

## **ELEMENTARY EDUCATION – A PANACEA FOR DEVELOPMENT IN BIHAR**

**Ratan Kumar**

GUEST FACULTY, DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE  
MAGADH MAHILA COLLEGE (PATNA UNIVERSITY), PATNA

### **ABSTRACT**

Education serves as one of the drivers of development. The educational development of the state depends on development of all levels of education i.e. elementary, secondary and higher education. The Government of Bihar has given much stress on elementary education in the recent years because for an educationally backward state like Bihar, it is the elementary education that deserves the highest importance. It feeds the students for secondary sector and in turn, for higher education. It is also relevant for those students who are first learners, coming out from the disadvantaged sections of the society. The present paper is an attempt to study the trends, expenditure and programmes for development of elementary education with conclusion and some vital suggestions.

*GEL Classification:* I2, I25

*Keywords:* Elementary Education, National Education Policy (NEP), Samagra Shiksha Abhiyan (SSA), Right to Education, Mid Day Meal Scheme.

### **INTRODUCTION**

Education is considered as the backbone of development of an economy. It is one of the most important instruments to create social security, alleviate poverty and reduce inequality.<sup>1</sup> Hence, good quality education is the foundation of growth and prosperity of a nation. But unfortunately, Bihar has been one of the disadvantaged states in the area of education. In recent times due to regular thrust on providing primary education has yielded good results across social categories and gender as well.

Literacy rate is basic indicator of status of education in a society. Bihar has shown lower literacy rate throughout except in 1961 when the state had the highest literacy rate among Empowered Action Group (EAG) states.<sup>2</sup> Later on, the situation has changed thereafter and Bihar had the least literacy rate in 2011. Fortunately, during the last decade, the literacy rate of Bihar improved significantly from 47.0 per cent in 2001 to 61.8 per cent in 2011. This implies an increase of 14.8 percentage points, the highest among all the decadal growth rates in Bihar since 1961 and it is also the highest among all the states for the decade 2001-11.

The National Education Policy 2020 introduced by the present government may be catalyst in the education sector after replacing the existing National Policy of Education framed in 1986. The new policy made the schooling age group from 6-14 years to 3-18 years. The new system will have 12 years of schooling with three years of Aanganwadi/ pre-schooling. The old education model of 10+2 has been divided into four components in new system. Under new NEP, the curricular and pedagogical for school structure has been guided by a 5+3+3+4

design, consisting of the Foundational Stage, Preparatory Stage, Middle Stage and Secondary Stage.<sup>3</sup>

### TRENDS IN ELEMENTARY EDUCATION

This section highlights of trends in elementary education in Bihar in terms of number of Schools, number of teachers, enrolment in elementary education, dropout rate and expenditure in elementary education,

#### 1. Number of Schools and Teachers

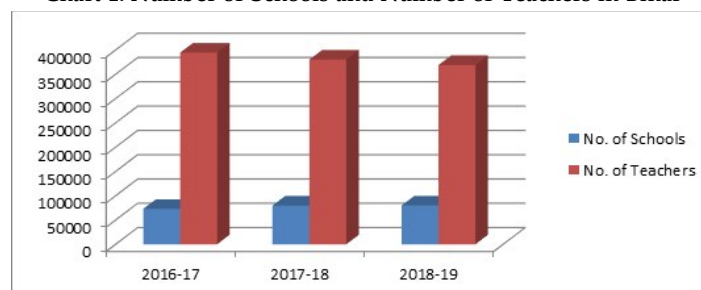
The number of schools and teachers in elementary education in Bihar has been presented in Table 1 and Chart 1. The table shows that the number of schools was 72981 in 2016-17 which increased to 80018 in 2018-19 and registered an increase about 10.3 per cent during the period. However, the number of teachers decreased from 394505 in 2016-17 to 369105 in 2018-19 thus registered a decline of about 6.4 per cent during the period.

**Table 1: Number of Schools and Number of Teachers in Bihar**

Year	No. of Schools	No. of Teachers
2016-17	72981	394505
2017-18	79815	380221
2018-19	80018	369105

Source: Compiled from GoB, Bihar Economic Survey (2020-21), Table A 11.19 & A 11.20, pp.455-456.

