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The Growth and Trends in Elementary School Enrollment and Drop-outs – An Appraisal of Indian Experience

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**Abstract:**

*Free and compulsory education to all children up to the age of fourteen years is the Constitutional commitment in India. At the time of adoption of the Constitution in 1950, the aim was to achieve the goal of Universalisation of Elementary Education (UEE) within the next ten years i.e. by 1960 the level of education in India has been increased rapidly from the last two decades and also the public and private institutions have a great role to play in a country like India and welfare states. The main objectives of this paper are, to analyze the growth of enrollment and drop-outs in India and also it has used exponential growth model to calculate the growth of enrollment as well as drop-outs. And Finally it has been conclude that, the growth of enrollment in private schools is better compared to Govt schools and ST caste is occupied a better position in terms of their enrollment than SC's. The enrollments have been showed marked differentials among girls and boys in India. The drop-out is still existed in the country; finally the drop-out is declining from the last decade due to the various programmes and policies adopted by the Govt.*

## Introduction

Free and compulsory education to all children up to the age of fourteen years is the Constitutional commitment in India. At the time of adoption of the Constitution in 1950, the aim was to achieve the goal of Universalisation of Elementary Education (UEE) within the next ten years i.e. by 1960. Keeping in view the educational facilities available in the country at that time, the goal was far too ambitious to achieve within a short span of ten years. Hence, the target date was shifted a number of times. Till 1960, all efforts were focused on provision of schooling facilities. It was only after the near realization of the goal of access that other components of UEE, such as universal enrollment and retention, started receiving attention of planners and policy makers. It is the quality of education, which is at present in the focus in all programmes relating to elementary education in general and primary education in particular.

Significant efforts have been made in the last fifty years to universalize elementary education. Since 1950, impressive progress has been made in every sphere of elementary education. In 1950-51, there were about 210 thousand primary and 14 thousand upper primary schools. Their numbers have been increased to 627 thousand and 190 thousand respectively as in the year 1998-99; At present in India, there are 13, 62, 324(lakhs) Elementary Schools (DISE 2011) (Table: 1). In that 10, 64,700 schools are Government and 2, 64,607 schools are in private sector. And also 10, 30,679 schools are rural Govt schools 1, 69,664 schools are belong to rural private sector. Where as in the urban area also there are about 34,021 schools and 94,943 schools are in urban private sector.

In addition to that 83 per cent of the total 1,061 thousand habitations have access to primary schooling facilities within 1 km and 76 per cent habitations to upper primary schooling facilities within a distance of 3 km. About 94 and 85 per cent of the total rural population is accessed to primary and upper primary schools/sections. The ratio of primary to upper primary schools over time has improved which is at present 3.3. Likewise, the number of teachers both at the primary and upper primary levels of education over time has increased many folds. From a low of 538 thousand in 1950-51, the number of primary school teachers in 1998-99 increased to 1,904 thousand (MHRD, 2000a) now the no of teachers were increased from 2559.21 thousands (DISE, 2011). Similarly, upper primary teachers during the same period increased from 86 thousand to 1,278 thousand during the above period but in the year of 2010-2011 it is 491.43 thousands.

Over a period of time, enrollment, both at the primary and upper levels of education, has increased significantly. From a low of 19 million in 1950-51, it has increased to about 111 million in 1998-99 at the primary and from 3 to 40 million at the upper primary level. At present, the enrollment ratio (gross) is 92 and 58 per cent respectively at the primary and upper primary level of education. The percentage of girl's enrollment to the total enrollment at the primary and upper primary level of education in 1998-99 was about 44 and 41 per cent. In addition to that the enrollment level of children also increasing positively. The total enrollment in elementary schools of India has been increased. 130.10 millions (Table 1) of Enrollment is in the public sector and 59.11 millions of Enrollment of Elementary Schools is in private sector. And also 115.21 million of Enrollment is in rural Govt schools and 32.16 Million of Enrollment is in rural Private schools. And also 14.89 Million in urban Govt schools, where as 26.95 Million Enrollment is in urban Private Schools.

Moreover, the level of education in India is increasing rapidly from the last two decades and also the public and private institutions have a great role to play in mixed economies and welfare states.

#### **Objectives**

- To Evaluate the Growth and Trends in Enrollments in India
- To Analyze the trends in Drop-outs in India

#### **Methodology**

This paper is mainly based on secondary data collected from Elementary Education where do we stand? State report cards from 2002-2011. It has been used exponential growth model to calculate the growth and trends in Enrollment and drop-outs of elementary schools in India.

