



SCHOOL EDUCATION SYSTEM IN INDIA

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Cite This Article: P. Jaganathan, "School Education System in India", International Journal of Applied and Advanced Scientific Research, Volume 2, Issue 2, Page Number 380-383, 2017.

Abstract:

India is divided into 28 states and eight so-called "Union Territories." The states have their own elected governments, while the Union Territories are ruled directly by the Government of India, with the President of India appointing an administrator for each Union Territory. As per the constitution of India, school education was originally a state subject - that is, the states had complete authority to decide policies and implement them. The Government of India's (GoI) role was limited to coordination and deciding on higher education standards. This was changed with a constitutional amendment in 1976 so that education now comes in the so-called concurrent list. That is, school education policies and programs are suggested at the national level by the GoI though the state governments have a lot of freedom in implementing programs. Policies are announced at the national level periodically. The Central Advisory Board of Education (CABE), set up in 1935, continues to lead the evolution and monitoring of educational policies and programs. The school system in India has four levels: lower primary (ages 6 to 10), upper primary (11 and 12), high (13 to 15), and higher secondary (17 and 18). The lower primary school divide into five "standards," upper primary school into two, high school into three, and higher secondary into two. Students have to learn a standard curriculum largely (except for regional changes in their mother tongue) till the end of high school. There is some amount of specialization possible at the higher secondary level. Students throughout the country must learn three languages (English, Hindi, and their mother tongue) except in regions where Hindi is the mother tongue and in some streams, as discussed below.

Key Words: Formal Education, Informal Education, Early Childhood Care & Education, Integrated Child Development Services, Balwadis, Day Care Centres, Pre- Primary Education, Primary Education, And Secondary Education.

Introduction:

In ancient times, India had the Gurukula system of education in which anyone who wished to study went to a teacher's (Guru) house and requested to teach. If accepted as a student by the guru, he would stay at the guru's place and help in all activities at home. This created a strong tie between the teacher and the student and taught the student everything about running a house. The guru taught everything the child wanted to learn, from Sanskrit to the Holy Scriptures and Mathematics to Metaphysics. The student stayed as long as she wished until the guru felt he had taught everything he could teach. All learning was closely linked to nature and life and not confined to memorizing some information. The modern school system was brought to India, including the English language, originally by Lord Thomas Babington Macaulay in the 1830s. The curriculum was confined to "modern" subjects such as science and mathematics, and issues like metaphysics and philosophy were considered unnecessary. Teaching was confined to classrooms, and the link with nature and the close relationship between the teacher and the student were broken. The school education system in India is vast and complex. The All India Council for Technical Education, the University Grants Commission, and the National Council of Educational Research and Training oversee it. In addition, each state has its Department or Ministry of Education, which regulates school education within its jurisdiction.

Formal Education:

Formal education is imparted in schools, colleges, and universities that follow a set curriculum. The traditional education system in India consists of five years of primary schooling, followed by three years of middle school and two years of high school. After completing high school, students can pursue higher education at a university or college.

Informal Education:

Informal education is provided outside the formal education system and does not follow any set curriculum. It includes training programs, workshops, and internships. Informal education can benefit students who want to learn specific skills or knowledge not covered in the formal education system. It can also be helpful for students who wish to gain work experience before entering the workforce.

Early Childhood Care & Education:

Realizing the crucial importance of rapid physical and mental growth during early childhood, the Government started several programs of early childhood care and education (ECCE). Declaration of a National Policy for Children (1974) shows the commitment of the Government to the development of children. The existing ECCE programs include:

- Integrated Child Development Services (ICDS);

- Scheme of assistance to voluntary organizations for conducting early childhood education centers (ECE);
- Balwadis and day-care centers run by voluntary agencies with Government's assistance;
- Pre-primary schools run by the State Governments, Municipal Corporations, and other agencies;
- Maternal and child health services through primary health centers and sub-centers, and other agencies.

The Integrated Child Development Services is the most extensive early childhood development program. Over the years, this program has demonstrated that even a modest investment in child development goes a long way in developing human resources. It needs to integrate with the Universal immunization program fully started with effect on 19 November 1985.

