



International Journal of Humanities & Social Science Studies (IJHSSS)
A Peer-Reviewed Bi-monthly Bi-lingual Research Journal
ISSN: 2349-6959 (Online), ISSN: 2349-6711 (Print)
Volume-I, Issue-V, March 2015, Page No. 19-25
Published by Scholar Publications, Karimganj, Assam, India, 788711
Website: <http://www.ijhsss.com>

Wastage and Stagnation in Primary Schools

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Abstract

Primary education provides fundamentals of all formal education. It starts at 6 years and continues upto 10-11 years of age. Primary education is a fundamental need of life and its development. Education is a birth right of every child which must be ensured by the State or Central Government. Primary education is the minimum education for an individual which helps in the removal of the darkness of ignorance and illiteracy from his life. It makes man capable of reading, and writing and knowing the environment in which he lives. It enables him to make proper adjustment and progressive development in society. This education can identify and unfold the native potentialities of an individual for development. It can help in the effective use of the human and natural resources of a country. Therefore it becomes the obligatory duty and bounded responsibility of the Government of a welfare state to make this education available to every child. Wastage and Stagnation are two great hurdles in the way of attainment of universalisation of education in the country. Statistics show that the number of elementary schools has increased and we have now a primary school within easy walking distance from the home of every child. The enrolments in class I to V have increased, huge amount of money is spent on elementary education, but unfortunately there is not so much increase in literacy rate. Therefore, these two major leaks that is Wastage and Stagnation need to be plugged immediately. Only then education ceases to be an exercise in futility. The earlier we do, the better it will be. This paper explains the meaning of wastage and stagnation in primary schools and their causes. It also describes the measures taken to remove wastage and stagnation in primary schools.

Key Words: *Wastage, Stagnation, District Primary Education Programme, Mid-Day Meal Programme, Sarba Shiksha Abhijan.*

Meaning of wastage: Wastage means dropout of pupils i.e. leaving the schools before completing the primary course. The number of primary schools is increasing in our country every year. The enrolment in such schools is increasing every year; the expenditure on primary education has increased year after year. But unfortunately, there is not much increase in the literacy rate. Children generally join schools during the age of 5-7 years, but start dropping off from the age of 9 years. An All India Education Survey report shows that with 100 students in class I, the enrollment in class II falls to 66, in class III to 52, in class IV to 40 and in class V to 32. This is reduced further by 25 by the time they reach class VIII. In short of every 100 children enrolled in class I, only 25 are retained within the school system till they reach class VIII or the age of 14 years. Thus all students who enter the educational system do not complete the full level of the system for which they are enrolled and leave or drop out somewhere in the middle. This is known as wastage. Our Indian Constitution declared to provide free and compulsory education to all children till they are of 14 years of age. So if any child leaves school before this stage it becomes a case of wastage. When students leave the school before the completion of stage of education, the time, money and energy spent on his education is a great national wastage. In India at primary level this wastage is estimated to the extent of 60%.

A study of the working group appointed by Kothari Commission 1966 revealed the following facts:

- (i) Wastage is minimum in class I and II
- (ii) Wastage is more in girls than boys
- (iii) Wastage in hills is more than the plains.

This shows that hardly 50% children enjoy the benefits of education. A UNESCO study lists India among countries where the drop-out in primary schools is very high. Prof. J.P. Naik had aptly

remarked 'of every 100 children who are admitted in primary Schools in class I, about $\frac{1}{3}$ drop off at the end of class I and only $\frac{1}{3}$ reach class V.

The Indian Government, after the attainment of independence, stressed the need of primary education and provided funds for its development, but a scrutiny of statistics reveals that the desired success has not been achieved due to certain reasons. Since the children leave the school before completion of their courses, the time of both the teacher and the taught are wasted. The available statistics reveal that till 1992, 40% of the children have dropped out before completing primary education.

