

# **Fundamental Right to Primary and Elementary Education in Uttar Pradesh: An Analysis**

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## **Abstract**

The Primary Education provides base to the entire pyramid of education and therefore, is comprised of the largest numbers of schools, teachers and students. The enrolment ratio is higher at this level and starts reducing gradually. The contribution of Primary Education to itself, to the socio-economic development of the country and to the State concerned, is nothing less than massive. This is the reason that the national mandate for the development of Primary Education (Article 45 of the Constitution of India before 86<sup>th</sup> amendment) and the international mandate for the development of Primary Education (Goal -2 of the Millennium Development Goals) are most outstanding and effectively worded. This is the reason that for a State like UP the task of the development of Elementary Education and the political underpinning of the processes assumes vital significance. Consequently, the policy pronouncements for the development of Primary Education in Uttar Pradesh are governed by both i.e. the national mandates in form of the Constitutional Provisions and the international mandates in form of the latest Millennium Development Goals. The present paper analyses the Statistical figures of right to education in the concerned state that reflects ground reality paving way for realistic planning and policy implementation .

## **Introduction**

There are many indicators to measure the progress of Primary and Elementary Education. In the present Chapter progress in School education has been measured in terms of availability of schools, number of schools, enrolment in terms of Gross Enrolment Ratio (GER) and Net Enrolment Ratio (NER), physical facilities, growth in number of teachers over the years, quality of education and equality in terms of gender, caste, religion and region in the State of Uttar Pradesh. Some of them have been considered in the case of UP in following manner.

### **1. Availability of School Facilities**

Educational development is directly related with the availability of school facilities. With many other things, it refers to the obligation of the Government to establish schools within the accessible distance for all school- age going children, without any discrimination. Though the availability of schools is not sufficient for realisation of the Right to Education but also it definitely serves as a pre-requisite to exercise this multidimensional right.

## 1.1 Number of Primary Schools

a) Table: Number of Primary Schools (1950-51 to 1999-2000)<sup>1</sup>

Year	1950-51	1960-61	1970-71	1980-81	1990-91	1991-2000
Total	31979	40083	62127	70606	77111	96764
Rural	23710	35302	55998	64021	71188	87402
Urban	8209	4781	6129	6585	5923	9228

The (Table a) reflects the growth of Primary Schools from 1950-51 to 1999- 2000. It may be observed that the number of Primary Schools grew from 31,979 in 1950-51 to 40,083 in 1960-61. In the next decade ending with 1970-71 the number of Primary Schools increased to 62,127 which went up further to a level of 70,606 in 1980-81. The number of Primary Schools stood at 77,111 in 1999-2000. The rural -urban division of Primary Schools reveals that about twenty-six per cent schools were in urban areas and seventy-four per cent schools were found in rural areas. 1999-2000, the number of Primary Schools in urban area came down to ten per cent while ninety per cent of the Primary Schools were situated in rural areas.<sup>2</sup>

However, the situation is not the same throughout the whole State. It varies area wise. There are four economic regions of UP, namely, (i) Western (ii) Central (iii) Eastern and (iv) Bundelkhand. There are vast inter-regional disparities in respect of development indicators among these four regions and education is one of them. The Eastern and Bundelkhand regions are comparatively more backward as compared to the Western and Central regions. In spite of all efforts at the Centre and the State levels, the availability of educational facilities has failed to reach in all the habitations in the Bundelkhand region of UP. In more than thirty-seven per cent of the habitations of the region the school facilities have not been provided. In Chitrakoot district where about fifty per cent habitations are not served by Primary School shows a dismal picture of the educational development in UP. (Table b)

b) Table: Served Habitations for Primary Stage in Bundelkhand Region of UP<sup>3</sup>

	Banda	Hamirpur	Jhansi	Mahoba	Lalitpur	Chitrakoot	Jalaun	Total
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Un-served Habitations	735	82	295	73	379	634	100	2298
Total Habitations	1612	604	1046	518	1031	1269	1023	6175
In %	45.60	13.58	28.20	14.09	36.76	49.96	9.78	37.21

## 2. Enrolments

Enrolment of students seems to be the most important requirement at Primary Education level where the ratio seems to be well defined. That is why hundred per cent enrolments in Primary Education are known as Universalisation of Elementary Education (UEE). For specific purposes attention is also given to Net Enrolment Ratio (NER) as distinct from the Gross Enrolment Ratio (GER). Here the discussion is based on numerical growth in enrolments in UP from 1951-2001. First an attempt is made to analyse the enrolments for classes I-V.

