

Problem solutions of universalisation of elementary education.

1. Solution of the Financial Problem:

Poverty of the masses is the greatest hurdle in the expansion of compulsory primary education in the country. Shortage of funds is responsible for lack of reading materials and equipments in schools, dearth of efficient teachers and insufficient number of school buildings.

With this in mind Gopal Krishna Gokhale pleaded for not spending money on the qualitative aspect of primary education but for opening primary schools in greater number and making the primary education available to everyone so that ignorance might be wiped off from the country.

He, therefore, argued for making primary education compulsory. For achieving success in this objective he suggested reducing expenditure on the process of changing the old primary education into the basic one.

In order to ease the financial condition some educationists suggest for reducing the curriculum from five to four years. They also advocate that tuition fees should also be charged from the children of well-to-do parents.

The Government should postpone the programme of introduction of basic education for some time. They should first make primary education compulsory and banish illiteracy and ignorance from the country. Money should be generated for primary education by heeding to the suggestions of eminent educationists.

2. Change in the Administrative System:

In order to ensure progress and development, some reforms in the present educational administration is necessary. The Government should, in the first instance, take over the entire responsibility of meeting the expenditure on primary education.

It is not possible to achieve the desired progress by merely giving grants to municipal and district boards. So far, as the administration is concerned it will be proper to leave this responsibility on local bodies only when a central committee is formed which should be in a position to force the local administrative set-ups to make arrangements for compulsory primary education.

The local bodies will have no hesitation in carrying on the instructions of the central committee when the entire expenditure is met by the Government. Only under such an arrangement the development of compulsory education will go on unobstructed.

3. Firmness in the Educational Policy:

The Government policy of compulsory education is not so much practical as it is idealistic. It is due to this reason that it has not been able to achieve solid results. Changing of traditional schools into taking into account the prevailing dearth of equipments in schools has crushed the Government objectives under the burden of financial expenditure.

It would have been more proper to have introduced compulsory education first and later on it should have been given the shape of basic education.

4. Provision of Teachers:

In view of the heavy demand of teachers for the implementation of the policy of compulsory education it has not been possible to obtain the necessary number of trained teachers. Consequently, the shortage of teachers has also affected the pace of progress of compulsory education.

It cannot be considered a wise step to postpone or slow down the programme of compulsory education till enough trained teachers were available. To meet this difficulty untrained teachers possessing average efficiency may be employed to start the work.

These untrained teachers may be gradually trained and their teaching standards may thus be raised. To bring better qualified persons in this profession it is desirable to raise the pay scale and the social status of the teachers.

5. Shift System:

In view of the shortage of teachers and school buildings it is desirable that the shift system be adopted in India as is done in some other countries like Germany, United States, Japan, China, Denmark, Australia, etc. And classes be held for some children from 7.30 a.m. to 11.30 a.m. and for others from 1.00 p.m. to 5.00 p.m.

This kind of shift- system will prove helpful to farmers and labourers also. Their children will get time both for education and for helping their parents in supplementing their incomes. No doubt the work to teachers will increase but they can be satisfied by providing extra-pay.

In adopting the shift system attention will have to be given in fixing the school hours. In deciding school hours seasons and facilities of parents and teachers will have to be taken into consideration.

6. Special Type of Schools:

In India there are nearly 12 crore people of scheduled castes and nearly 5 crore tribal people. These people have remained cut-off from education since long. Now some emphasis is being given on their education by the Government. Provision has been made to give them some grants for purchasing books, besides stipends and scholarships.

The governments have made provisions for opening special types of schools in the areas where scheduled caste and tribal people mostly live. Even then public co-operation for the education of these people is very necessary.

7. Reforms in Curriculum:

It is also necessary to introduce reforms in the curriculum of primary education along with the efforts to develop and make it compulsory. The traditional and unilateral course should be changed and a local craft should be included in it so that it may become more interesting and helpful to children.

Although this is one of the main features of basic education, yet till all the primary schools are not converted into basic ones it will be desirable to include a local craft in the primary schools.

8. Increase in the Number of Schools:

Most of the Indian population lives in villages which are small and situated at great distances from one another. It is not possible to open schools in every village due to lack of funds, therefore the compulsory education is receiving a great set-back.

But to check the expansion of education due to these difficulties will simply be against the objective of education programme. Under the circumstances, it is desirable even to open schools at places like temples, mosques, churches and other public places etc., in the interest of education, keeping in view that India is a place where the Ashrams (forest schools) of Rishis in ancient days and Shantiniketan in the present days have remained ideal places of learning.

India can surely succeed in achieving its objective of the expansion of primary education by benefiting itself from some of the old ways of imparting education. It is worth mentioning here that in earlier days due to shortage of school buildings schools were held under bridges in England.

9. Five Year Plans and People's Co-operation:

Five Year Plans occupy an important place in the development of education in India. The expansion of education even gets help and co-operation from other development plans. Geographical factors obstructing the progress of education could be solved to an appreciable extent through the development of means of communication.

With the successful implementation of the plans, the per capita income will increase and people will be in a better position to bear expenses on education. This will in itself help the expansion of compulsory education.

In this way the progress and development of education is linked with the success of Five Year Plans and it is the duty of the people to co-operate in the successful implementation of the Plans. It is well known that for the success of democracy people's co-operation is a necessity.

If our Plans succeed through public co-operation, the achievement of our objective of compulsory education is a certainty.

10. Increase in Teaching Load:

Although it will not be proper to increase the work-load of teachers who are poorly paid, yet in the interest of the country they will not mind if their work load is increased for some time. This happened in foreign countries like England, Italy and China.

The number of students in a class may be raised to 60 from 33; but care will have to be taken to see that under these conditions a teacher is not asked to take too many classes at a time.

It is hoped that by acting on the above suggestions, success may be achieved in fulfilling the objectives of quantitative expansion of primary education..