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A study of learning levels of students in primary schools

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Abstract
This paper studies the learning level of students in state run Primary Schools of district Gurugram, located in National Capital Region (NCR). The analysis was carried out by adopting a standard tool developed by ASER for similar purpose. An experimental study is carried out on 180 and 178 students of class 3rd and 5th respectively sampled through random stratified sampling. It was observed that learning level of students is not upto the desired level as prescribed by RTE and hence need to be improved.

Keywords: RTE, learning level, education and learning outcomes

1. Introduction

Education is both a human right and an indispensable means of realizing other human rights. It acts as catalyst for economic, social growth and human development and has a vital role in empowering women, safeguarding children, promoting human rights and democracy, protecting the environment, creating equal opportunity and poverty alleviation. In United Nation's Millennium Development Goals (MDG) achieving universal primary education by 2015 is seen as mean to accomplish several other MDG's like poverty, health, nutrition fertility etc. India, itself as a responsible country, is abided by various Constitutional and International commitments, to provide Free and Compulsory Elementary Education to its children within age of 6-14.

At retrospect to these commitments; in India the modern system of elementary education in India is said to have begun with the Charter Act of 1813. After that various reports like Macaulay's Minutes of1835, Wood's Despatch of 1854, Report of the first Indian Education Commission, 1882-83, report of the Hartog Committee of 1929 and Zakir Hussain Report of 1937 which recommended a national system of education in the pre-independence era have landmarked British patterned education in India.In the post-independence era, notable developments were the Second Education Commission, 1952, the Kothari Commission, 1964-66, the National Education Policy, 1986, Rammurthi Committee, 1990, Janardan Reddy Committee, 1991, Programme of Action (PoA), 1992, Saikia Committee, 1996, Tapas Majumdar Committee, 1999 and National Curriculum Frame Work (NCF), 2005. All these committees and commissions has recommended for quality Universal Elementary Education (UEE) for all children of country by apprehending the constitutional provisions enshrined in Article 45 of Constitution mentioned in Directive Principle of State. Based upon this government has initiated a series of programmes like DPEP, Operation Blackboard SSA, and RMSA for efficient functioning of the Elementary Education System. But it is unfortunate that despite of enormous efforts the goal of 100% Universalisation of Elementary Education is unachieved even after 60 years of independence. Rallying on the Supreme Court comment ", All for Education, Education for All" and 86th Constitutional Amendment Act, 2002, revising Article 21 of constitution to include Right to Education in Fundamental Rights similar to right of life. After amending Article 21A (Right to Education) of Indian Constitution its operative part read as follow: "The State shall provide free and compulsory education to all children of the age of six to fourteen years in such manner as the State may, bylaw, determine."

Parents send their children to school because they believe they will acquire the skills, abilities, values and habits that will enable them to become productive adults and Government of India has implemented a range of measures to ensure that schooling is indeed accessible to all children. With 13% of the country's population currently under six years of age, the country's ability to deliver these outcomes will affect its future prosperity in no small measure. Over the past decade, India's annual budget for elementary education has risen steadily, and is currently Rs. 21,000 crore. Basic school infrastructure has been put in place across the country: classrooms and toilets have been built, in many states thousands of teachers have been hired, and most villages now have a school within one kilometer. This remarkable push towards universal coverage has led to more than 96% of all children being enrolled in school. As an effect of these initiatives we have are able to send almost every child to school but what students learn in school is still a controversial un-achieved issue.

Literacy and numeracy are essential components of learning, the basic building blocks without which desired schooling outcomes, however defined, cannot take place. Yet despite massive investments in primary education, many children are not acquiring even basic abilities in reading and arithmetic. The Annual Status of education Report (ASER), conduct survey each year since 2005 in all rural districts of the country, shows that in 2010,53% of Std 5 children in rural India could read a Std 2 level text and 36% could solve a three digit by one digit division problem. Nationally, this situation has hardly changed over the six year period for which ASER

data is available. The Annual Status of Education Report (ASER 2012) by Pratham [1] shows that the number of Class V students who could not read a Class II level text or solve a simple arithmetic problem has increased. In 2010, 46.3% of kids in this category failed to make the cut and this shot up to 51.8% in 2011 and 53.2% in 2012.