### 2.1 Enrolment in Classes I-V

**c) Table: Primary School's Enrolment, Classes I-V (1950-51 to 1997-98)<sup>4</sup>**

('000s)

Type	1950-51	1960-61	1970-71	1980-81	1990-91	1996-97	1997-98
Girls	334	787	3867	2774	4068	7708	8414
Boys	2392	3171	6748	6593	7893	10666	10991
Total	2727	3958	10615	9368	11961	18404	19405

Table c shows that the enrolment in class I to class V has slide up from 2,727 thousand in 1950-51 to 19,405 thousand in 1997-98, which shows an increase of about seven fold increase during the said period. The enrolment of girls has gone up from 334 thousands in 1950-51 to 8,414 thousand in 1997-98, which demonstrates a twenty-five fold increase in

the female enrolment at this level. The enrolment of boys in Lower Primary classes has increased from 2,392 thousand in 1950-51 to 10,991 thousand in 1997-98, which indicates an increase of a little more than four and a half times over the reported period.<sup>5</sup> These trends suggest that the progress achieved in the enrolment of girls has been very remarkable, which is a positive sign in the development of the Lower Primary Education.

## 2.2 Enrolment in Classes VI –VIII

**d) Table: Primary School's Enrolment, Classes VI-VIII (1950-51 to 1997-98)<sup>6</sup>**

('000s)

Year	1950-51	1960-61	1970-71	1980-81	1990-91	1996-97	1997-98
Girls	69	103	285	391	721	226	2341
Boys	278	446	1095	1413	2026	4627	4639
Total	347	549	1380	1804	2747	6808	6980

Coming to the analysis of data of enrolments given in table d it is found that the total enrolment of students in Upper Primary Schools has gone up from 348 thousands to 6,980 thousands from 1950-51 to 4,639 thousands in 1997-98, which reflects an increase of about seventeen fold during the said period. As against this the enrolment of the girls in Upper Primary Schools has jumped up very speedily from 69000 in 1950-51 to 2,341 thousands in 1977-78 but the high gender gap is still exists<sup>7</sup>

**e) Table: Status of Girl's Enrolment (2006-2007)<sup>8</sup>**

Districts/Levels	Banda	Hamirpur	Jhansi	Mahoba	Lalitpur	Chitrakoot	Jalaun
Primary Level	32.92	34.42	38.72	34.37	29.70	31.23	38.82
Upper Primary Level	33.96	28.61	34.76	24.87	25.27	28.74	31.63

This is clearer that the districts covered under Bundelkhand region of UP are characterised by persistence of high gender inequities. The female literacy rate is observed very low as 34.98%. Though the overall enrolment of girl has been increased in UP<sup>9</sup>, the growing enrolment rate is not equal in the whole State. Whether the girls are at Primary level or the Upper Primary their enrolment is less than forty per cent. There are disparities in girl's enrolment within the districts. At the Primary level, the girl's enrolment varies from 29.70 per cent to 38.72 per cent. At the Upper Primary level it varies more i.e. from 24.87 per cent to 34.76 per cent. In Jhansi and Jalaun districts the number of girl's is comparatively better than the other districts both at the Primary and Upper Primary levels. The Lowest enrolment of girl's at the Primary level is in Lalitpur district i.e. 29.70 per cent and at the Upper Primary level in Mahoba district i.e. 24.87 per cent. (Table e) It may be pertinent to point out that in the Bundelkhand region there is a demand for single sex schools for girls, especially among rural communities. The outcome of gender disparity has been a major issue in the State's pursuit for achieving the goal of Universal Elementary Education. While female enrolment has increased rapidly since the 1990s, as a result of the implementation of a number of gender specific programmers, there is still a substantial gap in Upper Primary and Elementary Schooling.<sup>10</sup> The increased female enrolment is, however, compromised by persistently high rates of drop-out and poor attendance of girls relative to boys. However, significant increases in girls' enrolment took place in Uttar Pradesh<sup>11</sup> even then the State requires significant increase in enrolment to reach the goal of Universal Primary Education (UPE). That is why the World Bank Report stated that in India, "The Gender, regional, community and income disparities are still serious issues in Elementary Education participation and attainments."<sup>12</sup>

