

Quality Improvements in Secondary Education

Dr. Subhash Singh

*Asso. Prof., Deptt. of Education,
R.R.P.G.College, Amethi*

Abstract

Secondary education serves as a link between the elementary and higher education, and plays a very important role in this respect. A child's future can depend a lot on the type of education she/he receives at the secondary level. Apart from grounding the roots of education of a child, secondary education can be instrumental in shaping and directing the child to a bright future. This stage of education serves to move on higher secondary stage as well as to provide generic competencies that cut across various domains of knowledge as well as skills. Providing secondary education to all, both boys and girls, with a focus on quality education assumes greater meaning today, when we consider the emerging challenges in our society. For instance, rising levels of socio-economic aspirations and also the democratic consciousness particularly among marginalized sections of population such as the dalits, tribals, OBCs, religious and linguistic minorities and girls seek space in the secondary education system for greater access, participation and quality.

Keywords : *Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan (SSA), Universal Elementary Education (UEE), National Policy on Education (NPE), Secondary Education Management Information System (SEMIS), Rashtriya Madhyamik Shiksha Abhiyan (RMSA),*

Reference to this paper
should be made as
follows:

Dr. Subhash Singh

*Quality Improvements
in Secondary
Education*

*,RJPSS 2017, Vol. 42,
No.2, pp. 174-183
Article No.24 (RS2048)*

Online available at :
[http://anubooks.com/
?page_id=442](http://anubooks.com/?page_id=442)

Introduction :

The recent significant development viz., Universal Elementary Education (UEE) being achieved through *Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan (SSA)* and also the impact of globalisation and rapid growth of new technologies have led to reassessment of India's preparedness to generate required technical manpower, develop new knowledge and skills, and remain competitive at global level. The secondary and higher secondary education system has a key role to play in enabling the nation to move towards these objectives. Given the high transition rate of about 85% from class VIII to IX and the anticipated progress in UEE, which is now widely acknowledged, that the time has arrived for taking proactive measures to plan and provide for universal access to secondary education and senior secondary education in a phased-wise manner. Secondary Education is a crucial stage in the educational hierarchy as it prepares the students for higher education and also for world of work. Classes IX and X constitute the secondary stage, where as classes XI and XII are designated as the higher secondary stage. The normal age group of the children in secondary classes is 14-16 where as it is 16-18 for higher secondary classes. The rigor of the secondary and higher secondary stage, enables Indian students to compete successfully for education and for jobs globally. Therefore, it is absolutely essential to strengthen this stage by providing greater access and and also by improving quality in a significant way.

Since universalization of elementary education has become a Constitutional mandate, it is absolutely essential to push this vision forward to move towards Universalization of secondary education, which has already been achieved in a large number of developed countries and several developing countries. Para 5.13-5.15 of the *National Policy on Education (NPE), 1986* as modified in 1992, deal with Secondary Education. Para 5.13 of the NPE, inter-alia, stated that " Access to Secondary Education will be widened with emphasis on enrolment of girls, SCs and STs, particularly in science, commerce and vocational streams.....Vocationalization through specialized institutions or through the re-fashioning of secondary education will, at this stage, provide valuable manpower for economic growth.The Rashtriya Madhyamik Shiksha Abhiyan is committed to universalize quality education at Secondary and Higher Stage. The focus in quality interventions would have to be on meeting the complex needs of this stage in terms of quality infrastructure, Management Information System, curriculum development, learning resources, teacher qualification, competency, subject specific deployment in schools, in service training of teachers and heads of the school, academic support at all level, classroom based support and supervision issues etc. **Secondary Education Management Information System**

(SEMIS) : Undertaking detailed mapping of Secondary Schooling Provisions, course mapping and streamlining the Secondary Education database is of paramount importance for universalization of access to and improvement of quality at this stage right from the preparatory stage. Some of the urgent activities includes Identifying deficiencies in existing secondary schools/ Higher Secondary schools, identifying upper primary schools for upgradation, Identifying under served areas to establish new schools, streamlining for non-government schools, Developing states specific norms for physical facilities etc.

