

Education Today: Crisis of Learning

Dr. Archana Sawshilya*

Associate Professor, Aditi Mahavidyalaya, University of Delhi

Abstract – Schooling today does not mean learning. Schooling without learning is wastage of time, energy and opportunities. Education is expected to equip and students to learn skills to lead a healthy and productive employable life in future. Indian education today is undergoing deep crisis, crisis of teaching and learning. Their reading and writing skills, memorizing techniques, high marks scored in Boards Exams add nothing to the values in their lives. Many factors undermine their learning capabilities and adversely affect students' cognitive skills. However not only students rather the entire management, teacher and learning methodologies are to be blamed. Government initiatives of Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan, Mid-Day Meal, may increase the number of enrollment of students in the schools, but cannot help much in increasing learning abilities. Civil society, Teachers, parents and other educators do need to play a meaningful role in it.

Key Words – Schooling Learning, Crisis of Learning, Cognitive Skills, Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan, Civil Society

INTRODUCTION

Education refers to growth and development but today schooling does not mean learning. Education promotes earnings, reducing property and thus leading to economic growth, social cohesion and innovation. But if there is schooling without learning, it is wastage of time, energy and opportunities. We need to accelerate learning for all. After 2009, no states of India participated in PISA (Programme for International Students Assessment) for assessment of the skills and knowledge of 15 years old, because of India's poor ranking¹. PISA is focused on testing application of knowledge as against those of old and traditional examination system based on rote memorization.²We could have considered our poor ranking as an opportunity to improve in future but we chose to withdraw forever from taking PISA attempts in future.

People of India generally assume that by sending their children to schools they are promoting their children to learn. But schooling today does not mean learning. Then is it wasteful energy to send our children to schools? If children are not learning in schools, education is not able to deliver its results. Education should enable and equip students to learn skills to lead a healthy and productive employable life in future.

Unfortunately children of today fail to read and write, unable to make calculations in the market and read

the message hidden in the stories, but they score very high marks in the final examination. They lack creativity and reasoning because of poor fundamental learning and understanding being very weak. Students of today are miserably failing to develop socio-economic skills and once they pass out go in depression and anxiety. Lack of teamwork, leadership qualities and expectations of scoring high based on their formal curriculum in schools even compel them towards suicidal tendencies. However not only students rather the entire management, teacher and learning methodologies are to be blamed.

Indian education today is undergoing deep crisis, crisis of teaching and learning too. Children are not taught to generate confidence of requisite skills and knowledge to deal with life failures and challenges.³ Their reading and writing skills, memorizing tendency and scoring high marks in Board exams without developing cognitive skills, thinking capabilities, problem solving capacities, add nothing to the values in their lives. Children from economically and socially disadvantaged and backward classes are more damaged. Facing challenges at home and in the schools from their fellows and teachers they finally give up and leave the education with little learning. While students from rich and socially, cultured background despite having best resources learn little due to deviation from academics and too much exposure to media.⁴ They however cope up their little learning with coaching centers and tuition classes and score high in the examinations. The present

¹ <https://factordaily.com/teacher-scarcity-india-education-edtech-start>

² http://www.india-seminar.com/2018/706_amit_kaushik.htm

³ <https://www.britishcouncil.org/voices-ma>

⁴ <https://hubpages.com/education/what-Caus>

ongoing memory centric examination has little scope to assess their personalities.

THE PROBLEM

Many factors are responsible for learning crisis today such as poverty, illness, low income resulting in malnutrition and lack of interest among students. All these factors undermine their learning capabilities and adversely affect students' cognitive skills. Second, teachers are the only instruments or enablers to promote learning process, but they themselves lack the training, will and skills, so fail to engage students in the learning process.⁵ Absence of teachers from the classrooms are frequently reported by the students and the visiting teams. These frontline educators lack educational leadership to give proper directions to the students. Third, unavailability of relevant reading and reference materials, resistance for reading and writing, not using library and lack of ICT enabled class room all lead to learning crisis. Therefore we keep focusing and celebrating days and weeks on **Padega India to Badhega India**. Fourth, poor administrative management system undermines educational environment and learning capacities of students and teachers as well. Favouritism, nepotism, favoured appointments and vindictive transfers of teachers and Principals affect effective functioning of learning process⁶.

The school learning process is so incomplete in itself that almost 80 percent student go for private tuitions at the primary and secondary levels. Teachers following old traditional style of teaching such as writing on the blackboards, students copying and reading aloud does not help much in learning and understanding process. Teachers are generally not well prepared for the class and so they fail to meet the learning needs of the students who finally go for private auditioning or Expert coaching centers⁷.

The potential challenges before all of us are

- ▶ How to enable child to learn on his own after school learning process.
- ▶ How teachers can become learning Experts
- ▶ How can educational environment be made more teacher-student learning centric.
- ▶ Government initiatives of Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan, Mid-Day Meal, may increase the number of enrollment of students in the schools, but cannot help much in increasing learning abilities. This needs, appointment of dedicated teachers, their commitment towards teaching and making students to learn and explore their potentialities on their

own by making them understand the intent of curriculum.