### 3. Out of School Children

The problem of low level of enrolment gets accentuated when a very large number of school going children discontinue or drop-out from schools. The majority of dropouts are of

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<sup>9</sup> National University of Educational Planning and Development, *State Report Card 2006-07: Elementary Education in India Where do we stand?*, Ministry of Human Resource Development, Government of India, New Delhi, 2008, p. 64.

<sup>10</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>11</sup> State Planning Commission, *Human Development Report of Uttar Pradesh, 2003*, Government of UP, Lucknow, 2003, p. 13.

<sup>12</sup> World Bank, *Report on Equity in Enrolment and Completion in Elementary Schooling in India*, WB India, New Delhi, 2003, p. 1

girl children from socially deprived sections including minorities/ethnic groups. Despite the large number of children enrolled on paper, very few complete even the first five years of Primary cycle.

### 3.1 Never Enrolled Children

f) **Table: Proportion of Children Age Group 12-14 Never Enrolled in School (1999-2000)**<sup>13</sup>

Area	Male (%)	Female (%)
Rural	27	68
Urban	19	39

A large number of children either do not enter Primary Schools or drop- out before completing the schooling cycle. This is more the case with girls and the other children of disadvantaged categories. It is estimated that only about twenty per cent of girls enter Upper Primary Schools. The incomplete participation in Primary Education could therefore result in a growing number of adult illiterates. Despite the substantial growth in enrolment, a large number of children belonging to disadvantaged groups are still not enrolled in Primary Schools.<sup>14</sup> Here again, girls are the worst sufferers as is evident from the general enrollment ratio (GER). The shortfall in participation can be clearly understood from the data.<sup>15</sup> (Table f). Even last year as many as 1,088 children (between six to fourteen years of age) were found to be out of school during a household survey only in Varanasi. The figures clearly indicating a high number of drop-outs and children deprived from formal education in the urban areas of the district.<sup>16</sup> The Education Resource Society also conducted a survey in Bahadurpur Block of Allahabad, in three Gram Panchayat; Kotari, Ibrahimpur and Faijullapur. According to the Study, forty-three children were found left the school due to various reasons.<sup>17</sup> Analysis of the existing situation in UP indicates that the main problem in the education system relate to access and equity, quality and completion, efficiency and effectiveness of educational management and planning.

### 3.2 Drop-out Rates

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**g) Table: Drop-out Rates at Primary Schools in DPEP II in Classes I-V (1980-1994)<sup>18</sup>**

<b>Year</b>	<b>Boys (%)</b>	<b>Girls (%)</b>	<b>Total (%)</b>
1980-81	63.70	80.20	73.30
1990-91	30.67	42.42	34.82
1993-94	19.86	20.08	39.94

There is a remarkable decline in the drop out rates both for the boys and for the girls from 1980-81 to 1993-94. Among the boys the drop-out rate has declined from about sixty-four per cent to about twenty per cent while that of girls has come down shapelier from about eighty per cent to twenty per cent over the same period. (Table g)

**h) Table: Drop-out Rates in Classes I-V (2005-06)<sup>19</sup>**

<b>Bihar</b>		<b>Jharkhand</b>		<b>Madhya Pradesh</b>		<b>Uttar Pradesh</b>		<b>All India</b>	
Boys	Girls	Boys	Girls	Boys	Girls	Boys	Girls	Boys	Girls
47.37	45.25	48.55	52.22	1.7	1.39	20.15	7.42	29.52	22.5

The discussion under the sub headings 3.1- .3.2 achieves great significance because the RTE Act, 2009 is desired to address mostly that group of students who are generally speaking stubborn to remain in school. There are many economic reasons as well responsible for heavy drop out and that is why the RTE Act places great responsibility on the shoulders of the State Governments to increase enrolments and to check drop out rates.