**Chart 1: Number of Schools and Number of Teachers in Bihar**



#### 2. Enrolment in Elementary Education

The total enrolment in elementary education has been increased continuously from 229.3 lakh in 2014-15 to 235.8 lakh in 2017-18 but it declined to 210.7 lakh in 2018-19. This situation prevails in all the categories as evident from Table 2, Chart 2(a), Chart 2(b) and Chart 2(c).

**Table 2: Total Enrolment in Elementary Education (Number in lakh)**

Type of Students/ Year	Boys			Girls			All		
	Combined	SC	ST	Combined	SC	ST	Combined	SC	ST
2014-15	118.5	21.7	2.3	110.8	19.9	1.9	229.3	41.6	4.2
2015-16	121.5	22.5	2.5	114.2	20.7	2.1	235.7	43.2	4.7
2016-17	121.8	22.7	2.6	113.9	21.2	2.1	235.7	43.9	4.7
2017-18	121.7	22.2	2.7	114.1	20.7	2.2	235.8	42.9	4.9
2018-19	106.8	20.0	2.3	103.9	19.4	2.1	210.7	39.4	4.4

Source: Compiled from GoB, Bihar Economic Survey (2020-21), Table 11.21, p. 400.

Chart 2(a): Total Enrolment in Elementary Education (Boys)

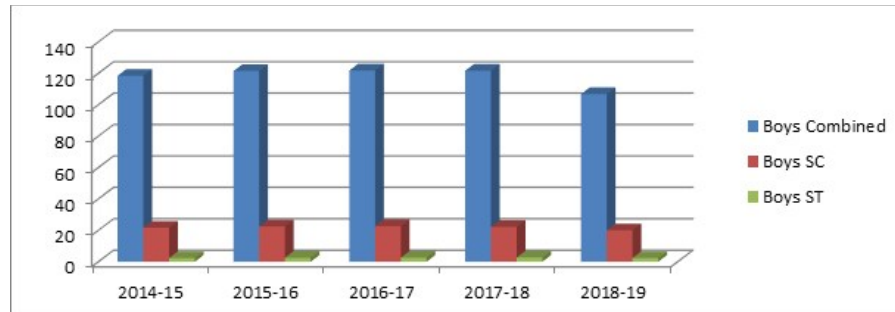


Chart 2(b): Total Enrolment in Elementary Education (Girls)

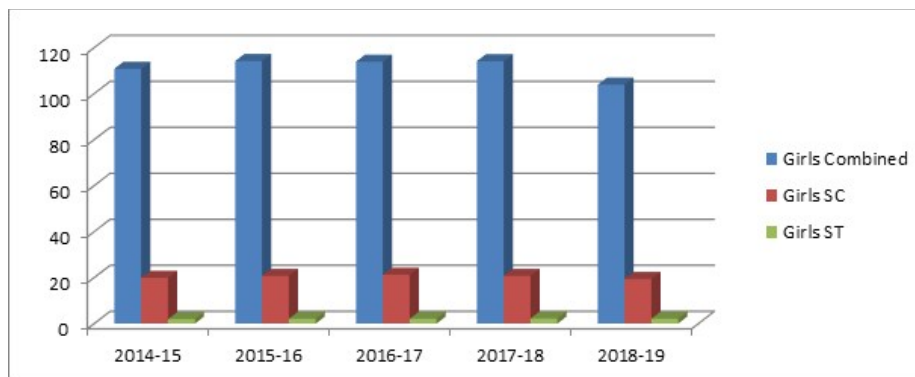
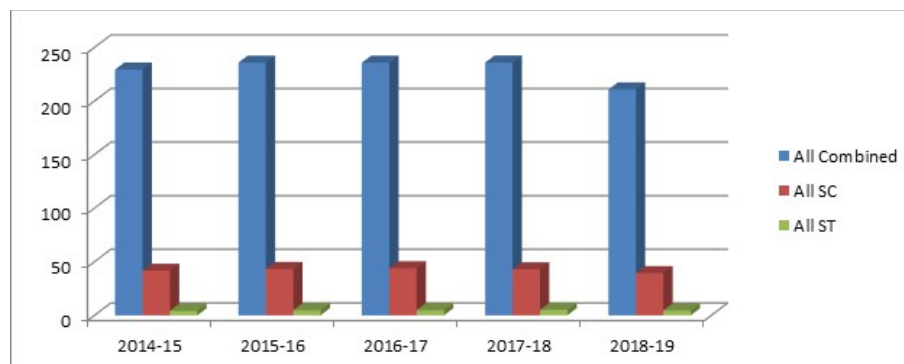