In order to initiate a comprehensive school mapping exercise at Secondary and Higher secondary level, it is necessary to develop a reliable data base, i.e., creation of Secondary Education Management Information System (SEMIS) with disaggregated data at the State, District, Block and School Levels. Keeping in mind the objective of the scheme that access to a secondary school will be provided to every one for a Secondary school within 5 Km and a Higher secondary school within 7-10 Km of every habitation, the preparation of habitation level educational plans for micro planning is also the greatest challenge of the preparatory phase. It is, therefore, essential to develop the capacity of the state and district level officers engaged in the planning and administration of secondary education in the states in this regard and to prepare base line data. Thereafter, it is also necessary to collect periodic data with predetermined regularity for every secondary or higher secondary school in the country through system similar to District Information System for Education (DISE) being used for capturing information at the elementary level. Keeping the goal of universal secondary education, state and locale-specific norms will be developed by the states and local authorities. It must be emphasized that setting up of an effective SEMIS would require contractual engagement of professionals including data analysts and data entry personnel. Similarly, the need for experts on various interventions under the scheme will also have to be assessed in the light of the specific State/UT.

Curriculum designing & formulation :

Curriculum designing and formulation has a special place among the diverse responsibilities envisaged for national and state level bodies working in the field of education. The National Policy on Education (NPE), 1986 (as modified in 1992) and Programme of Action (POA), 1992 view such a framework as a means of establishing a national system of education, characterized by certain core values and transformative goals, consistent with the constitutional vision of India. NPE also points out that implications of the Constitutional Amendment of 1976, which includes Education in the Concurrent List, require a new sharing of responsibility between the Union

Government and the States in respect to this vital area of national life. Approved by Central Advisory Board of Education, National Curriculum Framework-2005 has been brought out by NCERT through a wide-ranging process of deliberations and consultations. Similar structures will have to be created in all the States/UTs to prepare new syllabi and textbooks at the State level. Many states are in the process of completing this exercise. Some of them have already completed. The States which have not yet completed the curricular reforms, preparation of new syllabi and text books are expected to complete this exercise in the very first year of the programme implementation. **Learning Resources:**

The main reasons for failure in exams of a large number of students are their limited understanding of concepts in Mathematics & Science and their weakness in English. NCF-2005 addresses this issue. The National Focus Group on “Teaching of Science” suggested prevention of marginalisation of experiments in school science curriculum. Investment in this regard is needed for improving school Libraries, Laboratories and Workshops to promote experimental culture while reducing the importance of external examinations. There is also need to have Computer – Interfaced Experiments and Projects utilizing database from public domain.

The National Focus Group on Work and Education, constituted as part of the exercise for revision of National Curriculum Framework (NCF)-2005, expressed its concern about the exclusionary character of education in general and secondary education in particular. This is founded on the artificially instituted dichotomy between work and knowledge (also reflected in the widening gap between school and society). Those who work with their hands and produce significant wealth are denied access to formal education, while those who have access to formal education not only denigrate productive manual work but also lack necessary skills for the same. A common core curriculum incorporating work-centered pedagogy initially united class x and within the foreseeable future up to class XII for all children should be the objective. A detailed framework of “Work and education” for School Education needs to be developed by NCERT for operationalization.

In view of the above, at least a Science Laboratory and an Art and Crafts laboratory along with necessary equipments need to be set up in each secondary school. While, there can be only one room for science laboratory in a secondary school, there should be at least three laboratories for Science subjects in Higher Secondary schools, in addition to one Art and Craft laboratory. The Arts and Crafts Lab will be used for carrying out the activities related to Social Sciences, Arts and Heritage Craft, Health and Physical Education and Work Education. To manage the affairs of these laboratories at least one Lab Attendant in Secondary School and

three Lab Attendants in Higher Secondary schools will be deployed.

