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Title of the Thesis: A STUDY OF ENROLMENT AND RETENTION OF CHILDREN OF WEAKER SECTION AT PRIMARY LEVEL IN HARYANA

ABSTRACT

Education is the core of human development and an essential prerequisite for achieving equality, dignity and social justice. Primary education is the base upon which the whole system of education rests. A country can build a sound system of education only if its elementary education is free from defects and weaknesses. However, the number of children particularly those from disadvantaged groups and weaker sections who drop out of school before completing primary education, remains high. The quality of learning achievement is not always entirely satisfactory even in the case of children who complete elementary education. With a view to address these issues, the RTE Act- 2009 has been introduced to directly counter the problems of illiteracy, poor quality infrastructure and learning level in the elementary education. But the problem of less enrolment and retention could not be realized due to numerous problems faced by the government as a result of the shortage of resources and will power.

All through the history of civilization, India has boasted of equality but still it is not true as inequality in one or other form has been perseverant in the society not only in one field but almost in every. Education is not an exception to this as the same can be seen in the form of less enrolment and retention of the students from weaker sections. The basic need of the study is to understand why many children are out of school, in spite of apparent access. The objectives of the study are: i) to study the enrolment and retention of children of weaker section at primary level. ii) to study the factors affecting the enrolment and retention of children of weaker section at primary level.

The researcher has used survey method of research to explore the enrolment and retention of weaker section at primary level at Jind district of Haryana. The sample for the study represents various stakeholders of primary education including one D.E.E.O., 4 B.E.E.O.'s, 64 head teachers, 128 teachers and 128 parents of the students. The researcher conducted 10 case studies of dropout children to find out the reasons for dropouts.

Findings of the study

- It is found that in 2009-10 the total enrolment of weaker section students in class- I is 2251, out of which 1042 are boys and 1209 are girls. During 2010-11, the total enrolment of weaker section students in class- II is 2155, out of which 978 are boys and 117 are girls. The total enrolment in 2011-12, in class- III is 2133, out of which 969 are boys and 1164 are girls. In 2012-13, the enrolment of class- IV is 2108, out of which 955 are boys and 1153 are girls. The total enrolment in 2013-14, in class- V is 2074 out of which, 932 are boys and 1142 are girls. The total enrolment of weaker section girls are higher than boys in class-I to V from 2009-10 to 2013-14. The enrolment of weaker section students shows the decreasing trend from 2009-10 to 2013-14 in Government primary schools.
- On the basis of academic session 2009-10 and 2013-14 it is found that the retention rate of weaker section students is 92.14 per cent, out of which 89.44 per cent is of boys and 94.46 per cent is of girls. The retention rate of weaker section girls is higher than that of boys.
- It is found that the dropout rate of weaker section students on the basis of academic session 2009-10 and 2013-14 is 7.86 per cent out of which, 10.56 per cent is the dropout rate of boys and 5.56 per cent is the dropout rate of girls. The dropout rate of weaker section boys is higher than the girls in the same category.
- The study found that Location and Environment of the School, Quality of Text-Books, Teacher Personality and Appearances, Child- Centred Approaches, Teaching - Learning Materials (TLM), Curriculum of the Courses, The Communication Language of Text – Books, Classroom Environment, Mid-Day Meal (MDM) Programme, Government Welfare Scheme, School and Community and Socio-Economic Status of the Parents are the factors which affect the enrolment and retention of weaker section children.
- Reasons for dropout of weaker section children were as follows: i) Poor social and economic condition of the family ii) Lack of awareness among parents about the education iii) Separation, divorce, conflicts and hostile environment at home iii) Excessive involvement of the children in domestic work iv) Lack of proper facilities at school v) Corporal punishment given by the teachers vi) Physical disability of the child vii) Distance between home and school.

The study recommends that government should review its welfare schemes and ensure the implementation these schemes/programmes/policies at grass root level. Further, the quality of Mid-Day Meal needs to be improved for increasing the enrolment and retention of weaker section children at primary level. Steps should be taken for the upliftment of weaker section.