Causes of Wastage:

- (1) Economic causes – It has been estimated that sixty five percent of the causes of wastage are due to economic reasons. As the income of about fifty percent of our country is very low they have to depend on direct or indirect earning by their children. It has been found that in many cases the children are admitted in schools at the age of six plus. At about the age of nine they are withdrawn from schools in order to help the family by doing some work, like seeking some employment etc. Poverty is also directly responsible for wastage.
Educational institutions are suffering from paucity of funds. In village primary schools, students generally come bare footed, their clothes are tattered and dirty. They do not take interest in the education of their children nor they can help them in their studies. All these things lead to great wastage.
- (2) Social Causes: –
 - (i) There are some backward classes, like the scheduled or tribal people, who do not take interest in the education of their children. They do not enjoy adequate social facilities, because of their social set-up. They are reluctant in keeping their children in schools.
 - (ii) Some of the parents are illiterate and as such do not understand the importance of education. They are prejudiced and steeped deep in ignorance. They do not realise that their education is of vital importance.
 - (iii) Some people are orthodox and do not like girl's education. Such people withdraw their daughters from the school at an early age.
 - (iv) Girls help their mothers at home. Therefore, they are generally withdrawn from school without the completion of primary education to assist their mother in domestic affairs.
 - (v) Early marriage system is another hurdle. The girls are married early. Therefore they can't continue their education even at primary stage.
 - (vi) Most of the primary schools are co-educational institutions. Orthodox people do not like their daughters to study in these schools. So, as soon as they are a little grown up, they are withdrawn.
- (3) Educational Causes: – Present primary education is not worth while both for the children and the parents. The following are some of the educational causes which lead to wastage and stagnation.
 - (i) The curriculum of primary education is not in accordance with the real life of the children.
 - (ii) Individual attention is not paid to the children.
 - (iii) The environment of primary schools does not meet the psychological needs of children so, they play truant.
 - (iv) Teaching methods adopted in primary schools are dull, boring.
 - (v) Teachers of primary schools do not take interest in their job. Neither they attend to their duties regularly, nor do they pay heed to the difficulties and problems of the children.
 - (vi) Ours is an examination ridden education. Fear of examination always remains in the mind of children. Because of this fear they develop repulsive attitude towards education.
 - (vii) The provision of instructional material in primary schools is not adequate.
 - (viii) There is lack of healthy contact between parents and teacher etc.
 - (ix) Most of the parents feel that education imparted to their children is useless. It does not train them for better work. On the contrary it isolates the children from habits of work. So they think it better to withdraw their children from the school.
- (4) Defective administration – Our educational system can not be said to be completely free from any defects. There are very few schools which can claim to be successful in making the mental, physical and moral development of the Child. In most of the classes the standard of teachers, lack

of educational implements on aim and there is a great lack of educational buildings built in healthy environment. In such condition neither the students are able to throw themselves heart and soul into the sacred task of acquiring and learning of knowledge nor the teachers are able to do their teaching work with complete enthusiasm and skill.

- (5) Bad environment – Ordinarily the students have to pass their time in vicious environment in schools as well as outside the schools. In each class there are a number of such boys whose habits and behavior, method of conversation etc. are deplorable. Such types of students never sincerely aim to pass their class every year, and other students by coming in to contact with them start ignoring their studies.
- (6) Pupil's ill health – It has been observed that for several years the physical conditions of the students has been deteriorating. It is because of the lack of edible things, lack of nourishing food, and because of the increase of different diseases, because of being weak and ill, majority of Indian students is not able to devote properly to their studies and consequently they are not able to complete their course within the prescribed period.
- (7) Illiteracy of the parents and guardians – Being illiterate, parents fail to understand the cultural and social importance of the education. Consequently even they admit their children in some schools, they take them out of these schools after some time, because from their point of view this is a wastage of time.
- (8) Natural calamities like flood, drought and epidemic diseases disrupt educational activities in school.