While there was little difference in learning level outcomes between students studying in government schools with regard to private schools, children who received private tutoring did better. Discontented with government provided education, parents are turning towards private schooling with a vengeance. The number of 6-14 year olds enrolled in private schools has jumped from 18.7% in 2006 to 28.3% in 2012. The Planning Commission of India in 12th five year plan targeted focus on raising standards of quality in teaching and faculty. In 2012, more than 40% of children (age 6-14 years) in J&K, Punjab, Haryana, Rajasthan, UP and Meghalaya were enrolled in private schools. This percentage was 60% in states like Kerala and Manipur.

From above discussion one thing engraved that during long journey of formal education in India we have achieved lot on quantitative front but on qualitative front we are still under achiever. Also there a lot of difference in data available from government sources and that of private educational outfits/NGO's. From April 2013 RTE the grace period to maintain facilities and standard as per RTE act has over and now we have left with no other option except to provide quality education to each and every child in the age group 6-14 years, as mandated by act.

This research paper is based on assessing the learning level of students of 3rd and 5th class in Govt. schools of district Gurugram. We also try to find out the functioning and the facilities provided to schools in reference to RTE norm.

2. Objectives of Study

The main objective of this study is to know the quality of educational transaction happening in Government run schools in district Gurugram in the preview of RTE act. Thematic objectives of this study are:

1. To know the learning level class 3rd and 5th students in government rum Primary Schools in Gurugram district.
2. To focus whether necessary material and human infrastructure to realize RTE is available in schools.

3. Methodology and Data Collection

3.1 Survey Techniques

The methodology provides an understanding of how research can be conducted and organized in order to get desired data. This research is conducted for quantitative purpose. In order to collect field data we have adopted two well-known quantitative research methods viz. direct observation and oral test/ written test of students. Observation is a qualitative way of gathering data by watching behavior, events or noting physical characteristics in their natural setting. The main advantage of direct observation is that an event, institution, facility, process can be studied in its natural setting, thereby providing a richer understanding of the situation. Similarly through oral test we come to know about exact learning level of students of class 3rd and 5th in three major subject's viz. Hindi, Mathematics and English.

3.2 Sample Size

Total 358 students from 18 primary schools in Gurugram district covering all the 4 blocks. By selecting total 20 students (10 students for each grade 3rd & 5th) from each school to assess their learning outcomes.

4. Findings

This section will elaborate finding of our research study. Sub-section 3.1 will provides findings related to school infrastructure, sub-section 3.2 will give that to learning level in district Gurugram.

4.1 Learning Level Out Comes of Standard 3rd

The learning level of students in different subjects is different subjects. Annexure–V gives data set obtained for analysis of primary data. Following figures represent learning level of students.

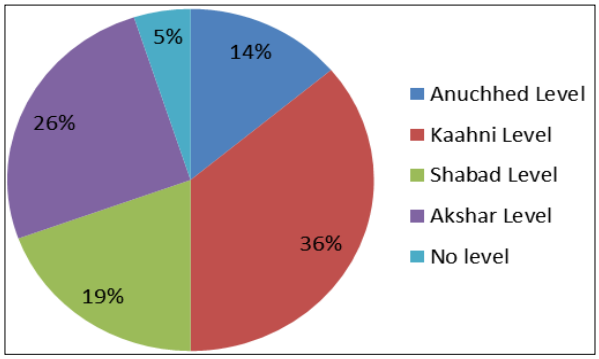

Fig 1: Class 3rd Hindi (N=180)

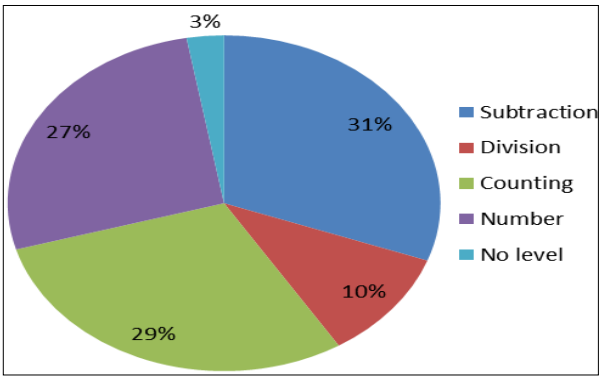

Fig 2: Class 3rd Maths (N=180)