Art and Craft Education :

The Mission recognizes the importance of aesthetics and artistic experiences for secondary level children, especially in view of the role that such experiences can play in creating awareness of India's cultural heritage and its vibrant diversity. In the context of education of arts (music, theatre, visual arts and dance) and heritage crafts, the Mission is guided by the recommendations of the National Focus Groups on these subjects and the report of the CUBE Committee on Culture. The syllabus for arts developed by NCERT should be followed and teachers who have been appropriately trained should be appointed for art education. Art is to be treated as a part of the curriculum and not as an extra-curricular activity. As recommended by NCF-2005, art education must become both a tool for the enrichment of learning in all subjects, and also as a subject in its own which is taught in every school up to class X and facilities for the same may be provided in every school.

There is need to make available resources for the integration of the arts and heritage crafts. It is important that the school curriculum provides adequate time for a wide range of activities pertaining to arts and crafts. Block periods of about 1 to 1 ½ hours are necessary. The aim of activities provided in these periods is to support the child's own expressions and style. India's heritage crafts should enter into the curriculum as a part of art, with an emphasis on creative and aesthetics aspects. Crafts persons themselves should be treated as teachers and trainers for crafts and ways of enabling them to serve in schools on a part-time basis need to be identified. Craft labs equipped with adequate materials and tools need to be developed in every school. Crafts Mela should be organized to expose children to local crafts and traditions and also for children to display their own creative endeavours.

Learning Resource Centres (LRC) :

In conformity with the advocacy in the National Curriculum Framework (NCF-2005) about curriculum enrichment for overall development of children rather than remaining textbook centric, and ensuring that learning is shifted from rote memorization and also in order to ensure quality in Secondary and Higher Secondary Education, all schools need to be equipped with Learning Resource Centres (LRC) with following inputs.

Provision for ICT support Link with EDUSAT:

The ICT Resource Room and Library of the school may be housed in one big room or these may be housed in two adjacent rooms. All Library operations from

accession to issue of books will be computerized. The provision of integrated Learning Resource Centre (LRC) will facilitate such activities. These resources will be instrumental in raising the knowledge and achievement levels of students.

There is need of a regular librarian cum computer instructor to look after the affairs of library as well as ICT activities. The scheme also provides for physical and financial norms for construction of library, if it was already not provided in the school and purchase of books, periodicals, new papers, magazines etc. At present Ministry of Human Resource Development is running a scheme called Information and Communication Technology (ICT) at Schools which is intended to establish an enabling environment to promote the usage of ICT, especially in Secondary and Secondary Government Schools in rural areas.

Adolescent Education Programme (AEP):

There is a scheme on Adolescence Education, presently funded by NACO and implemented by MHRD. It started as on HIV/AIDS Awareness Scheme for school children. It is suggested that health related education of Adolescents, including awareness about AIDS, should be treated in the larger context of life skill education and holistic development which covers health, physical education and sports. The focus of AEP needs to be on, Comprehensive operationalization of AEP in all schools in all States and UTs with necessary inputs like teachers' training to act as counselors, Curricular integration of Adolescence Education elements in the Courses of Study. Curricular integration in the Teacher Education System (both pre-service and in – service).

Students Assessment and Examination Reforms:

In order to manage the stress factor in examination, it is necessary to reconstruct and redesign examination system with attributes like flexibility where a student can achieve learning in a flexible time frame and accumulate credits, eliminating tests of fixed duration and adopting continuous and comprehensive evaluation. The practice of mark sheet indicating marks in certain subjects must be replaced by a portfolio that would accommodate a student's performance in variety of domains like life skills, academic/non-academic and vocational subjects, personal qualities, etc. The portfolio should be comprehensive, revealing the total being of the student.

While School-based Assessment by teacher is an essential part of assessment globally; its actual implementation in most states of India leaves much to be desired. NCERT and State-level nodal agencies should take steps through workshop and other modes of information dissemination, including creation of websites dedicated

to this issue. School-based assessment should be graded internally but moderated externally to eliminate the widespread fraud currently perpetrated by school.