Meaning of Stagnation: Stagnation means failure in the class i.e. repetition of classes by pupil. By stagnation we mean that a student continues to remain in one class for more than a year or the prescribed course is not completed within the allotted time. Stagnation is a major factor responsible for wastage in primary education, both directly and indirectly. If a student completes five years courses in seven years' time it naturally means that he has wasted two years' time and labour. Besides, if the student consistently fails in a class, he loses interest in studies. The parents also get discouraged and lose interest in the child's education. Generally, in the end, the child gives up studies and either gets into some trade thereby helping his parents to supplement their income or turns a vagabond menacing the society and thus increasing the burden of the nation. In this way stagnation damages the primary education to a great extent. Hence, it is necessary to seriously deliberate over the causes of this stagnation.

Gokhale Institute of Politics and Economics conducted an investigation and pointed out that stagnation was as greater evil than wastage. The Kothari Commission collected data regarding enrolment in Class – I to VIII in 29 districts of our country. On an analysis of the data it concluded that –

- (i) Stagnation is higher in Class – I
- (ii) It is reduced considerably in higher classes.
- (iii) At the Higher primary stage, stagnation decreases.
- (iv) On the whole, stagnation among girls is greater than that among boys' and
- (v) The extent of Stagnation show considerable variation from area to area.

Thus the problem of stagnation is very acute at the primary stage in India.

Causes of Stagnation:

- (1) Heavy and uninteresting curriculum – The children studying in the primary classes are mostly in the tender age group of six to eleven years, and they have to study five subjects including arithmetic and science which are uninteresting for the children of this tender age. So, they find it difficult to complete this huge and un-absorbing curriculum within the prescribed period. They therefore, fall victim to stagnation.
- (2) Irregular attendance – Some pupils are irregular in attending schools due to indifference of their parents who are either illiterate or too busy to care for their kids. The failure of the school to attract its pupils and adjust its study hours to their needs also contributes to the irregularity of attendance of pupils.
- (3) Absence of definite admission rules – There are no definite rules regarding admission in

primary classes. Any child of any age within the age group may seek admission in any class. The result is that there is no co-ordination and balance between one's age and mental development and consequently the child may have to repeat a year.

- (4) Unsuitable atmosphere and conditions – Mostly two different types of atmosphere are faced by the student when he gets admission in the class. The first is that of his family or locality and the second is that of the school which comprises of children of various families and different social strata. It is generally not possible for all the children to strike a balance between the two. This mal adjustment sometimes not only causes stagnation but also becomes responsible for juvenile delinquency. Delinquency being an easy way out of the problems faced by the young students does spread fast among children at this vulnerable age.
Sometimes the atmosphere at schools or home being unfavorable for education causes stagnation. Many children do not get sufficient time to study at homes with the result that neither they complete the home task nor the prescribed courses within the expected time. Hence, they do not achieve success in the examination. The stagnation is, therefore, natural in this case.
- (5) A physical weakness of students – A healthy body possesses a healthy mind. Our children do not get balanced diet with the result that their physical development gets retarded. The mind and the memory, therefore, do not develop to the desired extent and the children fail to cope up with their course within the prescribed time.
- (6) Social evils – Sometimes some evil social practices also become major hurdles responsible for stagnation. Even today early marriage takes place and the boys and girls get involved at a young age with married life. They lose interest in studies, and therefore fail in examinations. Besides, on boys falls the responsibility of supporting the family and therefore they leave studies to take up a trade. Girls in particular are forbidden to pursue their education after marriage. Moreover, they have to at their tender age, begin to house-keeping and rear a family.
- (7) Defective Education Systems – Due to shortage of teachers, a teacher has generally to take many classes and teach various subjects. Under these circumstances it is simply a folly to expect that the students will be able to complete their courses in time. Lack of trained teachers, dearth of educational material, unsuitable school buildings are some of the other causes responsible for stagnation in primary classes.
- (8) Defective Pattern of Examination – Through the present examination system efforts are made to assess the knowledge gained by the student in a year within a few hours through some questions. Least importance is attached to the work a student does throughout the year. If due to any reason the student, despite knowing the subject matter, fails to answer in a particular fashion his entire year is lost and he once again has to repeat the class. Thus, the prevailing system of examination, besides being full of defects, also helps to increase stagnation.
- (9) Stagnation in class - I – Besides the above causes which apply to the primary stage as a whole, there are certain causes which are peculiar to class - I:
 - a. Heterogeneity of the age composition of students. Some children join late and they find it difficult to adjust psychologically with their peers who are of a lower age.
 - b) Making fresh admission throughout the year.
 - (i) Overcrowding in the class.
 - (ii) Inability of the teachers to use play way techniques.
 - (iii) Poor and illiterate parents consider it most profitable to use their children in household work than sending to school.