Chart 2(c): Total Enrolment in Elementary Education (All)



### 3. DROPOUT RATE

Dropout is one of the major problems of elementary education in Bihar. The success of enrolment is meaningful if the children are retained in the school up to a certain level. There are three major factors which are responsible for dropouts of the students in Bihar. They are economic factors, social and cultural factors and infrastructure and environment of the school. The dropout rates at primary and upper primary levels in Bihar during 2014-15 to 2018-19 have been presented in Table 3, Chart 3(a) and Chart 3(b).

**Table 3: Dropout Rates in Elementary Education**

Year	Primary			Upper Primary		
	Girls	Boys	Combined	Girls	Boys	Combined
2014-15	24.0	29.2	26.8	38.9	49.9	45.1
2015-16	24.2	25.6	25.0	36.3	47.0	42.2
2016-17	22.4	22.0	22.2	38.1	46.8	42.9
2017-18	16.1	17.1	16.2	36.2	43.0	39.8
2018-19	16.8	25.4	21.4	43.0	46.5	44.8

Source: Compiled from GoB, Bihar Economic Survey (2020-21), Table 11.22, p. 4

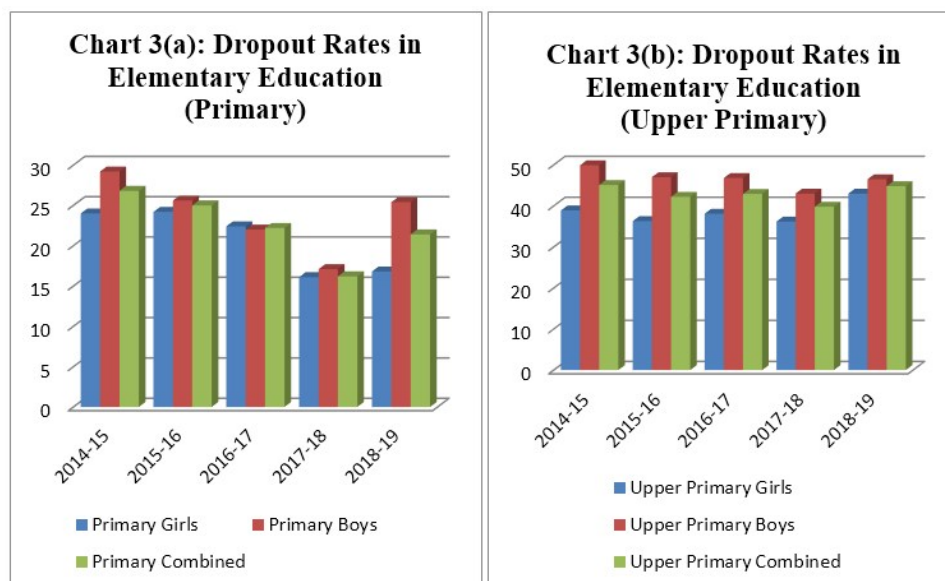


Table 3, Chart 3(a) and Chart 3(b) shows that dropout rates at primary and upper primary and upper primary levels in Bihar during 2014-15 to 2018-19. It reveals that dropout rates have fallen steadily in the recent years. At the primary level, the dropout rate fell from 26.8 per cent in 2014-15 to 21.4 per cent in 2018-19, registered a decrease by 5.4 per cent. Similar trend has been observed in upper primary level also. In upper primary level, the dropout rate decreased from 45.1 per cent in 2014-15 to 44.8 per cent in 2018-19 and registered a decline of 0.3 per cent. To check the factors responsible for dropout, a constant monitoring for retention of enrolled students is urgently required. A special attention must be given to the socially and economically underprivileged society and students belonging to the SC/ST categories.

