

A Study on Recent Schemes and Initiatives of State Government for Promoting Primary Education in Karnataka

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Manuscript ID:
ECO-2021-09033981

Volume: 9

Issue: 3

Month: June

Year: 2021

P-ISSN: 2319-961X

E-ISSN: 2582-0192

Received: 30.03.2021

Accepted: 06.05.2021

Published: 01.06.2021

Citation:

Harish, N. "A Study on Recent Schemes and Initiatives of State Government for Promoting Primary Education in Karnataka." *Shanlax International Journal of Economics*, vol. 9, no. 3, 2021, pp. 36-39.

DOI:


<https://doi.org/10.34293/economics.v9i3.3981>



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Abstract

Education is an essential instrument of social transformation and economic development. Financing of primary education is of vital importance due to it being a fundamental right in most modern societies. Government spending on primary education in Karnataka has been increasing in recent years to improve access to and quality of education. Also, the Government of Karnataka has introduced many attractive schemes in the state and the support of the Central government and private organizations. The study aims at measuring the effectiveness of such programs on improving the enrolment and access of children at the primary education level in Karnataka.

Keywords: Primary education, Schemes, Quality of education, Teaching, Learning, Government of Karnataka

Introduction

Education is an essential factor in human resource development which is the basis for the economic development of a country. Primary education is the first stage of basic formal education. India has made a constitutional commitment to provide free and compulsory education to children up to 14. Continuing its efforts to make primary education global, India formulated the National Policy on National Education (NPE) in 1986 and revised it in 1992.

With continuous efforts at the state level, the goal of Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan (SSA) is to harmonize the initiatives of the Central Government at the school level. Right to Education (RTE) 2009 further strengthens the goal of free compulsory education. The state of Karnataka is a fast-growing economy and has embarked on significant reforms in the education sector with increasing public investment to ensure access, equality and quality in education with the community's involvement in the education sector of the state. The child population of the state is about 33% of the total population. There were 56441 primary schools registered in Karnataka in 2007-08 with 4818 schools to 61259 in the year 2016-17. Poverty and economic deprivation are the main factors responsible for children not attending school. Such factors call for particular government interventions to promote better participation of such children. The number of children from low-income families has also increased. Their retention in schools until the acute stage depends upon effective programs like mid-day meal schemes, free supply of school uniform, textbooks, regular health check-ups etc.

Literature Review

Thangaraj 2002, studied the impact of the noon meal scheme on enrolment and retention in Tamil Nadu; the plans helped improve the strength and enrolment in schools and remove malnutrition of children. The evaluation of the system clearly showed an upward trend in the health status and education status of children. The dropout rates had also come down in Tamil Nadu.

Mahal (2005), using the National Sample Survey Organisation (NSSO) 52nd round data on health and education, estimated benefit incidence for Karnataka. It was found that promoting equality in the allocation of higher education subsidies may require greater government attention to services at elementary level.

Govinda 2011, developed an in-depth analysis of educational access, enrolment, dropout, attendance, progression, social and gender equity in education, level of achievement, quality of education, teachers and teachers education, and local governance and community participation.

Objectives

- To Study the effectiveness of various schemes of the Karnataka State government to promote primary education.
- To trace the factors that facilitate or hinder the smooth flow of children into the public school system and school factors responsible for ensuring the children attending public schools achieve the expected levels of learning.

Methodology and Data Source

The study is based on secondary sources of data from Karnataka state. The secondary data has been collected from government documents, Economic Surveys of Karnataka, Economic Surveys of India, Karnataka State Education Performance Reports, Karnataka State Government's Budget Documents, Udisre reports & Govt. of India's Budget Documents.

Recent Schemes and Initiatives of State Government for Promoting Primary Education in Karnataka

Mid-Day Meal Scheme: The mid-day meal scheme is the main program of the Central Government designed to achieve improvement in

attendance, reduction of dropouts, improvement in learning attainment by increasing the nutritional level of children. It is being implemented in partnership with the state government to cover the whole of India.

The mid-day meal scheme in India was launched on August 1, 1995. All students in government and aided schools are provided with leading, healthy and delicious food during their stay in school. The diet is equipped with a specified menu for about 200 days each year, with about 300 calories, a variety of nutritious foods (supported with adequate amounts of protein, minerals and vitamins). The objectives of the mid-day meal plan are to encourage disadvantaged students to gain admission and progress with health improvement with high retention. In the year 2010-11, the Central Government's contribution was Rs. 11662.70 lakh while the Karnataka government spent Rs. 21892.64 lakhs.

Free Uniform Distribution: The scheme of providing free uniforms is with the main objective of bringing equality to all school children. Free uniforms are distributed to all primary and secondary school students studying in government and government-support schools.