Measures to remove wastage and stagnation: We have acquainted ourselves with some of the causes of wastage and stagnation in education that are responsible for wastage and stagnation. Many measures have been taken by both Central and State Governments to remove wastage and stagnation. Now we have to deliberate on how to free education from the causes that are responsible for wastage and stagnation. Some suggestions to remove these causes are mentioned below –

- (1) Improvement of Curriculum – It is necessary to effect changes in the tough and burdensome curriculum in order to avoid wastage and stagnation. Wastage and stagnation may be avoided by making the subjects of science and arithmetic light and more interesting. The method of teaching these subjects should also be made attractive and the number of subjects should also be reduced.

- (2) Regular Admission Policy – The administrators and the inspectors should formulate a uniform policy and strictly observe it. Wastage and stagnation may be checked by framing rules regarding the age and the stage of mental and physical development for the purposes of admission.
- (3) Improvement of Atmosphere – Changes in the home, society and school atmosphere should be made in order to stop wastage and stagnation. The changes made should aim at improving and making the atmosphere healthy. To achieve this, it is desirable that the public, the teachers and the government should co-operate. It is necessary to remove the evil social practices and false values. Registrations should be imposed on indecent films, film-songs, etc. Much success in the sphere may be achieved by providing healthy entertainment to children under the supervision of teachers and adult education to the illiterate parents.
- (4) Improvement of Health – Physical development is necessary for mental development of students, but the tragedy is that most of the parents in our country are unable to provide nourishing food for their children. In view of the helplessness of the parents it is the responsibility of the state to take over the charge of providing food to the future citizens of the country. It is, therefore, necessary to provide milk and other nourishing food to the school going children. This is necessary for removing stagnation and for building up healthy citizens.
- (5) Improvement in Teaching Method – The prevailing teaching methods being unpsychological and unattractive cause stagnation. The problem of stagnation may be solved to a large extent if psychological systems prevailing in other developed countries are adopted in this country, too. In adopting these systems we will face the difficulty of financial resources and sufficient number of trained teachers. This difficulty may be overcome if love for education is created in rich persons.
- (6) Stopping child Marriage – Although child marriage has been proclaimed an offence under Act of 1930 and other Amendments to the Act, yet this social practice continues. Unless the society looks down on this practice with contempt, it will not be stopped. As such, it is the duty of the public and leaders to put an end to this practice. The government, too, should take effective steps to ensure the implementation of the act.
- (7) Reforms in the Examination system – The system of examination should be based on the principle that education is imparted for success in examinations. The system, therefore, should examine the whole year's work and promotions should be given after testing the real knowledge acquired during the period of study. There should be continuous comprehensive evaluation (C.C.E) of the performance of the pupils, and of their day to day activities.

For minimizing wastage and stagnation, Kothari Commission has made the following recommendations:

- (i) Examinations at the end of class I should be abolished and first two classes and where
- (ii) possible, even class I to IV should be regarded as one unit.
- (iii) Introducing a year of pre-school education
- (iv) Adoption of play-way techniques in class I
- (v) Providing 'literacy classes' for a period of one year at least to all children in the age group
- (vi) 11-14 who are not attending schools
- (vii) Right type of trained teachers should be appointed. Lady teachers have proved better in a. handling young children.
- (viii) The school should be properly equipped with teaching material, furniture, building etc.
- (ix) Medical facilities, free books to poor students and mid-day meals should be given.
- (x) Admission should be restricted to certain months, especially in the beginning of the year
- (xi) Class I should be made a homogeneous unit of age group 6-7 years.
- (xii) Educational system should be made realistic.
- (xiii) No failure at this stage.
- (xiv) Provision for adult education be made so as to create parent's consciousness and
- (xv) interest in the education of their wards.

