
Research Paper



A STUDY OF INTER-DISTRICT DISPARITIES IN ENROLMENT OF PRIMARY SCHOOL STUDENTS IN HIMACHAL PRADESH FROM THE ACADEMIC SESSION 2001-2002 TO 2010-2011

Rakesh Kumar

Research Scholar, Department of Education, HPU, Shimla

ABSTRACT

Primary education constitutes the foundation for a child to build up his/her career. It has two functions to perform. One is to prepare child for higher formal education and thereby to lay the foundation for his/her future life; and other is to make the individual literate and bring the required development in different aspects, which is essential and helpful to become a good and useful citizen in later life. From the history of Himachal Pradesh it is evident that there has been phenomenal growth of education in the State after 1951 and particularly after the formation of larger Himachal which comprised of twelve districts. The present study related to inter-district disparities in enrolment of primary school students in Himachal Pradesh from the academic session 2001-2002 to 2010-2011 was undertaken for bringing qualitative improvement in school education. The findings of the present study will point out some suggestions and guidelines and schemes for the effective implementation of primary school education. The present study revealed that there is continuous decline in the enrolment of government primary school students in all districts of Himachal Pradesh from the session 2001-2002 to 2010-11. Maximum decline in enrolment of primary school students from the session 2001-2002 to 2010-11 was noticed in Kangra, Mandi and Shimla districts of Himachal Pradesh. Minimum decline in enrolment of primary school students from the session 2002-2003 to 2010-11 was observed in Chamba and Lahaul-Spiti districts of Himachal Pradesh.

KEYWORDS: Disparities, Enrolment and Primary Education.

INTRODUCTION

Early period of formal education is known as primary education and its duration extends to five years. Primary education is followed by upper primary education and its duration extends to three years. Primary and upper primary education constitutes the elementary education which is the foundation for a child to build up his/her career. It has two functions to perform. One is to prepare child for higher formal education and thereby to lay the foundation for his/her future life; and other is to make the individual literate and bring the minimum required development in different aspects, which is essential and helpful to become a good and useful citizen in later life. This period of schooling is very significant period for making child's future growth and personality and plays a vital role in the socio-economic development of the nation. The strength of nation rest upon the educational foundation of its people, so elementary education deserves the highest priority not only on grounds of social justice and democracy, but also for raising the competence of the average workers and for increasing educational productivity. In conclusion we can say that primary education is the springboard for developing all the necessary qualities and the fountain head of all the learning experiences for making the child a "balanced and mature adult and further elementary education is crucial for spreading literacy, which is basic requirement for the effective functioning of democratic

institutions, economic development and modernization of the social structure. It also represents an indispensable first step towards the provision of equality of opportunity to all its citizens (Pathania, 2009). Elementary education means education of children from the age of 6 to 14 years. In the present content, elementary education refers to education being implied from class I to VIII.

Education from class I-V is termed as 'primary education' and from class VI-VIII is termed as 'upper primary education.' In Five-Year Plans elementary education is divided into two stages (i) A five year course comprising the age group of 6 to 11 (ii) A three year course comprising the age group of 11 to 14.

From the history of Himachal Pradesh it is evident that there has been phenomenal growth of education in the state after 1951 and particularly after the formation of larger Himachal which comprised of twelve districts. However, the growth and development of school education has not been uniform and there have been disparities in various accounts. In order to bring all the districts at par in the developmental status of education it is thought to be essential to find out the areas where certain districts of the state are still lagging behind so that the causes for the same may be curtailed and suitable remedial measures be suggested to policy makers and complementing agencies. Further such kinds of studies have hardly been taken up especially in context of school education in Himachal Pradesh. This study also tries to consolidate various data about school education in Himachal Pradesh which is not consolidated in any one department yet. The study is expected to bring about certain crucial issues which are considered important for bringing qualitative improvement in school education. It provides the educational administrators, policy makers and other agencies with an idea the loopholes in the formulation/implementation of the scheme of school education. The study proves to be of tremendous help for all those who are directly or indirectly involved in governments' endeavors for translating the target of UEE into reality. The findings of the present study points out some suggestions and guidelines with help of which intervention strategies and schemes for the effective implementation of school education.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

The study was conducted to achieve the following objectives.

1. To study the inter-district disparities in enrolment of primary school students in Himachal Pradesh from the academic session 2001-2002 to 2010-2011.
2. To provide suggestions for improving quality of primary education in government institutions of Himachal Pradesh.

DELIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

The present study was delimited in its scope to the following aspects.