Integrated Child Development Services:

The preschool education component needs to strengthen in ICDS- For the following steps will be taken:

- Each Anganwadi Workers' Training Centre should be responsible for running at least 25 Anganwadi centers to provide the trainees with good field practice areas.
- The trainees should be placed for at least one month in the anganwadis for practical training.
- Instructional materials for trainers and trainees should be developed.
- Materials for children - picture books, pictures, posters, minimum essential play materials - should be made available to all anganwadis and replenished periodically.
- The trainers, supervisors, and CDPOs should orient through Refresher Courses in the preschool education component and give field training to strengthen it at pre-service and in-service levels.
- The CDPO's office should be developed into a Resource Centre and be well-equipped with training materials.

A beginning was made in ICDS by developing a small percentage of Anganwadis as day-care centers, and an effort was made to coordinate the timings of ICDS Anganwadi with the primary schools.

Balwadis Run by Voluntary Agencies:

There are varieties of patterns in the Balwadis. Each scheme has its history and background. All child development programs implemented through voluntary agencies will have an integrated approach, offering a comprehensive package and avoiding duplication. Where this does not happen, the existing activities will be merged into some comprehensive and integrated program. Most programs run by 12 voluntary agencies have only some health, nutrition, and education components. They need to convert into comprehensive child development centers.

Day Care Centers:

The crèches and day-care centers being run with CSWK support and otherwise need to be reviewed and strengthened immediately. The following requirements will be ensured:

- Timing co-terminus with school working hours or mothers' working hours;
- Adequate, safe, and hygienic space;
- Adequate child-worker ratio;
- Drinking water;
- Supplementary nutrition;
- Paramedical care under medical supervision;
- Minimum equipment including linen, cradles;
- Toys and play materials;
- Training and supervision of workers.

Pre-Primary Education:

The pre-primary stage is the foundation of children's knowledge, skills, and behavior. Upon completion of pre-primary education, the children are sent to the primary step, but pre-primary education in India is not a fundamental right. In rural India, pre-primary schools are rarely available in small villages. But many established players are in the pre-primary education sector in cities and big towns. The demand for preschools is growing considerably in smaller towns and cities, but only 1% of the population under age six is still enrolled in preschool education.

- Playgroup (pre-nursery): At playschools, children are exposed to many basic learning activities that help them to get independent faster and develop their self-help qualities like eating food themselves, dressing up, and maintaining cleanliness. The age limit for admission into pre-nursery is 2 to 3 years. Anganwadi is a government-funded free rural childcare & Mother care nutrition and learning program incorporating the free Midday Meal Scheme.
- Nursery: Nursery-level activities help children unfold their talents, thus enabling them to sharpen their mental and physical abilities. The age limit for admission to the nursery is 3 to 4 years.
- Lower Kindergarten is also called the junior kindergarten (Jr. kg) stage. The age limit for admission to LKG is 4 to 5 years.

- Upper Kindergarten is also called the senior kindergarten (Sr. kg) stage. The age limit for admission to UKG is 5 to 6 years.

LKG and UKG stages prepare and help children emotionally, mentally, socially, and physically to grasp the knowledge quickly in the later stages of school and college life. A systematic preschool education process is followed in India to impart knowledge in the best possible way to understand young children better. By following an easy and exciting curriculum, teachers strive hard to make the learning process enjoyable for the children.

Primary Education:

Primary education in India is divided into Lower Primary (Class I-V) and Upper Primary (Middle school, Class VI-VIII). The Indian Government emphasizes primary education (Class I-VIII), elementary education, for children aged 6 to 14. Because the states give education laws, the duration of primary school visits alters between the Indian states. The Indian Government has also banned child labor to ensure that the children do not enter unsafe working conditions. However, free education and the ban on child labor are difficult to enforce due to economic disparity and social needs. 80% of all recognized schools at the elementary stage are government-run or supported, making it the largest provider of education in the country. Figures released by the Indian Government in 2011 show that there were 5,816,673 elementary school teachers in India. As of March 2012, there were 2,127,000 secondary school teachers in India. Education has also been made accessible for children 6 to 14 years of age or up to class VIII under the Right of Children to Free and Compulsory Education Act 2009. While school enrollment rates have increased, many children leave school with poor literacy and numeracy skills.