Some of the Implementing Schemes are:

Alternative Model for Elementary Education: The governments' major national strategy for promoting early childhood development, the Integrated Child Development Scheme (ICDS) Programme was launched in 1975. Under this programme expectant and nursing mother and children

up to the age of 6 years benefit from a package of services including medical checks, immunizations, supplementary feeding, pre school education, health and nutrition education. The ICDS, the world's largest early child hood programs, includes converging interventions for health, nutrition, psychological and cognitive development of pre-school children. This programme is primarily meant for the under privileged pre-school children and is run through the centers, called Anganwadi Centres. With the help of Anganwadi under the Integrated Child Development Scheme Programme, pre-primary education would be provided for 3 years and thereafter in continuation and conjunction, at the same location, primary education would be organized. This would be evaluated by a public examination on the basis of which admission would be made for further continuation of education from class – VI to X. In this model, girls would be able to come to the school with sibilings, who would be taken care of in Anganwadis.

District Primary Education Programme (DPEP): District Primary Education Programme was launched in India in 1994. It is one of the largest education project ever taken in the world. Some of the objectives of DPEP are to

- (i) Provide all children with access to primary education (class I to V)
- (ii) Reduce primary drop-out rates for all students to less than 10%
- (iii) Reduce difference in enrolment drop-out rates and learning achievement among gender and social groups to less than 5 %.

Sarba Shiksha Abhijan (SSA): Sarba Shiksha Abhijan is an educational scheme. The scheme has been formulated for universalisation of primary education. The main aim of Sarba Shiksha Abhijan is to provide useful and practical primary education to all the children of 6 -14 years by 2010. Some of the objectives of Sarba Shiksha Abhijan (SSA) are –

- (i) To give more importance to the education of the girls
- (ii) To provide equal access of education of children belonging to schedule castes, tribes and living below poverty line
- (iii) To publicize the concept of education among the common people.
- (iv) To make the people conscious that the schools and other educational institutions belong to them.
- (v) To introduce a programme of literacy, library, women empowerment, games and sports, to establish a relation among the schools and the public.

Mid-Day Meal Programme (MDMP): The children of today are the citizens of tomorrow. The Mid Day Meal Programme for the children was initially viewed as an act of charity. MDMP was initiated in 1995 for the purpose of not only improving childrens' health, but also increasing their school participation in terms of enrolment, regularity in attendance and performance leading to certain levels of achievement of objectives of school education. From 1st July 2005 all Mid-Day Meal Schemes includes a component of micro nutrient supplementation covering essential micro nutrients such as Vitamin A, Iron, Iodine etc.

Reading Enhancement Programme: This Programme has been launched in 19th September, 2007, for classes I and II in collaboration with Pratham (Parhim - Sikim). Goal of this programme is to make children ready to recognise alphabets, read simple words. Children should be able to read unseen paragraph without conjoined letter with understanding.

Meena Campaign: Meena Campaign was launched in 2008. Meena Camp is established in the Tea Garden and will be conducted in collaboration with UNICEF. Objectives of this Meena Campaign is to make an attempt to eliminate problem of girls education in tea gardens, char areas.

Conclusion: The present study deals with the causes of wastage and stagnation and the remedial measures taken to remove the same. Only by way of implementing the Government schemes it may not be possible to remove wastage and stagnation fully. It is only possible when the teachers take the pivotal role in transacting the lessons and curriculum as a whole in the classroom situations. Education is one of the factors affecting the physical and mental growth of a child. The SSA is doing yeoman's service so far as enrolment of pupils in the age group 6 - 14 is concerned. Mere enrolment is not enough. The teachers are in collaboration with the parents, Government machinery, Panchayats to see that there is no instance of wastage and stagnation. The teacher as a manager of the teaching

learning process, should plan, organize, lead and control the effects of all the available new material resources involved in the process of teaching learning in such a way as to achieve the teaching learning objectives with maximum efficiency and effectiveness and that too, in keeping conformity with the Constitutional guarantee to Right to Education.

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