The present typology of examination questions leads to rote learning rather than the development of conceptual understanding, analytical writing and problem-solving skills. It is proposed that the incidence of short-answer questions be reduced and replaced with Multiple Choice Questions (MCQs) on one-hand and Reflective (long answer) type questions on the other. Orientation programmes to make the teachers familiar with MCQs and how to have them test higher-order thinking need to be organized. While long answer type questions involve more examiner time than spent today, MCQs, being machine-marked, will involve nil.

Guidance and Counseling:

Guidance and Counseling, both as an approach and as a service, will be an important strategy for promoting universalisation of Secondary Education in terms of its pro-active as well as remedial role. Guidance and Counseling services can help in promoting students' retention and better scholastic performance in curricular areas, facilitating adjustment and career development of students, developing right attitudes towards studies, self, work and others.

This stage of education coincides with adolescence, a period in an individual's life that is marked by personal, social and emotional crises created due to the demands of adjustment required in family, peer group and school situations. Counsellors, especially trained in theory and practice of counselling, can guide the students and help them develop the right attitudes and competencies to cope with educational, personal, social and career related problems and issues. The provision of these services in schools particularly at this stage would help students cope with increasing academic and social pressures. A multi-pronged strategy is needed to make available guidance services at school stage across the country.

Orientation of Secondary School Teachers:

Since the teacher is the most important component in school education it is necessary to continuously upgrade the quality of teachers through in-service education programmes and a variety of other measures, apart from pre-service qualifying programme of teacher training viz., B.Ed. There is great regional disparity in the provision for secondary teacher training institutions in the country. There are regions such as the north-eastern region for example, that do not have enough teacher training facilities compared to other states. Careful state-level planning will be necessary for ensuring adequate number of trained teachers and their continuous enrichment.

Besides the conventional in-service education programmes, it will be necessary to develop a mechanism whereby secondary school teachers will be able to share their experiences and learn from each other, thereby developing a learning community and culture. An Orientation Programmes for the Teachers teaching the Secondary Classes needs to plan and operationalised through NCERT. The role of DIETS should also be up-scaled and involved in Secondary/ Hr. Secondary in-service teachers training programmes. **Orientation of Educational Planners and Administrators:**

To cover all the Headmasters/ Principals/ Vice Principals National University of Educational Planning and Administration (NUEPA) needs to collaborate with and make a network of institutions like IASEs, CTEs, University Departments of Education, Management Schools, Regional Institutes of Education, (NCERT), Indian Institutes of Management, etc. This will enable NUEPA to expand its resource base and also give it a form of Networking Organisation rather than an organization, which trains heads of school on its own. An orientation Programmes for Educational Planners and Administrators needs to be planned and operationalised on a mass scale.

Educational Leadership:

Which encompass professional knowledge and understanding of the art of teaching and learning to inspire commitment and achieve quality outcomes for students. Principals seek to evoke a passion for learning and believe that every child is important and every school day makes a difference to the achievement outcomes.

Public Private Partnership:

The Mission recognizes public-private partnership as an important tool for improving the quality of certain aspects and facilities which contribute to the overall quality of education provided in schools. A partnership model can be used to enhance the basic infrastructure available in schools for the sciences, arts, sports, ICT and audio-visual education. Wherever possible, philanthropic investment by private organizations should be utilized for improving school infrastructure in areas like libraries, science labs, audio-visual and ICT facilities, art workshops, sports facilities and equipment, drinking water and toilet facilities. It is to be expected that availability of material such as paints, crayons, racquets, balls, sports shoes, etc. will have a positive effect on the size and diversity of rural markets in the context of children's needs. From this point of view States may want to consider providing tax incentives to attract investment in school infrastructure and children's requirements in the areas indicated above. The success of the Madhyamik Shiksha Mission also depends on the availability of necessary infrastructure, facilities and a range of pedagogic

equipment in teacher training institutions such as DIETs, CTEs and IASEs. Public-private partnership can also be, therefore, considered for the enhancement of quality in all aspects of infrastructure and facilities available in these institutions. Maintenance of equipment poses a significant problem in the prevailing situation.