The Right to Education (RTE) Act that promises a right to free and compulsory education to every child between six to fourteen has completed its first year on April 1<sup>st</sup> 2011 but, unfortunately, a number of children of this age group are still out of school in the Districts of UP. Although the basic education authorities in State claim that there is no child left out of school in the Districts of UP, as, “We had identified 1,257 such children during the

last survey conducted in July-August, 2010 and all of them were admitted to different schools".<sup>20</sup> It may sound very pleasant, but the reality is something else. One can easily see children engaged in roadside dhabas, tea stalls, rag picking and other 'unhealthy' jobs in the State. They do not go to schools due to one reason or the other. The claim of officials itself contradicts the fact that the school drop-out rate in the Uttar Pradesh is about twenty-five to thirty per cent.<sup>21</sup> Till date, the maximum number of child labourers (about ten lakh) are in UP. In such a situation, how could the authorities claim that all the children were brought under the umbrella of RTE Act, 2009?<sup>22</sup>

#### **4. Pupil –Teacher Ratio (PTR)**

At the Primary stage of education the capability of a teacher to teach children effectively is very limited that is why standard norms have been drawn for PTR in different classes. If the number of students per teacher exceeds and exceeds substantially, then the effectiveness of teacher declines.

##### **4.1 Comparative Teacher Pupil Ratios**

**i) Table: Pupil-Teacher Ratio (PTR) In the Study States (2005-06)<sup>23</sup>**

<b>Bihar</b>	<b>Himachal</b>	<b>M P</b>	<b>Jharkhand</b>	<b>U P</b>	<b>National</b>
71	31	69	68	72	62

Only the State of Himachal Pradesh is within the range of Government's norm 40:1 PTR. All the other States is having the poor PTR, exceeds from the national norm. The situation of UP is worst amongst all of them as having the ratio of 72:1.(Table i) The PTR has to be discussed in close linkage with the rising school drop-out, underperformance of teachers, low learning level of students, and the growing apathy of local people to educate their children. The apathetic perception of communities on making their children educated is also due to the general experience of a large chunk of educated youths who remain unemployed which has reduced them to a mass of unproductive generation. The high PTR is,

thus, directly linked to affecting quality learning and is a stumbling block to the universal enrolment of children and their retention.<sup>24</sup>

#### 4.2 Single Teacher Schools

While attempt is made to maintain normatively obtain Pupil Teacher Ratio (PTR) in schools but unfortunately there are a very large number of single teacher schools, where the concept of PTR becomes virtually meaning-less. As an another proof of the poor State of Elementary Education in India, the data shows that the schools rooms in many States have as many as hundred students to a class, with a single teacher in- charge.<sup>25</sup> The 2006-07 District Information System for Education (DISE), data compiled by the National University of Educational Administration (NUEPA), reveals that Bihar with ninety-two, Jharkhand seventy-nine and Uttar Pradesh fifty-three have one of the highest Student Classroom Ratios (SCRs) in Primary Schools.<sup>26</sup> The Table 6.16 presents the percentage of Primary Schools with single teacher in UP.

j) **Table: Percentage of Primary Schools with Single Teacher in UP (1997-2000)<sup>27</sup>**

<b>Districts</b>	<b>1997-98</b>	<b>1998-99</b>	<b>1999-2000</b>
Moradabad	10.4	12.6	14.9
Badaun	12.3	14.5	21.1
Bareilly	4.0	16.3	19.0
Pilibhit	22.1	17.7	26.0
Shahjahanpur	26.5	29.6	38.1
Firozabad	10.9	17.11	20.9
Lalitpur	23.0	34.5	23.7
Kheri	27.5	32.8	38.2
Hardoi	13.8	22.5	24.0
Gonda	27.6	36.0	40.8
Siddharth Nagar	12.6	19.5	37.2

