

A study about primary education in Kerala

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Abstract

The state shall endeavor to provide, within a period of 10 years from the commencement of this Constitution, for free and compulsory education for all children until they complete the age of fourteen years" (Article 45, Part IV, Directive Principles of State Policy, The Constitution of India, 1951). In India number of programmes were launched during the last four decades like as the Operation Black Board in 1987, Mahila Samakhyain 1988, District Primary Education Programme (DPEP) in 1994 etc, for the universalization of Elementary Education. Some of these efforts have been made in the field of primary education while other for upper primary areas. Because of SSA the whole country came under the single umbrella, so in this sense, SSA has been considered as a major programme for elementary education.

Keywords: primary education, sarva shiksha abhiyan, mid day meal, block resource centre, national state domestic product

Introduction

The schools in Kerala are affiliated to Central Board of Secondary Education (CBSE), Indian Certificate of Secondary Education (ICSE), Kerala State Education and National Institute of Open Schooling (NIOS). (National curriculum framework, 2005) [1] As per the education department of Kerala, the state has shown tremendous growth in educational facilities at all levels during the last 50 years. The government of Kerala put a high percentage of budget in the development of education sector. As per the study published by Centre for Socio – economic and Environmental Studies, the dropout rates are very low in primary schools and increases in the 9th and 10th standards in Kerala. In January 2016, KERALA became the first Indian state to achieve 100 % primary Education through the literacy programme 'ATHULYAM'.

Concept

Primary education provides learning and educational activities typically designed to provide students with fundamental skills in reading, writing and mathematics. It establishes a sound foundation for learning and solid understanding of core areas of knowledge and personal development.

Literacy Rate

Kerala is the most literate state in India, with 96.2% literacy rate (September 2020). Kerala's history as a region plays a role in its literacy success. Starting in the 19th century, royalty called for the state to cover education costs. While still a colony, Kerala implemented social reform in the early 20th century that allowed access to education for lower castes and women.

School Education

School education is divided into three different stages,

1. Primary
 - a. Lower primary (LP-Class I – IV)
 - b. Upper primary (UP – Class V – VII)

2. Secondary Secondary (Class VIII – X)
3. Higher Secondary Higher Secondary (Class – XI – XII)

Primary Education

It is the basic stage in schooling. Primary is further divided into UP and LP. Apart from the primary schools, there are pre-primary institutions which include Anganwadis, Kinder gardens, Independent primary schools and other institutions attached to schools. "Understanding the total literacy in Kerala," 2020)

Table 1: Number of primary Schools in Kerala 2019

School	Government	Private Aided	Private Unaided	Total
LP School	2551	4003	158	6712
UP School	957	1870	124	2951

Table 2: Literacy Rate of Male and Female in Kerala

Gender	Percentage
Male	80.9
Female	64.6

Kerala's achievements in social development and quality of life is surely encouraging and ignifying.

The society attaches so much importance to education that the school in Kerala is really the nucleus of the social microcosm. Better education kindles the aspirations of the people and the main concern is on how to improve the quality of education. (Menon, S., 1996)^[4].

The door to door campaign undertaken by the school and teachers have enabled to bridge gender gaps, supplemented by the visible role played by PTA, MDM etc. All these interventions have contributed in uplifting the performance of sample schools. The holistic approaches sensitize the public and community about the values of education, encourages the PTA members to participate in the meetings and advocates for discontinuation of teacher's services in non – academic activities. SSA has an important role in providing the necessary ground in primary level. This lead

to community mobilization, gender empowerment and social space for the participation of marginalised sections. The access to free education enjoys horizontal equity all across ethnic classes and social identities. (Dhanuraj, 2017) [3].

Kerala

Kerala rated high in the standard of literacy rate – near universal level of primary education. Kerala is often looked upon for not only its model of development, but also its model of education. In 1860s, Travancore determined to promote primary education in Malayalam. It was “evident” wrote T. Madhava Rao the 19th century administrator, “that the education of the masses of the people must be conducted through the medium of Vernacular language”, since Travancore “abounds with indigenous schools”. (The Kerala model school, 2019) It was the task of the royalty to turn these popular centers of old – fashioned, often superstitious learning to modern ends. This policy goes along with those of British India, which emphasized higher education in English for their on benefits. Rather, Travancore aimed to create a regulated system of Vernacular, primary education inclusive of well-constructed buildings, regular hours, centralised curricula, travelling inspectors, standard examinations and perhaps most important of all, printed text books. The credit to high quality of education in Kerala cannot solely be attributed to the Royalty of Kerala, and it would be truly unfair if some credit is not given to the efforts of Christian Missionaries – progressive social movements as well as, to state interventions.