However, due to a shortage of resources and a lack of political will, this system needs more infrastructure, including high pupil-to-teacher ratios, a need for infrastructure, and poor levels of teacher training. Some scholars have used the concept of "visibility" to explain why successive governments have under-prioritized investments directed at raising the quality of teaching and education in India relative to investments in building more schools. Building schools is more "visible" to the voting public and easily attributable to the Government; training teachers to teach better and raising the quality of education is a more uncertain venture, the success of which is determined by factors outside the control of any one government. This incentivizes governments to focus their resources on "visible" areas of intervention.

Secondary Education:

Secondary education covers children aged 14 to 18, comprising 88.5 million children, according to the 2001 Census of India. The final two years of secondary are often called Higher Secondary (HS), Senior Secondary, Intermediate, or simply the "+2" stage. The two halves of secondary education are an important stage for a pass certificate. Thus, they are affiliated with boards of education under the education ministry before pursuing higher education, including college or professional courses.

UGC, NCERT, CBSE, and ICSE directives state qualifying ages for candidates who wish to take the standardized exams. Those at least 15 years old by 30 May for a given academic year are eligible to appear for Secondary School Certificate exams, and those 17 by the same date are eligible to appear for Higher Secondary certificate exams. It is further stated that upon completing Higher Secondary, one can apply to higher education under UGC control.

Secondary education in India is examination-oriented and not course-based: students register for and take classes primarily to prepare for one of the centrally-administered examinations. Secondary school is split into two parts (grades 9–10 and grades 11–12), with a standardized nationwide examination at the end of grade 10 and grade 12 (colloquially referred to as "board exams"). Grade 10 examination results can be used for admission into grades 11–12 at a secondary school, pre-university program, or vocational or technical school. Passing the grade 12 board examinations leads to granting a secondary school completion diploma, which uses for admission into vocational schools or universities in the country or the world.

Most schools in India do not offer subject and scheduling flexibility due to budgeting constraints (for example, students in India are often not allowed to take Chemistry and History in grades 11–12 as they are part of different "streams"). Private candidates (not studying in a school) are generally not allowed to register for and take board examinations, but there are some exceptions, such as NIOS.

Usually, students taking the grade 10 examination take five or six subjects: Two languages (at least one of them being English/Hindi), Mathematics, Science (often taught as three separate disciplines: physics, chemistry, and biology, but assessed as a single subject), Social Sciences (consisting of four components: history, geography, economics, and political science), and one optional subject depending on the availability of teachers. Elective or optional topics often include computer applications, commerce, painting, music, and home science.

Usually, students taking the grade 12 examination take five or six subjects, with English or the local language being compulsory. Students re-enrolling in most secondary schools after grade 10 have to choose by choosing topics from a "core stream" in addition to the language: Science (Mathematics, Biology, Physics, Chemistry, Computer Science, Biotechnology, Physical Education), Commerce (Accountancy, Business

Studies, Economics, Entrepreneurship, Informatics Practices), or Humanities (History, Political Science, Sociology, Psychology, Geography, Legal Studies, Fine Arts, Music, Dance) depending on the school. Students with the Science stream study mathematics up to single-variable calculus in grade 12.

Conclusion:

Each state has three kinds of schools that follow the state curriculum. The Government runs its schools on land and buildings owned by the Government and pay the staff from its resources. These are generally known as government schools. The fees are low in such schools. Then there are privately owned schools with their land and buildings. Here the prices are high, and the management pays the teachers. Such schools primarily cater to urban middle-class families. The third kind consists of schools that are provided grant-in-aid by the Government, though the school was started by a private agency in their land and buildings. The grant-in-aid was meant to help reduce the fees and allow low-income families to send their children. In some states like Kerala, these schools are very similar to government schools since the Government pays the teachers, and the fees are the same as in government schools.

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