1. The study focused only on school education i.e. Primary level of formal education from academic session 2001-2002 to 2010-2011.
2. Only Government schools were taken for the present study.

OPERATIONAL DEFINITIONS OF TERMS USED

Following terms have been used in the study.

1. Inter- District Disparities in Primary Education: In the present study it refers to inter-district differences in the enrollment of primary school students studying in the institutions managed by the Government of Himachal Pradesh.

2. Primary School Students: Primary school students refer to the students studying in government primary schools in Himachal Pradesh from class I-V.

RESEARCH METHOD USED

In the execution of the present study descriptive survey method of research was employed. Descriptive surveys investigate phenomena in their natural setting. Such surveys, however, provide

information useful to the solution of problems, making future improvements and at times provide data to form the basis of research of a more fundamental nature.

SAMPLING AND DATA COLLECTION

In order to achieve the objectives of the present study all the districts of Himachal Pradesh was selected. To have the first hand information regarding different aspects of problem under study, the information was collected through observation method, and questionnaire developed for school teachers. In the present study, a desk work has been done in the various libraries including Himachal Pradesh University, District Library, Secretariat Library and various Ph.D. Thesis, M.Phil. Dissertations, M.Ed. Dissertations, Dissertation Abstracts International, Educational Survey, Journals and News Papers etc. were further consulted. The data was collected through various secondary sources which are listed below:

- Annual reports of SSA published by State Govt./Central Govt.
- District Abstracts and State Abstracts of Economics and Statistical Department, Govt. of Himachal Pradesh.
- Implementation Framework for SSA published by Ministry of HRD, Govt. of India.
- Reports of Educational Statistics published by SPO, SSA, Govt. of H.P.
- Status Reports of SSA published by different State Governments in India.
- Various annual work budget plans of DIETs.
- State annual work budget plans of SPO, SSA, Govt. of H. P.
- Various Annual Plans, Govt. of India.
- District Information System of Education data from SPO, SSA, Govt. of H. P.
- School Records of Sampled schools.

TOOL USED

A schedule was developed for obtaining the data pertaining to district-wise enrolment of Government Primary school students from the academic session 2001-02 to 2010-11.

DATA ANALYSIS AND MAJOR FINDINGS

The district-wise enrolment of government primary school students in Himachal Pradesh from 2001-2002 to 2010-11 is given below in Table-1.

Table-1: District-Wise enrolment of Government Primary School Students in Himachal Pradesh from 2001-2002 to 2010-11

Districts	2001-2002	2002-2003	2003-2004	2004-2005	2005-2006	2006-2007	2007-2008	2008-2009	2009-2010	2010-2011	Difference/ Decline
Bilaspur	33691	32684	29552	28404	26901	25449	23445	22170	20903	20099	13592
Chamba	N.A.	50701	61080	59469	56615	56509	54697	52661	50773	50606	95
Hamirpur	35480	32215	31140	29991	28643	26665	24807	22749	21190	20283	15197
Kangra	118084	118180	113278	110189	104304	98309	91203	82844	74937	67799	50285
Kinnaur	8390	7439	7893	7658	7369	7208	6792	6300	5941	6097	2293
Kullu	48113	45829	45174	43023	41647	39675	37344	35572	34073	33332	14781
Lahaul & Spiti	2964	2791	2673	2496	2594	2388	2196	2166	2103	2296	668
Mandi	96461	91235	87417	83468	79740	75317	70732	67045	64186	62053	34408
Shimla	N.A.	74255	68425	66223	64897	62122	58457	55329	52663	52207	22048
Sirmaur	61819	57117	55488	51557	48999	50046	47554	46566	44939	44870	16949
Solan	50162	46739	45827	45115	43316	42067	39681	38685	36964	37397	12765
Una	45142	43161	41394	40141	38480	37859	35494	33873	32318	31333	13809

Source:

- Statistical Branch, Directorate of Education, Himachal Pradesh, Shimla, Census.
- District Information System of Education, Data as on 31-12-11.

