A comparative study of the status of Elementary Education of Gujarat with its neighboring states of India

- Ms. Minaxi S. Trivedi, Research Associate, GCERT, Gandhinagar

Abstract

The elementary education is the foundation for the development of every citizen. Education is a powerful means to bring about a harmonious development in society for making the nation strong. Elementary education plays an important role in the student’s future. India has made a constitutional commitment to provide free and compulsory education to all children up to the age of 14. It is important that, access and equity go together in order to make universalization of elementary education. To reach the goals of universalization of elementary education, all the state governments strive much within the ways & means available to them and have achieved remarkable success. However, there are miles to go to reach complacency level. Further, governments have adopted fruitful and adequate steps to bring all children from every nook and corner to the arena of school. Many efforts are put by the government through various projects, programs, schemes & strategies. Almost all programs, plans and policies aim at bridging gender and social gaps in enrollment, retention and learning achievement at the elementary stage. This study is an attempt to scale and compare the status of Gujarat and its neighboring state-Maharashtra, in the area of elementary education, with a view to cover growth along with development. The proposed study was undertaken with a view to cover multi topics comparison together, for Gujarat and its neighboring state-Maharashtra. The title of the study was - A comparative study of the status of Elementary Education of Gujarat with its neighboring states of India. The objective defined was to identify and to compare the status of elementary education of Gujarat and its neighboring state- Maharashtra with respect to different variables (aspects) for various school structures from the year 2003-04 to 2007-08 along with to work out some recommendations for the development of elementary education in Gujarat.

In our Country, there were total 28 states and 07 union territories. 28 states were considered as population for the study. Out of 28 states of our country, Gujarat state and its neighboring states were selected as a sample for this study. Here, the selection of the sample was purposive. The states which have the same pattern of the elementary education were considered as the sample for the study as the purposive sampling technique was used for the selection of the sample. This study was a documentary survey type study. The entire data were available in the form of schedules. Hence, the data-schedule was treated as a tool. The information from the state report card of Gujarat and Maharashtra for last five years was collected. The data collected for 53 different variables (aspects) were categorized into eight (8) main categories as – General, School, Enrollment, Achievement, Teacher, Miscellaneous, Infrastructural facility, Incentives. Further, the data were classified into various school structures as primary only, upper primary only, primary with upper primary & all schools for both the states. Moreover, data were also classified into standard IV and standard VII for the boys and the girls. The analysis of collected data was done by using descriptive statistics. The comparison was made by computing Averages, Rates, Ranks...etc. for each respective stratum.

To decide the development and the trends, graphical presentation of the data was done for each table. The visual analysis was made to decide nature of the increasing or the decreasing trends of the values of the variable. The statuses of the variables for both the states were interpreted from the tables and the graphs. Within the state and between the states comparisons of data for the five years were also narrated. The average, the trend and the rate for both the states were also compared. To comprehend the status of variables easily, same color code was used in the table and the graph. Year wise table color was matched with graph color too. Further, to identify the data of variable at various positions as good, bad and average, the average/rate of the variable in table was colored as GREEN, RED and BLUE respectively.

The entire data were classified, tabulated and analyzed after a vigorous interpretation of data. Some outcomes of the study were interpreted as - (1) The number of the government schools, the private schools and the total schools in Gujarat were less than that in Maharashtra. The trend for the government schools, the private schools and the total schools was increasing in nature for both. (2) The percentage of enrollment in the government school in Gujarat was higher than in Maharashtra for all the four school
structures. (3) The ST enrollment percentage & the ST girl-students’ enrollment percentage for primary was higher than that of upper primary in Gujarat and its neighboring state – Maharashtra. (4) The percentage of boys and girls securing more than 60 percent in Std. VII in Gujarat was higher than that in Maharashtra; but in case of Std. IV, the picture was the reverse. (5) The average number of female teachers in Gujarat was more than that in Maharashtra for upper primary only & primary with upper primary. (6) The trend of teachers with the educational qualification as graduate was increasing in Gujarat and Maharashtra, for all three school structures. The nature of increasing trend in Gujarat was very sharp in case of primary only and primary with upper primary school structures than its counterpart. (7) The trend of percentage of schools having single classroom was decreasing for all the four school structures in Gujarat and Maharashtra. (8) The average number of PTR in Gujarat was higher compared to its counterpart for all the four school structures, except primary only. (9) Gender Parity Index (GPI) for primary grade in Gujarat was less than in Maharashtra, for all the five years. (10) The trend of TR was increasing and decreasing in Gujarat and Maharashtra respectively. The nature of trend was uneven. (11) The trend of percentage of schools with the common toilet and girls’ toilet were increasing for all the four school structures in Gujarat and Maharashtra. (12) The numbers of boy and girl beneficiaries of stationery were increasing for primary and upper primary, in Gujarat and Maharashtra.

Looking to the findings, it was observed that, Gujarat had possessing encouraging effect and positive effects for some variables (aspects) along with holding affirmative situations for some. But in case of few variables, negative changes with variables having depressing effects were found. Such week points along with implication were (a) the percentage of students who have secured more than 60 percent for boys and girls in Std. VII in Gujarat was higher than in Maharashtra; but in case of Std. IV, the picture was just the reverse. In case of Std. IV, the government of Gujarat has to make change in the curriculum, teaching methods and also concentrate on teaching aids, evaluation strategy ...etc. to improve the academic achievement in Std. IV in Gujarat. (b) The average number of PTR in Gujarat was higher compared to its counterpart for all the four school structures, except primary only. This situation was not a desirable. To reduce the PTR, availability of teachers in position should be as per sanction teacher, & so recruitment of teacher according to the actual demand (PTR) should be taken by the government of Gujarat. (c) Transition Rate for primary to upper primary in Gujarat was less than that in Maharashtra, for all the five years, except 2004-05. This was not desirable. It shows that, cent percent students who got enrolled in primary were not entering in upper primary, it resulted into drop out. To improve the transition rate, various incentives at upper primary level should bring in and follow of child rights should make the part of discipline in Gujarat. At grass-root level, incentives for teachers and for schools should be provided. (d) The trend of percentage of schools with common toilet was increasing for all the four school structures in Gujarat and Maharashtra. The nature of increasing trend was very sharp for primary only, zigzag for upper primary only and sharp for primary with upper primary & all schools in both the states. This was good, but at the same time, separate facility for girls should also be taken into account. (e) The average number of beneficiaries for text-books, more boy-beneficiaries were found than that of girls for primary as well as upper primary in Gujarat. In case of Maharashtra, girl-beneficiaries were more than that of boy-beneficiaries for primary & while upper primary also. To make beneficiaries of text-books as boys and girls equal, more importance should be given to reduce the gender gap in enrollment and retention in primary as well as upper primary in the state of Gujarat.

General suggestions were described as – stake holders can plan and take necessary steps to remove some weaknesses like - Literacy rate, girls’ enrollment, SC & ST enrollment, passed students in IV, students secured more than 60% in VII, teachers with educational qualification as below secondary, schools without female teacher (tea.≥2) in primary only, average number of teachers per school in primary only, student classroom ratio, gender parity index, transition rate, drinking water facility ...etc. Moreover, comparison of more states with Gujarat in elementary as well secondary education for various time span along with other school structures can be the topics for further researches.