Four Distinct Periods Exhibiting the Historical Development of Education in Kerala

1. The Existing age old systems of Education and the systems developed by the Royalties
2. The 19th century, during the major part of which foreign missionary initiative was prominent and close co-operation existed between the state and the Missionaries in their educational efforts.
3. The first half of the 20th century, during which several powerful social movements played a decisive role in the promotion of education.
4. The 43 year period since the formation of Kerala state, when the elected representatives of the people and the governments in power became more responsive to the economic and social aspirations of different sections of the population, especially the educationally backward regions in northern Kerala. (Asok M,1999) [6]

The quantity of school education provided for school-age children in Kerala has been consistently much higher than in any other state in India. Kerala has one lower primary school for every square km of area, and one high school for every 4 square km. Facilities are more or less evenly distributed in both urban and rural areas. Generally, investment in education can be thought of as a composite of two kinds of investment decisions. Individuals or families make expenditure to attain education and others – individuals, institutions or society invest in providing or selling education. In Kerala, institutional investments in facilities have been matched by individual investments, which lead to the excessive growth in enrolment and average years of schooling. Apart from the various initiatives from social reform oriented community groups

and individuals in the early part of the last century, a remarkable institutional feature later on played and important positive role inclosing the gender gap in school education. In Kerala, public spending on education both as a share in the total budgeted expenditure and as a percentage of NSDP has been among the highest in the country. In recent years, Kerala is finding it difficult to sustain the current level of expenditure because of the fiscal squeeze and resource constraints. Kerala’s education system has been able to achieve gender equity in enrolment to a large extent. Our nation formulate policies with a large vision – Education for All. While formulating its educational policies, it has brought to light that, it quite often considers education as a key sector that not only needs greater focus but also greater allocation of financial resources. (Ndaruhutse, 2019) [7]

Role of Teacher in Primary Education

The teacher’s role becomes that of a helpmate whose task is to assist the children arrive at an understanding. Mastering a specific learning strategy is only the first step, which must be followed by suitable application. Teachers should focus on creating favourable conditions for the development of appreciation and adequate self – assessment among learners, beware of smoothening learner’s innate initiative and creativity in problem solving and ensure freedom of choice in their learning about the world. Teacher should know learner’s needs, interest and abilities as well as be able to suggest appropriate forms of social cooperation to specific situations in the teaching and learning process. All this is directed towards fostering a comprehensive understanding of relevant subject matter through a set of attitudes that find expression in the learner’s values, principles and ideals and underpin their personal growth. (Brandt.2019) [8]. It makes a mind-set in children, favourable on developing an understanding of cultural diversity and finding personal meaning in interaction with other people in a world of culture.

Holistic Approach in Primary Education

The cumulative effect of the reform will be the creation of liberation, choice – based education on the lines of the best practices in the world, making use of modern technology, international linkages and projections of employment opportunities and compulsions of the post COVID world. Learners should develop unbroken whole nations of the art of music for continued self-education through autonomous interaction with art. This is being practised in the COVID – 19 situation (India Today. 2020) and implemented by BRCs by appointing music teacher in primary schools in the Idukki District, in order to make students tension-free and relief to parents. The musical education in primary school helps in the following ways—

1. Artistic and figurative inquiry with view to cognising the world.
2. Feelings of belonging and altruism in one’s relationship with the world.
3. Humanistic and spiritual development.
4. Acquisition of national and universal, past and present musical cultural values.
5. Nurturing creativity.
6. Integration of learner’s personality traits into national and global artistic culture.

Conclusion

In spite of a large number of educational institutions in the state, the quality of education at all levels in Kerala has been showing a decline. The reason is the financial constraints and quantitative expansion of the sector reducing quality. Christian Missionaries and British rule along with royalty brought the modern school education system to Kerala. The reason for high literacy rate of Kerala is due to high literacy rate among girls – when a woman is educated, she will make sure that her children are well educated. There is also a pressing need to overcome the gender biases that are so deeply entrenched in the availability of educational opportunities. This can only be countered by promoting more and more progressive schemes like “Beti Bachao and Beti Pado” schemes of the government. SSA aims to provide a boost to educational planning, adequacy, capacity and efforts across different states and Union territories in India.

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