#### **The Growth of Enrollment in Elementary Schools of India**

Private and government schools have been contributed in the total enrollment in elementary schools of India. The contribution of private schools is more in terms of its enrollment compared to government schools. Because, the people want to provide quality education to their children and they are ready to invest more income for that purpose. Parents participation is the best reason for the highest growth of enrollments in private institutions and also in private schools, infrastructure level of the schools, quality education like Medium of Instruction, curriculum activities has been given. Further, there is no teacher related problem i.e., absenteeism and lack of teachers and they have given preference to every individual student and such schools mainly concentrates on education attainment as well as outcome. Hence, the level of enrollment in private management schools is more compared to

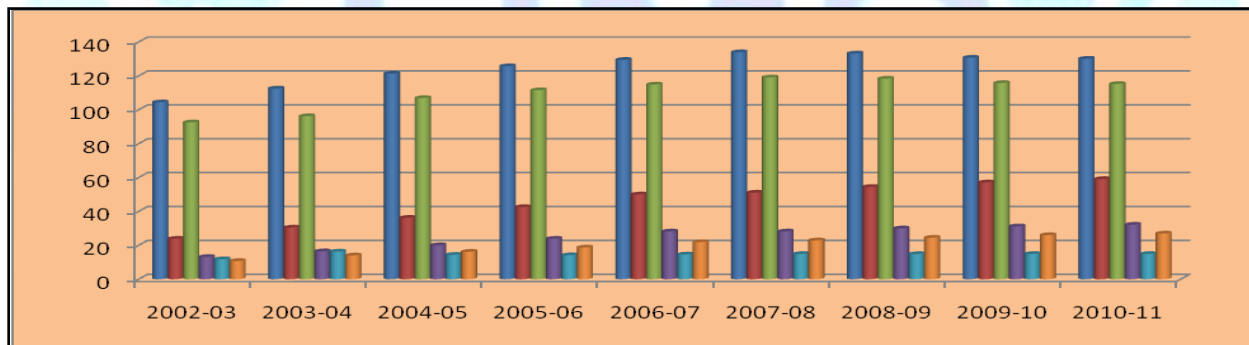
government schools in both rural as well as urban areas. The table 1 represents the various trends and growth of enrollment.

**Table 1: Total Enrollment in Elementary Schools of India-2002-2011 (in Lakhs)**

Years	Govt Schools	Private Schools	Rural Govt Schools	Rural Private Schools	Urban Govt Schools	Urban Private Schools
2002-03	104.37	23.87	92.58	13.12	11.78	10.74
2003-04	112.51	30.47	96.2	16.45	16.3	14.02
2004-05	121.31	36.24	106.91	20.04	14.39	16.19
2005-06	125.7	42.58	111.53	23.88	14.16	18.69
2006-07	129.45	50.04	114.87	28.19	14.58	21.85
2007-08	133.95	51.09	119.06	28.2	14.89	22.88
2008-09	133.2	54.45	118.36	29.98	14.84	24.47
2009-10	130.71	57.15	115.8	31.14	14.91	26
2010-11	130.1	59.11	115.21	32.16	14.88	26.95

Source: Elementary Education in India-Where Do We Stand? State Report Cards

**Figure 1: Total Enrollment in Elementary Schools of India-2002-2011**



Source: Elementary Education in India-Where Do We Stand? State Report Cards.

Note: ■ Govt Schools ■ Private Schools ■ Rural Govt Schools ■ Rural Private Schools  
 ■ Urban Govt Schools ■ Urban Private Schools

Table and Figure1 illustrate that, the trends of enrollment in elementary schools of India over a period of time from 2002-03 to 2010-11. In this figure, the enrollment of government schools and the rural government school is very high but it has in progressive trend in the beginning of the study period but later it has varied. But in the urban government schools, the enrollment level is very low. Whereas in private schools, the enrollment has been rose every year in both rural as well as urban areas but compared to the government schools it has been very poor.

