(3) Faulty Administration of Education:

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In most of the states the responsibility of universal primary education is on the authorities of Blocks, Municipalities and Educational Districts. The progress of expansion of primary education gets slow because of the indifference and incapability of these institutions.

In fact, it is the responsibility of the nation to educate its citizens. It is necessary that the Government of India should take upon itself the sacred work of universal enrolment and universal retention at the Elementary stage. In fact it is the responsibility of the action to educate its citizens.

(4) Dearth of Money:

Inadequacy of money is a serious problem that confronts primary schools. Income of the local institutions responsible for primary education is so much limited that they are totally incapable of meeting the expenditure of compulsory education.

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To meet the requirements of compulsory basis education it was estimated that an annual expenditure of Rs.269.5 crores will be required. But in the First Five Year Plan the allocation was Rs. 93 crores and this allocation was reduced to Rs.89 crores in the Second Plan. So sincere and honest efforts should be made to educate as many children as possible so as to banish illiteracy to the maximum extent possible. Only after abolition of illiteracy, quality of education as a matter of importance should come.

(5) Dearth of Trained Teachers:

There is shortage of trained teachers to make Elementary Education Universal and compulsory. Nowadays, the young teachers do not wish to work in rural areas. But the fact remains that majority of Primary Schools are in rural areas. The chief reason of non-availability of suitable teachers is that teaching work is not attractive for many persons, since the salary of primary teachers is hopelessly low.

The condition of Scheduled areas is still more miserable. The hilly and impassable jungle areas with very poor communication and transport facilities fail to attract the present day luxury-loving young men. Teachers should be provided with proper residence in the villages of their work. The question of Women teachers is very much special.

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So the question of teacher’s quarters, residential schools, especially residential Ashram Schools in the Scheduled areas should be provided. The quality of teachers can be improved by executing a training progrmme for the untrained teachers in service on basis of study-leave basis.

(6) Establishment and School Buildings:

Even the Third and Fourth All India Educational Surveys indicate that even now there are lakhs of villages and habitations without schools. There are nearly 4 lakhs schoolless villages in India which are to be given schools. It is not that easy to provide necessary funds for setting up such a large number of schools with buildings and other equipments.

In order to meet this problem of new buildings along with the existing schools in private houses, temples, verandah of rich persons, residence of teachers etc. should be met by construction of low cost houses of thatch or tile with local materials; looking to the weather conditions of certain places open air stands may be taken up in the Shanti-Niketan pattern.

All the same, the Primary schools should have accommodations of their own as far as practicable. Problem of school houses along with the problem of lack of teachers in all the primary schools can be solved through shift system in the existing schools. In order to enrol the additional age-group 6-14 children additional section rooms should be constructed.

(7) Unsuitable Curriculum:

The curriculum for primary schools is narrow and unsuitable to the local needs. The curriculum should be interesting for the children for its continuance. Learning by work should replace the emphasis on monotonous bookish knowledge. Education of craft should be given in the primary schools in accordance with the local needs and requirements. But the schemes of craft education in the primary schools should not of highly expensive ones.

(8) Wastage and Stagnation:

It is another major problem and great obstacle for universalization of Elementary Education. Out of every 100 students enrolled in class – I more than half leave schools by Class IV, only 32 pupils reach class V and only 26 reach class VIII. This is due to the lack of educational atmosphere, undesirable environment, lack of devoted teachers, poor economic condition of parents, absence of proper equipment etc.

In order to check such massive wastage and stagnation at the primary stage, existing educational system and curriculum should be reformed, teaching method should be interesting, school buildings should be adequate and neat and clean, and the parents should be educated. These may help the problem of wastage and stagnation to be solved.

(9) Natural Obstacles:

Natural barriers are the great obstacles in the way of expansion of compulsory education. The village and small habitations in areas of Himalayan regions, Kashmir, Garhwal, Almora with less population are situated in distances apart.

So also the desert areas in Rajasthan, the dense forest areas in Madhya Pradesh, Orissa, Assam and many Southern States create problems for expected enrolment. These are very very difficult areas with lack of communication and of Education and School Organization absence of transport. It is desirable to make provision, for schooling facilities even in small habitations without leaving much for mobility of small children in the severe cold, heat or heavy rains

(10) Social Evils:

Social evils like superstition, illiteracy faith in ancient conventions and customs, child marriages, untouchability, pardah system etc. create innumerable obstacle in the expansion of compulsory primary education. Still man; persons get their sons and daughters married at a very minor age against the Child Marriage Prohibition Act and deprive these school-going children of the fruits of education.

Because of illiteracy and ignorance these social evils grow. The educated young men and women should volunteer themselves to remove these evils of society in their neighbourhood. Against these social evils, the work of expansion of universal enrolment should not be slackened, since social evils flourish because of illiteracy and ignorance.

(11) Language Problem:

1961 Census reports about 826 languages and 1652 dialects in the country. The Constitution of India, 1950 mentions 14 languages, which can be made medium of education. Compulsory education has not been fully introduced among the Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes and denotified tribes in the country. This is due to the hindrances of languages as medium of education.

In the Five Year Plans the incentive programmes of free text-books, free uniform, stipends in hostels, and conversion of Residential Ashram Schools etc. do not improve matters much.

The responsibility of education of these castes and tribes, who are staggering under the weight of misery and poverty for centuries, should not be left alone on Govt. Voluntary and philanthropic organization and people should come forward to assist the Government in this sacred and significant work of the nation.

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