Vidya Vikasa Scheme: Under the "Vidya Vikas Yojana," the government provided free shoe socks for all government School children in the state studying from 1st to 10th class. A total of 45.77 lakh students were offered free shoe socks during 2017-18 and the number of funds spent under this scheme was 129.84 crore.

Free Bicycle Distribution: The free bicycle distribution scheme was started in 2006-07. Initially, it was extended to 8th standard girls living in remote and hilly areas who belonged to a family with BPL card and studied in government or aided schools outside the corporation's limits and where there is a bus pass. The purpose of this scheme is to instill confidence in the students, to avoid late arrival in school and to increase attendance. In 2017-18, a total of 2,47,955 girls cycles and 2,57,941 boys rotations were provided and a total of 5,05,896 bicycles were distributed. The expenditure incurred is Rs.172.00 crore.

Nali Kali Joyful Learning: Nali Kali Joyful Learning Method is an important program that provides quality education at the primary level. The program is based on five basic principles; Joyful learning - Self-learning - Self-phase knowledge - Multistage learning - Multiclass learning.

The main objective of this program is to ensure effective teaching and learning of mathematics at the primary school level by trained resource people. At the rate of two teachers per school, more than 90,000 teachers have been trained to join Nali-Kali classes.

Baa Baale Shaalege (Bringing the Girl Child to School) Campaign: Despite all the efforts of the government to increase the access of all children to schooling, about 300,000 children are still out of the school system. About 50% of these are girls and Baa Baale Shaalege is another special campaign to bridge this gender gap.

- The main strategies being adopted under this campaign are:
- To make all voluntary organizations such as street-shakti /self-help groups, Mahila/yuvathi manuals and women representatives evince interest and take responsibility for the tasks
- To open two residential schools with the help of Mahila Samakhya for dropout girls in the backward districts of North-eastern Karnataka.

Beediyind Shaalege (From Street to School): Street children from a deprived class where children cannot attend school. In urban areas, they are struggling to survive in the most challenging and vile conditions. Separated from their parents due to various social and economic problems, many have been orphaned and led to the streets. Others are dustbin begging or whipped for a living. Against this backdrop, the Beediyinda Shaalege has been conceived and is a new initiative of the department to provide education to the underprivileged. It has been decided to delegate the responsibility of implementation of this program to voluntary agencies and institutions active in the social and educational fields.

Cooliyinda Shalege (Labour to School): The main objective of the Cooliyinda Shalege campaign is to free children from the shackles of child labor and give them admission to schools. Contrary to the

law, joining children in the age group of 6 or 14 as child labor is a fundamental constitutional right of primary education. Thanks to the efforts of teachers and supporters of the educational initiative, the Ba Marali Shaalege Campaign succeeded in bringing back about 224,000 children in the age group of 6-14 years to school. The main objective of the Cooliyinda Shaalege Campaign is to free such children from the shackles of labor and bring them to school.

Ksheera Bhagya Yonaje: The program was launched in 2013, which provided milk to 150 children from first to the tenth standard for three days a week to each child in government and aided schools. Milk is prepared with 18 grams of whole milk powder, which has 89.64 kcal. The original purpose of the program was;

- It helps to eradicate anemia in school going children
- By giving balanced food to the children, malnutrition can be eliminated.
- To improve learning ability among the children.

Rs. 4.64 is spent per child per day. A grant of Rs.321217.08 lakh has been allotted for the scheme during 2016-17.

Samudayadatta Shale: The scheme was launched by the state government in the year 2000 to ensure the quality of primary education and to implement a program called the Samudayadatta Shale program by visiting the fixed schools of primary and high school teachers in about 40,000 villages. The program is being implemented twice a year. On that day, the community will review the MDM's performance in the presence of department staff. All schools will be covered twice a year to bring the community together and raise awareness about the demand for quality education and equity education.

School Adoption Programme: The government, the "School Adoption Program," was launched as it was difficult for the state government alone to provide all the basic facilities to the schools. Many companies, NGOs and corporate companies have come forward to adopt and provide facilities in government schools. So far, more than 9926 schools have been taken over by NGOs and other undertakings and Rs. 200 crores have been collected.

Conclusion

The above study analyzes various recent schemes by the government to promote primary education in Karnataka. Undoubtedly, the state government has made serious efforts with the central government and other private companies, NGOs and individuals to provide free and compulsory education through innovative and attractive schemes. Also, studies have shown that all of those programs have had a positive impact on society and the state's primary school system, as the results of the schemes have resulted in improved enrolment, proper attendance and a dropout over the years.

However, not all of the set goals of the programs are achieved to their full extent; it can be said that all those programs have reached their maximum reach and have benefited many deserving students who could not go to school due to poverty and economic deprivation.

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