**Table 2: Average Annual Growth of Enrollment in Elementary Schools of India 2002-2011**

Dependent Variable	Constant	Parameter ( $\beta_1$ )	Sig	R square
Government Schools	18.506	0.026	0.004	0.721
Private Schools	17.04	0.108	0.001	0.9
Rural Government Schools	18.371	0.028	0.004	0.72
Rural Private Schools	16.447	0.108	0.001	0.879
Urban Government Schools	16.424	0.013	0.274	0.167
Urban Private Schools	16.235	0.109	0.001	0.922

The results of the growth of enrollment in government, private, rural and urban elementary schools in India are reported in table 2. The average growth of enrollment in government schools is 2.6 percent and it is statistically significant at the 1 percent level and the value of the R Square is 0.72. Whereas the enrollment in private schools was increased with an amount of 10.8 percent approximately four times higher than government schools and it is statistically significant at the 1 percent level and the value of the R Square is 0.90. The study has also compared the enrollment of rural and urban elementary schools, the average of enrollment in rural government schools is 2.8 percent and it is statistically significant at the 1 percent level and the value of the R Square is 0.72. In the same way, enrollment of rural private schools also increased with an amount of 10.8 percent, again it is higher than the rural government Schools. It is statistically significant at the 1 the percent level and the R Square value is 0.879. Whereas in the urban government schools, the overall average annual growth of enrollment is 1.3 percent and it is statistically insignificant compared to the growth of enrollment in all types of elementary schools and the value of R Square is 0.167. Finally, the average annual growth of enrollment in urban private schools is 10.9 percent approximately it has a higher average of annual growth in enrollment of all types of elementary schools in India. It is statistically significant at the 1 percent level and the value of R Square is 0.922.

The above result reveals that, both government and private schools are participating well in providing good education. Unfortunately, the level of enrollments in government schools is very low in both rural and urban areas. But compared to government schools, the private schools have lion share in the growth of enrollment as well as providing standard education at the elementary school level. The main reason for the decreasing trend of enrollment in government schools are firstly, the inefficiency of management, medium of instruction, lack of infrastructure facilities rather than the PTR ratio is also problematic in such institutions as a result of the above problems the level of enrollment in government schools is very poor. Whereas, in private management schools the situation is completely opposite to

the government schools. Because, the above mentioned obstacles are very less in private institutions. Consequently, the level of enrollment has been increased compared to the government schools.

### **Analyses of Growth Pattern in Drop-outs in India**

The drop-out problem is pervasive in the Indian Education system. Many children, who enter school, are unable to complete school education and multiple factors are responsible for children dropping out of school. Risk factor begins to add up even before student enroll in school that include; poverty, low education level of parents, the weak family structure, pattern of schooling of sibling, and lack of pre-school experiences. Family background and domestic problems create an environment which negatively affects the value of education (Chug, 2011). Further, students could drop-out as a result of multitude of school factors such as uncongenial atmosphere, poor comprehension, absenteeism, attitude and behavior of the teachers, and failure or repetition in the same grade etc.

The problem of drop-out children at the primary stage is deeply seated in almost all the developing countries and thus it has attracted the attention of academicians, researchers and policy makers for a long time. Despite progress towards universal primary education, 75 million of children are still not enrolled in primary schools, most of the children drop-out before completing primary school and many more leave having failed (UNESCO 2009).

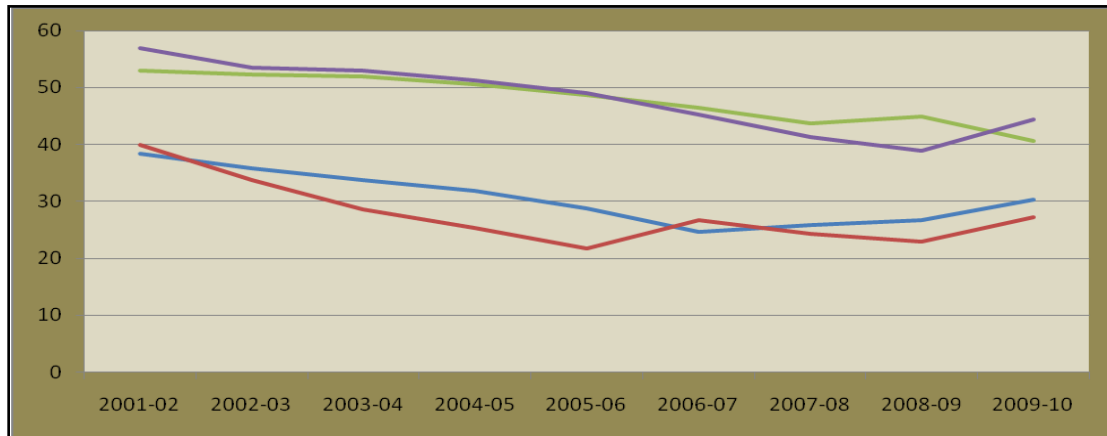
In this section the study has analyzed the trends in drop-outs in India during the period of 2001-02 to 2009-10 descriptively as follow