#### 4. EXPENDITURE IN ELEMENTARY EDUCATION

The expenditure in elementary education is the backbone for development of education in any state. The expenditure in elementary education has been increased from Rs.12140 crore in 2014-15 to Rs. 19152 crore in 2018-19 registering an increase about 57.8 per cent during the same period as it is evident from Table 4. However, this figure reduced to Rs. 18747 crore in 2019-20. In percentage terms, the share of elementary education in total expenditure on education was marked at 68.1 per cent which increased to 81.1 per cent in 2019-19 but decreased to 66.4 per cent in 2019-20.

**Table 4: Expenditure in Elementary Education (Rs. in crore)**

Year	Expenditure on Elementary Education	Total Expenditure on Education
2014-15	12140 (68.1)	17833
2015-16	13327 (68.7)	19386
2016-17	13880 (69.6)	19939
2017-18	15638 (64.1)	24385
2018-19	19152 (81.1)	23618
2019-20	18747 (66.4)	28234*
CAGR	10.1	9.2

Source: Compiled from GoB, Bihar Economic Survey (2020-21), Table 11.24, p. 404.

Note: (1) Figures in the parenthesis represent percentage share.

(2) \*2019-20 includes Rs. 542.94 crore expenditure on Mass Education, Research and Training, Administration and Library.

### III. PROGRAMMES FOR DEVELOPMENT OF ELEMENTARY EDUCATION

#### 1. Right to Education

Right to Education Act was passed in Parliament on August 4, 2009 which came into force with effect from April 1, 2010 to ensure community participation in the overall development programme of school and to create genuine understanding for election of Vidyalaya Shiksha Samiti. This was a landmark in Indian history as the country joined the pool of around 140 countries that declared education as a fundamental right. Apart from free and compulsory education, the Right to Education (RTE) advocates a pupil-teacher ratio of 30:1 for every primary school and 35:1 for every upper primary school. Education is completely free till a child completes elementary stages of schooling ensuring guardians not to bear the cost of uniforms, textbooks, meals, transport, etc.<sup>4</sup>

#### 2. National Education Policy

India has gone through two major education policies after independence, first in 1968, second in 1986 and third has been proposed in 2020. In 2019, the Ministry of Human Resource Development a Draft New Education Policy followed by a number of public consultations. The Draft discusses reducing of curriculum content to enhance learning, critical thinking and more holistic experimental, discussion-based and analysis-based learning. It intends to revise curriculum and pedagogical structure from 10+2 system to a 5+3+3+4 system design in an effort to optimize learning for students based cognitive development of children.<sup>5</sup> The Cabinet approved the New Education Policy in July 2020 with an objective to move Indian higher education system from teacher centric to student centric, information centric to knowledge centric, marks centric to skills centric, examination centric to experimental centric and learning centric to research centric.<sup>6</sup> It will also be instrumental in deciding the economy, social status, technology adoption and healthy human behavior of the country.

#### 3. Samagra Shiksha Abhiyan

Samagra Shiksha Abhiyan was an overarching programme launched by the central government in 2018-19 extending from pre-school to class XII. It includes three schemes of Ministry of Human Resource Development Department (MHRD) namely; Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan (SSA) covering Grade I to VIII, Rashtriya Madhyamic Shiksha Abhiyan (RMSA) covering Grades IX to X and Grades XI to XII for certain components and Centrally Sponsored

Scheme on Teacher Education (CSSTE) aiming to provide infrastructural and institutional support to teacher education institutions to enhance the quality of teachers.<sup>7</sup>

**Table 5: Funds Received under Samagra Shiksha Abhiyan (Rs. in lakh)**

Programme	Approved AWP&B (including spill over)	Share (60:40)		Fund Released by GoI as a Central Share	Fund Received by State Implementing Society		Percentage of Share Received	
		GoI(60%)	GoB(40%)		GoI	GoB	GoI	GoB
2018-19								
Elementary Education	737158.3	442295.0	294863.3	296059.0	296059.0	194039.4	67.0	66.0
Total	874827.8	524896.7	349931.1	305837.7	307379.7	200558.5	59.0	57.0
2019-20								
Elementary Education	738278.2	442966.9	295311.3	324377.8	324377.8	212251.9	73.0	72.0
Total	862507.2	517504.3	345002.9	326693.1	326693.1	213795.4	63.0	62.0

Source: Compiled from GoB, Bihar Economic Survey (2020-21), Table 11.27, p. 408.