- Deputy Director Office of the concerned District.
- In case of Chamba & Shimla districts the initial data was taken from 2002-2003 as the data from 2001-02 was not available.
- It can be easily observed from the Table -1 that there is continuous decline in the enrolment of government primary school students in all districts of Himachal Pradesh from the session 2001-2002 to 2010-11 except Chamba district.
- There is also continuous decline in the enrolment of government primary school students in Chamba district from the session 2003-2004 to 2010-11.
- The enrolment of government primary school students has decreased in Bilaspur District from 33691 in 2001-2002 to 20099 in 2010-11, in Hamirpur 35480 in 2001-2002 to 20283 in 2010-11.
- In district Kangra the enrollment dropped from 118084 in 2001-2002 to 67799 in 2010-11, in Kinnaur 8390 in 2001-2002 to 6097 in 2010-11, in Kullu 48113 in 2001-2002 to 33332 in 2010-11.
- The enrolment of government primary school students has decreased in Lahaul & Spiti from 2964 in 2001-2002 to 2296 in 2010-11, in Mandi 96461 in 2001-2002 to 62053 in 2010-11, in Shimla 74255 in 2002-2003 to 52207 in 2010-11.
- Similarly in Sirmaur district enrollment of government primary school students dropped from 61819 in 2001-2002 to 44870 in 2010-11, in Solan 50162 in 2001-2002 to 37397 in 2010-11 and in Una 45142 in 2001-2002 to 31333 in 2010-11.
- Maximum decline in enrolment of primary school students from the session 2001-2002 to 2010-11 was observed in Kangra, Mandi and Shimla districts of Himachal Pradesh. In Kangra, Mandi and Shimla districts of Himachal Pradesh maximum decline of 50285, 34408 and 22045 primary school students was noticed from the session 2001-2002 of Kangra and Mandi Districts and 2002-03 of Shimla district to 2010-11.
- Minimum decline in enrolment of primary school students from the session 2002-2003 to 2010-11 was observed in Chamba and Lahaul-Spiti districts of Himachal Pradesh i.e. 95 and 668 respectively.
- In other districts of Himachal Pradesh viz. Kullu, Hamirpur, Una, Sirmaur, Solan, and Bilaspur the decline in the enrolment of government primary school students from the session 2001-2002 to 2012-13 was 14781, 15197, 13809, 16949, 12765 and 13592 students.

REFLECTIONS

Many factors are responsible for the decline in enrolment of government primary school students in the state of Himachal Pradesh. Other research studies conducted by other agencies in the state also reported the same results and reasoned that mushrooming growth of private institutions near the government schools is the one factor and the other factors that are responsible for the decline of enrolment of primary school students are preference of parents towards private institutions, lack of number of teachers per school, limited facilities in the government schools, poor quality of teaching in these Govt. institutions, lack of seriousness on the part of government regarding timely appointment of teachers and maintenance of quality etc. There is urgent need to probe the situation further and remedial measures should be taken to improve the enrolment of primary school students in the state. Thousands of primary school students are shifting every year from government primary schools to nearby private English medium schools in the state. On the one hand it increases the pressure on the private institutions and on the other in spite of providing various facilities to government schools the results are not evident either quantitatively or qualitatively.

EDUCATIONAL IMPLICATIONS

The results of the present study have following implications for education.

- ❖ Primary education is the base of whole school education and higher education so it is very necessary that the policy of single or two teachers per school should be discouraged. One teacher per class/section or five teachers must be provided in the primary schools. The

Government has started the process of filling the vacant posts. Well trained, professionally qualified and competent candidates should only be appointed at this crucial stage of education.

- ❖ The decline in class I enrollment in government schools can be attributed to decline in the intake. The schools in which the intake has gone to single digit can be merged with nearby schools, keeping in mind the access criteria. Where ever, it is not possible due to natural barriers or such other conditions, only such schools should be allowed to continue. The services of the teachers of the merging schools can be utilized in the same merged schools in place of rationalization. The transfer of the teachers after the completion of the session is a good step taken by the government. It should not be violated at the cost of the education of the children.
- ❖ The pre-school component of ICDS must be attached to the adjoining school and it should be imparted in the same campus where the child is to continue school education. There should be an umbrella body to bring different departments like women and child development and Elementary education work towards a common goal. The tracking of the child from the age 3 years should be started by their body to catch the child for the admission in government school.
- ❖ The government must take steps to introduce softer aspects like 'smarter uniform' and greater discipline in the schools. It must ensure that each and every child gets a chance to participate in all the activities organized in the school.
- ❖ The physical presence of the teachers during teaching days must be ensured by the Education Department. Different programmes like workshops and seminars etc. should be planned and organized during vacations and teachers attending programmes should be compensated for the same
- ❖ The government should take steps to equip the classrooms with modern teaching facilities to make classroom teaching more attractive in its schools. The libraries should be made functional so that the students may take advantage of the same. It must engage agencies for the cleanliness and maintenance of the toilets in the schools.

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