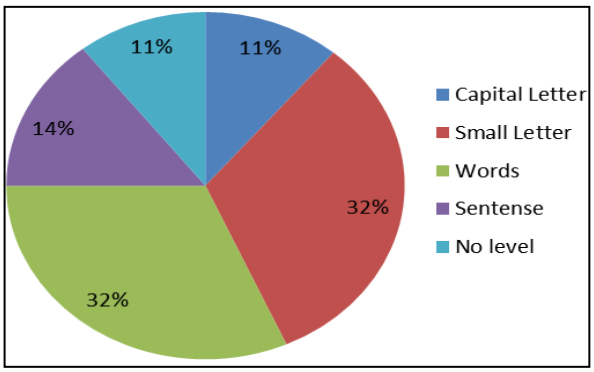

Fig 3: Class 3rd English Reading (N=180)

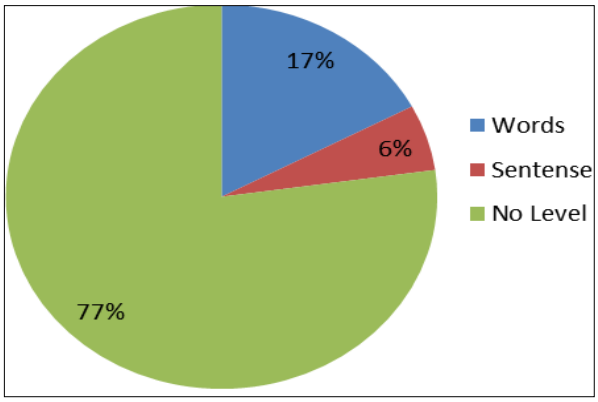

Fig 4: Class 3rd English Understanding (N=180)

This analysis of figure 1 clearly indicate that in class 3rd only 36% students can read story in Hindi and 26% students have knowledge of letters only. 5% students of class 3rd do not even know the letters mean they are illiterate. Similarly from figure 2 in Mathematics only 11% students of class 3rd can do division and 27% know number only. 3% students of class 3rd are illiterate and majority of students i.e. 29% students are at counting only. As per figure 3 in English 11% students are up to capital letters and 32% students are at small letter level. Merely 14% students can read sentence. And 11% students of class 3rd are illiterate in English. The situation of understanding the English is much worse where 77% students even could not understand the simple and common words in English. Only 6% students can understand simple sentence in English as envisaged from figure 4. Figure 5 summaries the consolidated learning level in all subjects for standard 3rd students in Gurugram.

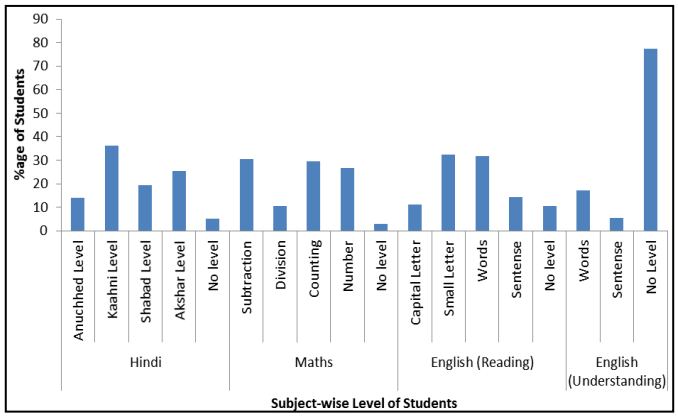

Fig 5: Learning Level of Class 3rd Students (N=180)

4.2 Learning Level Out Comes of Standard 5th

The learning level of students in different subjects is different subjects. Annexure–V gives data set obtained for analysis of primary data. Following figures represent learning level of students.

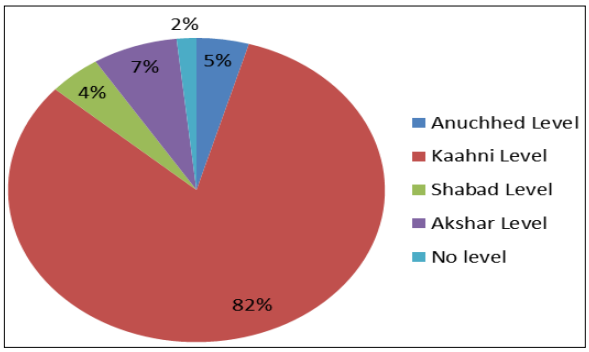

Fig 6: Class 5th Hindi (N=178)

