

Education in Jammu and Kashmir: Issues and Challenges

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ABSTRACT

Education is the main instrument for the development and prosperity of any nation. It is the process through which the society deliberately transmits its cultural heritage, knowledge, values and skills from one generation to other generation. Education plays a key role in the process of social mobility of an individual. Many sociological studies have shown that education is a powerful factor in bringing about change in society. Education has contributed to the destiny of the societies in each and every area of development. The education system in Jammu and Kashmir is not in a good condition and has become total failure on the part of authorities, teachers, students and society. The education system is not progressing at a pace when compared to other Indian states. Faulty education system has created a lot of problems affecting the students and society at large. Against the national literacy rate of 74.04% Jammu and Kashmir has a literacy figure of 68.74%. The current paper deals with the historical background of education, present status of education sector in Jammu and Kashmir and highlights the problems and challenges of education in Jammu and Kashmir. The investigator also suggests suitable measures and recommendations to improve the education system in Jammu and Kashmir.

KEYWORDS: Education, Jammu & Kashmir, Status, Issues and Challenges

INTRODUCTION

Education is one of the important transformation and effective input for nation building. It is closely related to various aspects of human life and environment. It is the process through which the society deliberately transmits its cultural heritage, its accumulated knowledge, values and skills from one generation to other generation. Education is the major aspect of development of any society, since if there is a deficit of educated people then society will stop its further progress. It is generally seen as the foundation of society which brings economic wealth, social prosperity and political stability. Education has contributed to the destiny of the societies in each and every area of development. Thus, it is considered as a powerful instrument to bring any type of change. The Education system in Jammu and Kashmir is not in a good condition and has become total failure on the part of authorities, teachers, students and society. The Education system is not progressing at a pace when compared to other Indian states. Faulty Education system has created a lot of problems affecting the students and society at large. Against the national literacy rate of 74.04%, Jammu and Kashmir has a literacy figure of 68.74%.

Historical background of Education in Jammu and Kashmir

Jammu and Kashmir is believed to be paradise on earth, not for its natural beauty only but also for being meeting ground of various cultures. The intellectual development has been the part of life of people of Jammu and Kashmir since time immemorial. Kashmir has been originator of Mahayana Buddhism and is known for its contribution to shavist philosophy. The people from Kalhan to Lal Ded and from Jonaraja to Rasool Mir- the John Keats of Kashmir have

always stood great in the intellectual world of times. The Jammu and Kashmir had remained for centuries, the home of great Sanskrit scholars, one of the best forms of Hinduism, the shavism, flourished here tremendously. The Hindus and Muslims had their own systems of education imparted in the Partshalas and Makhtabs and communicated through sacred languages of Sanskrit, Arabic and Persian and various vernaculars. During Muslim rule, the Persian and Sanskrit learning were promoted. Education was imparted in Makhtabs, Madrasahs, Khanqas attached with mosques, where Persian and Arabic were taught and Partshalas attached to temples where Sanskrit was taught. In the later part of the nineteenth century, Christian missionaries were high on spreading the teachings of Christianity through English education. They started establishing missionary schools across the sub continent. In 1880, expanding their mission to the Kashmir valley, Tyndale Biscoe school, named after Cecil Tyndale Biscoe (1863-1949) was established in Srinagar. This boy's school was the first modern education imparting school in Kashmir. Later, in 1912, another similar school was established for girls. This school was named Mallinson Girls School, named after Ms. Fitze Mallinson. Both these schools had and continue to have their affiliations with Church Mission Society. This set up a precedent for other socio-religious organizations to follow the trend and establish their educational centres and schools to promote their cause via modern education.

Under Dogras, particularly under Galub Singh and his successor Maharaja Hari Singh, education status dropped down to the lowest in the recent centuries. Gulab Singh's son Maharaja Ranbir Singh showed significant interest in