Table 5 shows the status of fund received by Bihar Education Project for elementary education under Samagra Shiksha Abhiyan in 2018-19 and 2019-20. The central government has released Rs. 3266.93 crore to Bihar under this programme in 2019-20 against Rs. 3058.38 crore in 2018-19. The percentage of share received from the central government was recorded 63.0 per cent in 2019-20 against 59.0 per cent in 2018-19. Matching to this, the state government also released 62 per cent in 2019-20 and 57.0 per cent in 2018-19 of the approved amount. It is also clear from the table that the major share of fund received by Bihar Education Project was for the development of elementary education.

#### 4. KASTURBA GANDHI BALIKA VIDYALAYA (KGBV)

Kasturba Gandhi Balika Vidyalaya (KGBV) are residential upper primary school for girl students from SC, ST, OBC and BPL communities, set up in educationally backward areas where schools are at good distance, posing security problem to girls. This may be one of the reasons why they discontinue their education. These schools provide 75 per cent reservation to girls from SC/ST/OBC and minority communities and 25 per cent to girls from families living below the poverty line. Since 2007, the KGBV has been merged with the SSA programme as a separate component. In 2019-20, there were 535 KGBVs in Bihar with a total enrolment of 50318 girls. Of these enrolled girls, 23897 (48 per cent) belong to SC, 4177 (8 per cent) ST, 17656 (35 per cent) OBC, 1635 (3 per cent) BPL and 2593 (6 per cent) are minorities. The facilities for girls' hostel have also been extended to higher secondary level. It has provided the facility of at least one residential school for girls from Grades VI-XII in every educationally backward block, which does not have residential school under any other scheme. Presently, there are 93 KGBVs (Grades VI-XII) operational in the state in which 4245 students are enrolled.<sup>8</sup>

#### 5. MID DAY MEAL SCHEME

Based on initial success of school meals in other states, the central government expanded this scheme for promoting higher enrolment in the age group of 6-14 years and their retention in the schools through National Programme of Nutritional Support to Primary Education (NP-NSPE), launched in 1995.<sup>9</sup> Under this programme, cooked food free of cost was to be

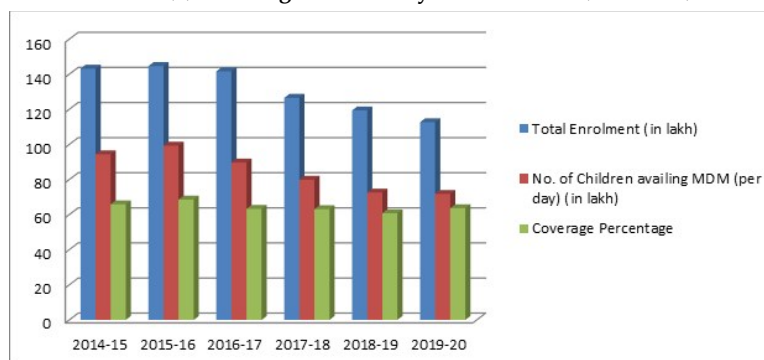
distributed among the students during the lunch period. The cost of the food is shared between the centre and state governments in 60:40. The coverage of the scheme for the period 2014-15 to 2019-20 has been presented in Table 6, Chart 4(a) and Chart 4(b).