- ▶ Civil society, parents and other educators do need to play a meaningful role in it.

Ineffective educational leadership, politically compromised school management adversely affect school, administration and teachers' merits and skills to impart education. Principals are helpless in solving teachers problems, they cannot provide direction nor can set goals for the schools learning curriculum. Constant interference of political representatives, local Community and pressure groups also affect teaching learning process. Many times the bureaucrats, the politicians and the Principals join their hands to serve their collective vested interests or to save their positions rather than on promoting students' learning process. Needless to say, all the stakeholders of educational sectors - teaching, non-teaching staff, suppliers of books, lab equipment's and other services, all undermine learning activities in the school as they have low accountability and high expectation for earnings.

Learning need to be a 'service goal' to be achieved. A school is not recognized by its infrastructure, but by having a strong teaching learning relationship between teachers and students. Talented, skilled and educated appointments can definitely develop stimulation among students to learn. These factors are enabling factors which work as catalysts for learning process. Technology will further help and generate interests in learning capabilities.

FUTURE OF LEARNING

The policy documents on education The National Policy and Education 1968, and later in 1986 all emphasized on different aspects of education-teaching, methodologies and curriculum. There was reference of evaluating students on a continuous basis to assess their minimum level of learning. But these policies focused on ensuring equality and increased access to learning within limited resources.

The Right of Children to Free and Compulsory Education (RTE) Act 2009, issued guidelines on no detention, no corporal punishment, no board examination up to elementary level, banned screening process and capitation fees, special training and even private tuition.⁸ Thus focus was placed on developing language and numeracy skills, continuous comprehensive evaluation followed by appropriate corrective action, and large scale assessment accompanied by smaller classroom case studies to evaluate learning process. Annual Status of Education Report (ASER) emphasized on enrollment issue and 12th five year plan (2012-2017) on teaching learning techniques.⁹ There was a clear shift in strategy from enrollment and increasing access to

⁵ <https://www.opencolleges.edu.au/informed>

⁶ <https://www.ilo.org/public/english/stand>

⁷ <https://ieltrainingonline.com/ielts-wr>

⁸ <https://www2.ohchr.org/english/bodies/cr>

⁹ <https://www.clearias.com/education-in-in>

teaching learning process. **From Right of Access to Right to learn and sharing**, of best practices. The Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) of United Nations initiatives talked of 'Levels of Proficiency' and Value of Educational Assessment'¹⁰. Being one of the members of global community, India was expected to make itself comparable with the other nations of the world. India had to submit its progress report regarding these goals to the organization. But the assessment of learning appears difficult and challenging for India as it is related to technical and highly specialized field.

We need to have a well-designed assessment methodology, improved system management to make schools as real learning place for the children of the society. Well planned and well-coordinated training workshops for teachers before joining the service and orientation and refresher course in post service period can accelerate learning activities and meeting the objectives of STG's. Our Indian education system has to make commitments to produce evidence of program; not just compulsory education up to class eighth rather a meaningful completion, with developing cognitive skills of learning of eight years of schooling.

- Education is for growth and development. In order to move towards a less rote based methods, India needs to address teachers' professional development and new ICT enabled learning techniques. To bring changes in teaching methodologies and curriculum, our government has to make investments in providing technical training to human resources and developing institutional capacities to facilitate the learning of children to meet their future requirements of employability and life skill. Our Indian education system should not aim at providing 'completion certificate of school education, rather 'Learning Achievement Certificate' to the students. Instead of making Quantum of Curriculum, the Policy makers should work on 'Relevance of Subject contents'. Rote learning should be replaced by 'learning with understanding'

This Article is based on my Interactive session with students, teachers, principals and parents whose children were appearing for Board examination in March 2018.

REFERENCES

- <http://www.reading.com/du-ac-in-fileadmi>
<https://www.educationforallindia.com/S>
<http://www.academicroom.com/topics/impor>

¹⁰ <https://www.undp.org/contents/dam/unct/ghana/docs/SDGs/UN>

National Policy on Education. Ministry of HRD, Gol, New Delhi, 1986.

Ministry of HRD, Right to Education Act, 2009. [Online] Available at: http://mhrd.gov.in/sites/upload_files/mhrd/files/document-reports/RTEAct.pdf

A. Kaushik, 'ASER 2014 – Looking Back', Annual Status of Education Report (Rural), January 2015.

Planning Commission, Twelfth Five Year Plan (2012-2017) – Faster, More Inclusive and Sustainable Growth. Government of India, New Delhi, 2012.

ASER data 2006 to 2016. See <http://www.asercentre.org/p/289.html>

World Bank, *World Development Report 2018: Learning to Realize Education's Promise*. World Bank, Washington, DC, 2018.

Planning Commission, Twelfth Five Year Plan (2012-2017) – Faster, More Inclusive and Sustainable Growth. Government of India, New Delhi, 2012.

Corresponding Author

Dr. Archana Sawshilya*

Associate Professor, Aditi Mahavidyalaya, University of Delhi