Mahrajganj	16.7	18.0	30.9
Deoria	16.3	14.9	19.5
Sonbhadra	33.5	46.0	63.0

The prevalence of single school teacher is a common occurrence in Uttar Pradesh. There are a large number of schools across the State where the entire teaching is managed by a single teacher. The factual position in respect of the sample of fourteen districts reveals that the incidence of single teacher is widespread across the districts. It may be noted that in 1999-2000, as much as sixty-three per cent schools were single teacher schools in Sonbhadra district. Almost the same figure was 40.8 per cent in Gonda and more than thirty-eight per cent for Kheri and Shahjahanpur districts. The best performing district as evident from the table is Moradabad, even where about fifteen per cent schools in 1999-2000 were single teacher schools.<sup>28</sup> What is worrisome is that in general there is an increasing trend as to the prevalence of single teacher schools over the period 1997-98 to 1999-2000. The teacher shortages persist even though a large number of trained teachers around 30,000 are waiting to be appointed in the State.<sup>29</sup> The SSA proposal to provide one teacher for every class in every school has provided or the opening of new schools in small habitations, but needs to be examined carefully in terms of its impact on social inequalities and the quality of education provided in such schools.<sup>30</sup>

### **Teacher Absenteeism**

One of the very unfortunate facts of Primary Education is that there is notable number of teachers who were found absent from the duty. This fact has been documented by several research studies and even Governmentally Appointed Commission on Teacher (1986), headed by Dr. Rais Ahmad. Even PROBE Report, 1999 has seriously lamented on absenteeism of teachers in all the four States where it went for Survey viz. UP, Bihar, MP and Rajasthan. Another survey, the regular rural Government teachers were found absent at least one day a week and that in a School in UP they spent only three quarters of their time in teaching.<sup>31</sup> Another unannounced visit to fifteen Schools in Uttar Pradesh reported that two third of teachers were absent on the day of visit, while only two out fifteen schools had a full complement of teachers. It was rare for school to start on time in the morning, or to continue

beyond mid - day<sup>32</sup>. Why many teachers have limited commitment to the educational advancement of their pupils, as well as have limited understanding of their problems.<sup>33</sup> The resources show that teacher absenteeism rates were lower in Schools with better infrastructure and where the student's parents were more literate. Both the problems of teacher absenteeism and teacher shortage are compound in nature that directly affects student enrolment, retention and quality of education. Untrained and trained a single teacher cannot run the school properly. Teacher cannot provide individual attention to the students and must rely on formal didactic methods to manage as many as seventy to eighty children with varying readiness to learn. The result is low quality education and high drop-out rates by grades.<sup>34</sup> The problem of teacher absenteeism is also associated with a number of non teaching activities given to the teachers of Primary Schools. As revealed by the PROBE team, 1999 the Teachers of UP are many of the times, engaged in activities other than the teaching such as polio-eradication, election and census.<sup>35</sup> Besides, they were also found involved in drinking tea, gossiping and teacher politics.<sup>36</sup> Reducing absenteeism requires policy intervention that simultaneously addresses problems such as low pay, poor conditions and low morale among the teachers, while at the same time will strengthen school governance and the accountability of teachers to parents.<sup>37</sup>

### **Conclusion**

This paper has comprehensively dealt with the access to Primary Education which has increased substantially due to the growth in the number of schools, number of teachers and particularly female teachers. Because of these facilities the numbers of students have gone up in Primary Schools and Gross Enrolment Ratio (GER) has been improved substantially at both Lower Primary and Upper Primary levels. The attraction of female teachers has resulted additional enrolment of girls in Primary Schools the attendance rate is still a problem because the dropout rates are high for which several economic-social and cultural reasons are responsible. While average GER shows remarkable improvement, the same for disadvantaged groups still looks very poor particularly Schedule Caste (SC), Schedule Tribe (ST), minorities and girls in some regions. The Constitutional Mandate for educational development was an important instrument in UP for educational demand in the beginning.

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More recently the Right to Education (RTE) Act is likely to impact on educational scenario of the State. While the Government efforts have been note worthy, dropout rates are still very high and in many cases really worrisome. The dropout rates increase in case of girl population. Among the special campaign of education, SSA has lasted long and therefore, impacted effectively. Among the many factors governing quality of education, TPR has been of utmost significance along with physical facilities and quality of education. The appointment of teachers and the regularity of teachers in schools leave much to be desired. Finally the responsibility of the Central and the State Governments in improving quality of school education still remains high and dry.

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