**Table 6: Coverage of Mid Day Meal Scheme**

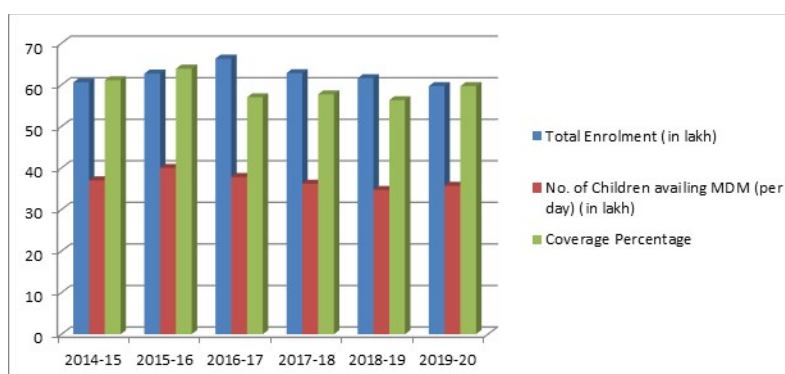
Year	2014-15	2015-16	2016-17	2017-18	2018-19	2019-20
Class I-V						
Total Enrolment (in lakh)	143.2	144.7	141.7	126.6	119.4	112.7
No. of Children availing MDM (per day) (in lakh)	94.4	99.3	89.7	79.9	72.6	71.8
Coverage Percentage	65.9	68.6	63.3	63.1	60.8	63.7
Class VI-VII						
Total Enrolment (in lakh)	60.6	62.7	66.3	62.8	61.6	59.7
No. of Children availing MDM (per day) (in lakh)	37.0	40.0	37.8	36.2	34.7	35.7
Coverage Percentage	61.1	63.9	57.0	57.7	56.3	59.7

Source: GoB, Bihar Economic Survey (2020-21), Table 11.26, p. 406.

**Chart 4(a): Coverage of Mid Day Meal Scheme (Class I-V)**



**Chart 4(b): Coverage of Mid Day Meal Scheme (Class VI-VIII)**



The table and charts show that the scheme has covered 107.4 lakh students of elementary education in 2019-20 against 131.4 lakh students in 2014-15. The average coverage percentage of MDM Scheme was around 64.2 per cent at primary level and 59.3 per cent at upper primary

level during the period 2014-15 and 2019-20. Hence, it needs some additional effort to ensure universal coverage of the scheme.

#### 6. Digital Educational Portal

A digital learning platform has been created by Bihar Education Project Council which is used to telecast the classes on its website. This portal provides live telecast and e-based material for primary class (I-V), upper primary classes (VI-VIII), secondary classes (IX-X) and senior secondary classes (XI-XII). Apart from this, YouTube channel has also been initiated by Bihar Education Project Council (BEPC) to share digital contents with teachers and the students.<sup>10</sup>

#### IV. CONCLUSION

Thus, it may be concluded that the Government of Bihar has applied much effort for the development of elementary education to enhance its level and create a sense of social security among students. Digital Education Portal, Digital Initiatives of BEP (classes of 5-hour slot through Doordarshan Bihar), Vidyavahini Bihar App, Right to Education, Shiksha Adhikar Yatra, etc are some important efforts of the government. It remains further ample scope to extend these efforts and create strong policies drawn on international experiences and previous evidences. Efforts should be made to increase enrolment, retain the enrolled students and special attention to the socially and economically underprivileged society and students belonging to the SC/ST categories. There is need to mobilize more resources and redesigning of the schemes to ensure a stronger education system at elementary level and make the grand success of Aatmanirbhar Abhiyan announced by our Prime Minister, Shri Narendra Modi. In this context, the foundation of New Education Policy, 2020 may be considered a milestone in development of elementary education and a vital instrument in contributing equitable and sustainable quality education in the state.

#### References

1. Iype, Sarah (2020), "Education – The Backbone of Development", Kurukshetra, Vol. 68, No. 9, July, pp. 22-27.
2. Government of Bihar, Bihar Economic Survey (2020-21), p. 398.
3. *Ibid.*,
4. *Ibid.*, p.482.
5. Kalyani, Pawan (2020), "An Empirical Study on NEP 2020 (National Education Policy) with Special Reference to the Future of Indian Education System and Its Effects on the Stakeholders", Journal of Management Engineering and Information Technology (JMEIT), Vol. 7, Issue 5, October.
6. Aithal, P.S. and Shubhrajyotsna (2020), Analysis of the Indian National Education Policy 2020 towards Achieving its Objectives, Munich Personal RePEc Archive (MAPRA), Paper No. 102549, August, p. 16.
7. Government of Bihar, *loc.cit.*, pp. 407-408.
8. *Ibid.*, pp. 406-407.
9. Iype, Sarah, *loc.cit.*,
10. Government of Bihar, *loc.cit.*, p.484.





This document was created with the Win2PDF "print to PDF" printer available at <http://www.win2pdf.com>

This version of Win2PDF 10 is for evaluation and non-commercial use only.

This page will not be added after purchasing Win2PDF.

<http://www.win2pdf.com/purchase/>