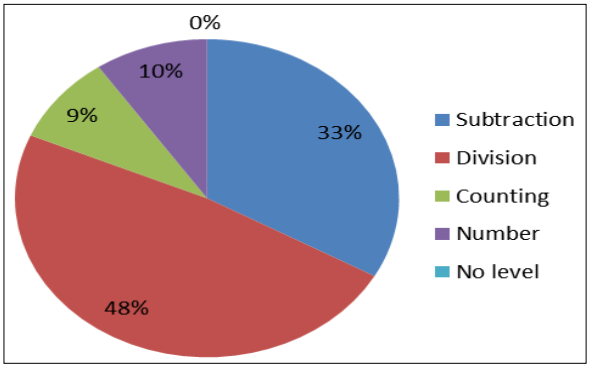

Fig 7: Class 5th Maths (N=178)

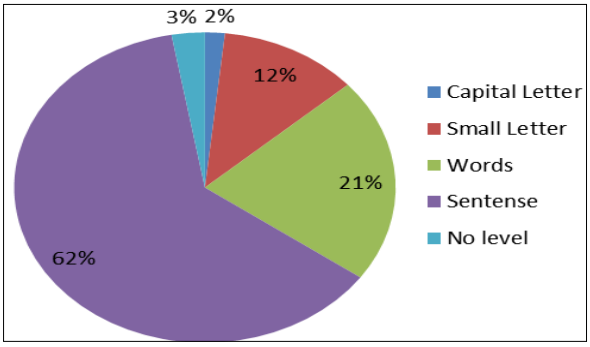

Fig 8: Class 5th English Reading (N=178)

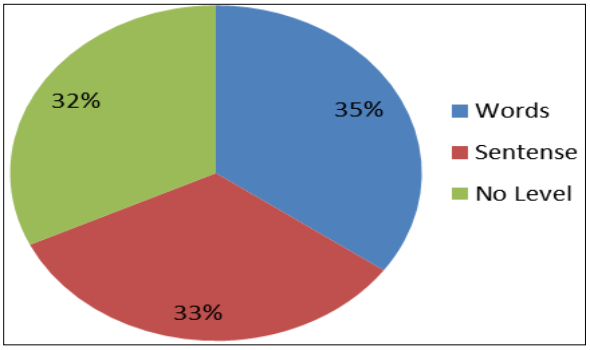

Fig 9: Class 5th English Understanding (N=178)

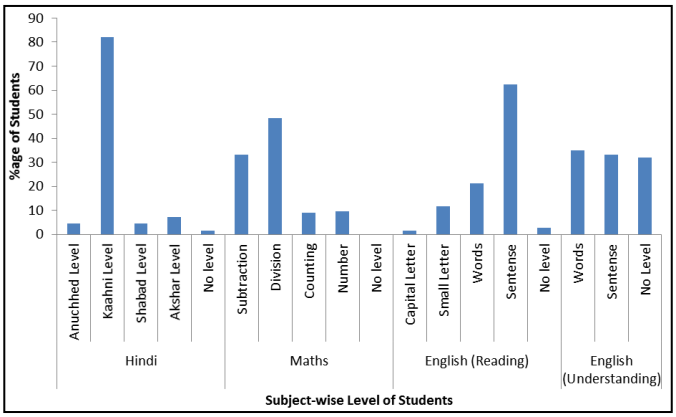

Fig 10: Learnig Level of Class - 5th Students (N=178)

In class 5th a majority of 82% students can read text of level 2nd in Hindi and 7% students have knowledge of letters only. 2% students of class 5th do not even know the letters mean they are illiterate as analysed from figure 6. Similarly from figure 7 in Mathematics only 48% students of class 5th can do division and 10% know number only. Majority of students i.e. 48% students can do division. From figure 8 it is clear that in English 2% students are up to capital letters and 12% students are at small letter level. Merely 62% students can read sentence. And from figure 9 we can see that 3% students of class 5th are illiterate in English. The situation of understanding the English is much worse where 32% students even could not understand the simple and common words in English. Only 33% students can understand simple sentence in English. Figure 10 gives comparative learning level of students of class 5th in district Gurugram.

5. Conclusion

This study was a sample study primarily targeted to assess the learning level of students in district Gurugram. For this we have analysed the learning level of 178 students of class V and 180 students of class III. The detail analysis of observation is presented in section 3. We have found that the learning level of students in government schools is not proper. Majority of students are not up to the level as they are expected as per their class standard.

6. References

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3. White G. teaching listening: time for a change in methodology, "Current Trends in the Development and Teaching of the Four Language Skills". Berlin: Mouton de Gruyter. 2006.