

**Problems of Extension of Primary
Education in Rural Areas, 1965**

1 .The Study

This study was undertaken by the Programme Evaluation organisation at the instance of Planning Commission to assess the progress achieved in the extension of Primary education in rural areas, and the problems being faced by this programme for further expansion. The main focus of the study had been on the coverage of village by primary schools, training and attitude of teachers, increase in the enrolment of children over the years, attitude of parents towards education of their children, problems of attendance, wastage & stagnation, school community relations and functioning of basic schools.

2. Objectives

Objectives of the study were to examine

- i) The extent of coverage of villages by schools and the rate of their growth since 1947;
- ii) Training equipment and-attitude of the teachers towards their job;
- iii) The increase in enrolment of children in schools;
- iv) The position regarding school enrolment among girls;
- v) Attitude of parents towards education of children, specially girls;
- vi) Impact of special efforts like mid day meals, enrolment campaigns, supply of free books etc on enrolment and attendance of children in schools;
- vii) Problems of attendance wastage and stagnation;
- viii) Schools Community relations with special reference to development of the schools as a centre of cultural and community activities in the village.

3. **Sample Size/Criteria for Selection of Sample**

16 districts one from each of the 15 States and the Union Territory of Himachal Pradesh were purposively selected for the study. These districts were selected since they represented more or less the average condition in respect of primary education in the respective States. The sample comprised of 142 villages, 132 schools, 2181 parents and 226 teachers, which were selected by adopting stratified random sampling method.

4. **Reference Period**

The study was conducted in 1961-62 and the data was collected for the years, 1947-61 & 1962.

5. **Main Findings**

1. There had been a steady increase in the financial allocations for elementary education over the plan periods.

2. The main source of finance for primary education had been the State Governments, contrary to the general feeling that the local bodies, voluntary agencies and trusts contribute substantial part of the funds for education at the primary stage.

3. There had been two folds increase in the number of primary schools since the advent of freedom. With 1946-47 as the base year, the increase in the number of primary schools worked out to 21.4% in 1950-51, 61.1% in 1955-56 and 98.1% in 1960-61.

4. The proportion of trained teachers recorded only a slight increase from 61.4% in 1955-56 to 64.3% in 1960-61. In 4 states, however, the proportion had declined. It appears that progress in respect of training arrangements had been uneven among the States and not kept pace with the opening of new schools and expansion of existing schools in many States.

5. In 1950-51, about 43 per cent of the population in the age group 6-11 years was enrolled in primary classes, in 1955-56 about 53 per cent and in 1960-61 nearly 61 per cent. There had been a steady increase in the enrolment proportion for both boys & girls.

6. The buildings or structure in the majority of the sample schools were in need of extension and improvement.

7. **Stipends** and free supply of books were reported in 14 per cent and provision of uniform in 9 percent only of the sample schools.

8. The proportion of sample schools having harijan children on roll registered a steady increase from 60.3% in 1951 to 74.2% in 1961.

9. Nearly 42 per cent of the parents were in favour of their children learning crafts. About one-half (52%) of the parents favoured inclusion in basic curriculum of some item of manual work especially sanitation drive by children.

10. Two important reasons for not sending boys to schools, as given by parents in the sample villages, were financial difficulties and the distant location of the schools.

11. Teachers recruited during the plan period (1951-56) were better qualified than those recruited earlier. The, majority of the teachers(63%),recruited during the Second Plan period (1956-61), were matriculates or had higher qualifications, whereas those with the middle or lower school qualifications predominated among those recruited before 1951. Only a small proportion of the teachers, after they had joined the service, made attempts to improve their educational status. Majority of the teachers did not undergo any regular training upto 1962.

6. **Major Suggestions**

One disturbing finding of the study is relatively low level of school going among the children of landless labourers and tenants. A study of the reasons for this state of affairs shows that financial difficulties of the parents figure predominantly as an inhibiting factor. Apparently, parents of children belonging to these groups are too poor to provide for books, stationery and even uniforms or dress for the children. Provision of assistance to members of these groups to cover expenses on such items should go a long way to push up school enrolment of these children. Further, the goal and content of elementary education need some fundamental re-thinking so that such education would be of some help to rural children in shaping their future life. These are the questions that deserve urgent consideration at the highest level.