Structure of School Education:

The secondary stage consists of classes IX – X in 19 States/UTs – Arunachal Pradesh, Bihar, Harayana, Himachal Pradesh, Jammu & Kashmir, Madhya Pradesh, Manipur, Nagaland, Panjab, Rajasthan, Sikkim, Tamil Nadu, Tripura, Uttar Pradesh, West Bengal, Andaman and Nicobar Islands, Chandigarh, Delhi and Karaikal region of Pondicherry. But in 13 States/UTs, the Secondary stage covers from classes VIII – X. They are Andhra Pradesh, Assam, Goa, Gujarat, Karnataka, Kerala, Maharashtra, Meghalaya, Mizoram, Orissa, Dadra and Nagar Haveli, Daman and Diu, Lakshadweep and Mahe and Yanam regions of Pondicherry. Though +2 stage schooling is available in all the States/UTs, in certain States/UTs these classes are also attached to Universities and Colleges. It implies that there exist differences in the structure of Secondary Education in the country. The Mission impresses upon this “Structural Reforms”.

Conclusion :

In the wake of global competitive scenario, quality assurance in school education needs to be the priority agenda. The indicators for quality in various aspects of school education may be prepared by NCERT for formal schooling and by NIOS for Open Schooling. The quality assurances are needed in all aspects of school education right from the curriculum, syllabi, textbooks, teaching-learning strategies, evaluation of students, planning, monitoring of implementation, infrastructure and other resources, and training of functionaries. Quality is not merely a measure of efficiency; it also has value dimension. The attempt to improve the quality of education will succeed only if it goes hand in hand with steps to promote equality and social justice. It is being observed that State schools now generally cater to deprived sections of population. Such segregation of students along class and caste lines is against the policy of neighborhood schools suggested by the Education Commission (1964-66). Adequate social mix in Classrooms will ensure that society as a whole has a stake in the future of state-run schools. Quality assurance is therefore a common denominator for success of planning and implementation strategies in the Education Sector.

REFERENCES :

1. Azad, J.L.(2001) : *Financing of Secondary Education, Paper Presented in National Conference : Focus Secondary Education, February 14-16, 2001, NIEPA, New Delhi.*

2. Blumberg, A. (1986) : *The Effective Principal : Perspectives on School Leadership*, Allyn and Bacon, Inc. Boston : Mass.
3. Council of Boards of School Education in India (1995) : *Towards Quality Secondary Education: Agenda for 21st Century*, Vikash, New Delhi.
4. Kalra, A. (1997) : *Efficient School Management and Role of Principals*, A.P.H. Publishing Corporation, New Delhi.
5. Mukhopadhyay, Marmar Ed. (2002) : *Secondary Education : The Challenges Ahead*, National Institute of Educational Planning and Administration (NIEPA), New Delhi.
6. Mukhopadhyay, Sudesh and Kumar, Anil (1997) : *Quality Profile of Secondary Schools*, NIEPA, New Delhi.
7. NCERT (1998) : *Gunatmak Vidyalaya Shiksha Hetu Dakchata Adharit Pratibadhyata Unmukt Adhyapak Shiksha* , NCERT Dastavej.
8. NCERT (2004) : *Vidyalayi Shiksha Keliye Rashtriya Pathyacharya Ki Ruprekha*, New Delhi.
9. *Report of the Secondary Education Commission-1952-53(1953)* : Ministry of Education, Government of India, New Delhi.
10. Singh, H.(1967) : *An Analysis of Some Aspects of Higher Secondary School Cost and their relationship to Quality of Education*, Indian Education Review, July, NCERT, New Delhi.
11. [http://www. Rashtriya Madhyamik Shiksha Abhiyan](http://www.RashtriyaMadhyamikShikshaAbhiyan)
12. <http://www.mhrd.gov.in /quality>