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education. He was the first Dogra ruler who took interest in the education of the state. He established some Pathshalas and regular schools. In early 1860s first state school was opened in Jammu and another similar school was opened in Srinagar in 1874. Maharaja Ranbir Singh established the first press "Vidya Vikas" in Jammu and Kashmir for the purpose of translating books into Sanskrit for Hindu scholars. Maharaja Ranbir Singh contributed more towards school education but his successor Maharaja Pratap Singh gave much importance towards higher education. 'Prince of Wales College' in Jammu and 'Annie Besant College' in Srinagar came into existence in 1905 under his rule. He appointed a committee under the chairmanship of Mr. M Sharp, the then education commissioner of Government of India, in 1916. The committee made some important recommendations regarding higher education. The need for educational reorganization was felt in the state after independence. In 1950 education reorganization committee came into existence with Mr. A.A. Kazmini, Director of Education its Chairman. This committee recommended free education at all levels. On the recommendation of this committee two colleges for women were started, one at Jammu and the other at Srinagar. After 1947 there was some improvement in the education sector. The political emancipation of Jammu and Kashmir and the equal distribution of resources lead to the development of education. Jammu and Kashmir constitution made right to education as basic human right and education was made compulsory for all and was made free at the elementary level that lead to schooling of much number of youth.

Status of Education in Jammu and Kashmir

Education in Jammu and Kashmir is free up to university stage. The literacy rate of Jammu and Kashmir as per census of 2011 is 67.16%, out of this the percentage of male literacy is 76.75% and female literacy is 56.43% (Census 2011). The schools of Jammu and Kashmir are affiliated to Jammu and Kashmir board of School education and Central Board of Secondary Education (CBSE). The education in Kashmir up to secondary level is the responsibility of Jammu and Kashmir board of school education and CBSE, whereas Department of Higher education has the responsibility of Higher education. There are more than 14000 schools for primary, elementary, secondary and senior secondary education. Jammu and Kashmir has also more than 140 colleges and 12 universities. There are two central universities, two deemed to be universities and eight state universities in Jammu and Kashmir. At present, Jammu and Kashmir has 8 Medical colleges, 7 Engineering colleges, 3 Law colleges, 4 Research institutes and 7 institutes of National importance. Even after having so many prominent institutions the educational status of Jammu and Kashmir is not that well. The educational facilities of urban areas are good as compared to rural and backward areas and same is the same with male and female disparities in the enrolment rate. The male literacy rate as per census of 2011 is 76.75% whereas the female literacy rate is 56.43%. This shows that female literacy is very low as compared to male literacy rate. The education system in Jammu and Kashmir is not in a good condition and has become total failure on the part of authorities, teachers, students and society. The education system is not progressing at a pace when compared to other Indian states. Faulty education system has created a lot of problems affecting the students and society at large. Against

the national literacy rate of 74.04%, Jammu and Kashmir has a literacy figure of 68.74%. In the national educational scenario, J&K is subsumed as educationally backward with reference to the established indices namely, literacy rate, teacher-pupil ratio, drop-out rate and the absorption pattern of the educated persons. The government of India has identified 374 districts as educationally backward out of which 11 districts are in Jammu and Kashmir. The situation of education in J&K is witnessing decline. In a survey conducted by Annual status of Education report (ASER) it was revealed that there was a decline in enrolment of 3.8% percent among all male students up to 10th standard. As per the (ASER) report 2020, "in academic year 2018, a total of 64.7 percent females were enrolled in government schools up to class 9th and above while in 2020 only 61.3 percent female students were enrolled". The government has taken many initiatives to improve the quality of education and to increase the literacy rate in Jammu and Kashmir. The following schemes have been implemented to enhance the quality of education and increase the accessibility of the students:

1. Mid-day Meal
2. Shagun Shiksha
3. Inclusive education of the Disabled at secondary stage (IEDSS).
4. Diksha
5. Scheme for providing Quality Education in Madrasa (Spqem).

Table No. 01: District-wise Literacy Rate of Jammu & Kashmir -2011

Districts	Males	Females	Total
Kupwara	77.10	54.79	66.92
Baramulla	77.35	55.01	66.93
Srinagar	78.01	63.47	71.21
Budgam	68.18	46.60	57.98
Pulwama	75.41	53.81	65.00
Anantang	74.13	54.15	64.32
Leh(Ladakh)	89.39	64.52	80.48
Kargil	86.73	58.05	74.49
Doda	80.36	50.34	65.97
Udhampur	79.93	58.22	69.90
Poonch	81.04	54.80	68.69
Rajouri	78.38	57.20	68.54
Jammu	89.77	77.41	83.98
Kathua	81.40	64.56	73.50
Samba	89.76	74.39	82.48
Reasi	69.93	47.55	59.42
Kishtwar	71.75	44.13	58.54
Ganderbal	70.74	47.62	59.99
Kulgam	70.59	49.74	60.35
Ramban	71.97	40.04	56.90
Shopian	71.86	52.77	62.49
Bandipora	68.41	46.24	57.82
Total	76.75	56.43	67.16

Source: Census (2011) Government of India

In the above table no.1 shows Jammu district has the highest literacy rate of 83.98% whereas Ramban district has the lowest literacy rate of 56.90%. Table also shows that male literacy rate is higher than female literacy rate, with male literacy rate of 76.75% and female literacy rate of 56.43% (Census 2011). The total literacy rate of Jammu and Kashmir as per census (2011) is 67.16%.