**Table 3: Drop-outs in Primary and Elementary Schools of India 2001-2010**

sYear	(I-V) Classes	(I-VIII Classes)
2001-02	39.00	54.60
2002-03	34.89	52.79
2003-04	31.47	52.32
2004-05	29.00	50.84
2005-06	25.67	48.80
2006-07	25.60	45.90
2007-08	25.09	42.68
2008-09	24.93	42.25
2009-10	28.86	42.39

*Source: Ministry of Human Resource Development Govt of India (13456)*

Figure 2: Drop-outs in Primary and Elementary Schools of India 2001-2010



Source: Ministry of Human Resource Development Government of India (13456)

Note: — Primary Boys — Primary Girls — Elementary Boys — Elementary Girls

The Table 3 and figure 2 enumerates that, the discrepancies in the growth of drop-outs in both primary as well as elementary schools of India over a period of time. Here, the average drop-outs are very higher in elementary schools compared to primary schools. But it is very clear in the chart; the average of drop-out in primary school is very lower than the elementary schools in India.

Table 4: Average Annual Drop-outs in Primary Schools of India

Dependent Variables	Constant	Parameter ( $\beta_1$ )	Sig	R Square
Primary Schools Drop-out Boys	37.784	-.044	.012	.618
Primary Schools Drop-out Girls	35.019	-.049	.033	.499

Dropping out of school children at primary and Elementary level is the main drawback to achieve universalisation of Elementary Education (UEE). There is a huge variation in drop-out rate among the boys and girls at primary as well elementary level in India during the period of 2001-2010.

The research study has found out the annual growth pattern in drop-outs between boys and girls at the primary and elementary school children by employing an appropriate exponential growth model. The result of the table 4 illustrates that, the average drop-outs among the girls and boys at primary and elementary school level. According to that result, the average drop-out of all boys and girls at primary and elementary level has negative values. So, the average drop-out in boys at primary level is -4.4 percent. It is statistically significant and the R Square value is 0.618. Where as in primary level the average annual growth of girls drop-out is -4.9 percent which is also statistically significant at the 5 percent level and the R Square value is 0.499.

From the above results, it is very clear; the drop-out average in boys is less than the average of girls drop-out at primary level. The main reason for the decline of drop-outs is the Government of India

and Government of Karnataka have launched various programmes like MDM, Labour to School, Special Enrollment Drive and Distribution of Bicycles etc. to decrease the level of drop-outs through Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan. Consequently, the boy's drop-outs have declined. Later, the government has concentrated to reduce the drop-outs in girls by employing the programmes like KGBV, NPGEL and Mahila Samakhya and also Distribution of Bicycles. In addition to that, the government has given lot of constitutional support to education through launching the various acts like RTE, UEE (Article 45). As a result of the above drop-out reducing programmes of government lead to decline the drop-out.

**Table 5: Average Annual Drop-outs in Elementary Schools of India**

Dependent Variables	Constant	Parameter ( $\beta_1$ )	Sig	R Square
Elementary Schools Drop-out Boys	56.198	-.032	.000	.928
Elementary Schools Drop-out Girls	59.216	-.043	.001	.838

The result of the table 5 reveals that, the average of drop-outs in boys at the elementary school is -3.2 percent which is statistically significant at the 1 percent level. And the R Square value is 0.928. Similarly, the average of girls drop-out at the elementary stage is -4.3 percent which is statistically significant at the 1 percent level with 0.838 R Square value.

According to the reported result, the average of girls drop-out at the elementary level is higher than the boys. It means that, the girls are dropping more from the schools compared to the boys. Because of lack of parental participation, distance of schools and lack of infrastructure facilities these are all the various reasons for the dropping out of girl children at the elementary school level. But the boys drop-out is declined compared to the girls. On the whole, the overall drop-out rate is declined due to the proper implementation of government programmes and policies by the Government of India.

Moreover, we may conclude that, the growth of number of enrollment as well as drop-outs in Govt, private as well as rural and urban Elementary Schools in India. And also it clearly shows that the private institutions have Lion share in providing quality education compared to Govt schools in both rural as well as urban areas. Where as in gender-wise enrollments, the boys and girls almost similar in primary enrollments but in upper primary level both have poor in average growth of enrollments. Subsequently, the SC's and ST's also have some share in enrollments at elementary stage. But the overall performance of Elementary Schools in growth of Enrollment is rising positively. Further, the



drop-out average in boys is less than the average of girls drop-out at primary level. Whereas in SC and ST's the drop-out is very high in upper primary level among boys and girls. On the whole, the overall growth of drop-out is declining due to the implementation of various Govt programmes and policies in India. Even though there is a lot many steps have taken to reduce the drop-out but unfortunately, that problem still existed.

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