Table no.2: Number of Universities and colleges

Central Universities	02
State Universities	09
Deemed to be Universities	02
Colleges	140
Medical Colleges	08
Engineering Colleges	07
Research Institutes	04
Law Colleges	03
Institutes of National Importance	07

Objectives of the paper

1. To trace the historical background of education in Jammu and Kashmir.
2. To highlight the problems and challenges of education in Jammu and Kashmir.
3. To determine the status of education in Jammu and Kashmir.
4. To make suggestions for improving education system in Jammu and Kashmir.

Methodology

This paper is based on secondary data. The data has been collected from different sources like research reports, Journals, research papers, newspapers, official census of government of India (2011), website of (JK BOSE) and Higher Education.

Problems and Challenges of Education in Jammu and Kashmir

Jammu and Kashmir is facing so many challenges and hurdles in education system. Some of the major problems are discussed below

1. One of the major problems of education in Jammu and Kashmir is political uncertainty. Mostly educational institutions remain shut which spoils the future of students and education system.
2. A long break due to political situation is another major problem that affects the education system badly. Researchers have revealed that breaks in education cause many psychological problems among students as well as affects their academic performance negatively.
3. Poor infrastructure in educational institutions especially the institutions run by the public sector suffer from poor physical facilities and infrastructure like unavailability of clean drinking water, lack of toilet facilities for students, inadequate classrooms etc.
4. Lack of trained and subject specific teachers in schools especially in government schools.
5. Teachers in educational institutes give more emphasis on rote learning and less emphasis on critical thinking.
6. Education system in Jammu and Kashmir is information based rather than knowledge based. Instead of understanding and analyzing the content the students focus on cramming it.
7. Educational institutions receive inadequate government funding. Insufficient amount is available for innovative ideas and programs.
8. There is less focus on quality research in higher education. There are limited facilities and resources as well as insufficient numbers of quality teachers to advise students.
9. Other problems and issues are student drop-out ratio, student-teacher ratio, disparities between girls and boys and low enrolment at the primary level.

Suggestions for improving Education system in Jammu and Kashmir

1. To build a high quality education system, adequate funding must be made available by the Government to improve quality and making education affordable to all.
2. Appropriate pupil teacher ratio should be maintained for the smooth functioning of teaching learning process.
3. More schools and colleges should be established in rural and backward areas to make education accessible to all.
4. Quality knowledge should be imparted to the students. Students should be encouraged to go for research activities.
5. Government should start skill based vocational courses in educational institutions.
6. Curriculum of all courses offered at various levels should be revised and updated to make it competitive and engaging and make the students confident, self-dependent and skillful.
7. Special training programmes should be organized for teachers in order to keep them updated with recent happenings.
8. Separate technical and research colleges should be established for girls in order to increase their participation in education.
9. The utilization of funds for rural development scheme in the state should be increased.
10. Infrastructure should be expanded and well developed for the betterment of education.
11. Parents of the students should actively participate in the learning process of their children. They should be encouraged to take part in the activities organized by the educational institutions.
12. Educational institutions should focus on learning oriented teaching rather than syllabus oriented teaching.
13. Government should provide sufficient staff in schools and colleges. The teachers in Jammu and Kashmir should be imparted training for using innovative teaching methods.
14. The schools and colleges should use sound evaluation schemes like continuous and comprehensive evaluation and provide rich and healthy in educational institutions.
15. The teachers should be imparted specialized training and guidance for adopting new teaching methods.

Conclusion

Jammu and Kashmir is subsumed as educationally backward in the national education scenario. The continuous closure of educational institutions and the long breaks in education caused by political situation is one of the recurring problems in Jammu and Kashmir. In order to tackle with these problems government must adopt alternative methods to improve the education system. E-learning must be encouraged at all levels to mitigate the loss caused by the political situation. In order to successfully meet the future challenges in education, the government must give prime importance to education sector and provide as many facilities as possible.

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