Elementary Education in Chhattisgarh
Status and Policy Perspectives

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Abstract

Realising the importance of education in national development, momentum has been gathering in the last two decades all over the country for restructuring and consolidating education system in a bottom-up approach. Stringent initiatives have been taken to expand and strengthen elementary education as it marks an important phase in the life of school going children. In order to attain the goal of elementary education, every state has been putting enormous efforts, henceforth it is essential to know the scenario of elementary education in various states in general and Chhattisgarh in particular. Chhattisgarh is one of the newly formed states, and has no long history on elementary education. In this study, an attempt has been made to find out the growth of various types of elementary schools, enrolment of boys and girls, gross enrolment ratio, drop-out rate at various levels, teacher population and teacher-pupil ratio of Chhattisgarh from 2012–13 to 2016–17. This paper also highlights various implemented schemes by the state of Chhattisgarh such as, syllabus revision, computer literacy project, introduction of English language in Class I, appointment of teachers, training of in-service teachers, infrastructure facilities, distribution of free textbooks and uniforms, Mid-day Meal scheme, and insurance and scholarships for students to improve elementary education.

INTRODUCTION

Chhattisgarh is one of the newly formed states in India that came into existence on 1 November, 2000, after being separated from the then Madhya Pradesh. It is located in the centre-east of the country. Chhattisgarh is one of the fastest-developing states in India.

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Chhattisgarh shares its borders with six states— Madhya Pradesh in the northwest, Maharashtra in the south west, Telangana in the south, Odisha in the southeast, Jharkhand in the northeast and Uttar Pradesh in the north. It is situated between 17047` N and 24006`N latitudes and 800 15` E and 840 24` E longitudes. It is the tenth largest state in India, with an area of 135,191 square km. Most of its regions are covered with dense forests, hills and untraceable areas. Currently, the state consists of 27 districts and 149 blocks.

Total population of Chhattisgarh, as per 2011 census, is 25,545,198, of which male and female are 12,832,895 and 12,712,303 respectively. In 2001, the total population was 20,833,803, in which males were 10,474,218 and females were 10,359,585. The total population growth in this decade was 22.61 per cent, while in previous decade, it was 18.06 per cent. The population of Chhattisgarh was 2.11 per cent of the total population of India in 2011. In 2001, the figure was 2.03 per cent. The rural and urban populations, as per census 2011, are 19,607,961 and 5,937,237 respectively. The population density is recorded to be 189 people per square kilometre and the sex ratio is 991 females per 1000 males. According to the 2011 census, a large share, i.e., 77 per cent of its population lives in rural areas.

According to the 2001 census report, Chhattisgarh had a literacy rate of 64.66 per cent, which included male and female literacy rate of 77.38 per cent and 51.58 per cent respectively. As per census 2011, the overall literacy rate increased to 70.28 in which male and female literacy rates are 80.27 and 60.24 respectively. Rural and urban literacy rates are 65.99 and 84.05 respectively. The overall growth in the literacy rate of Chhattisgarh was 12.72 within a decade. The decadal growth of male literacy was 2.89 per cent, while the female literacy was 8.39 per cent.

Being a new state, it has been facing many challenges in almost all the fields. In spite of such a challenging condition, the state has emerged as one of the most developing states in India. It has also made a tremendous progress not only in the field of agriculture, industry, public distribution system but also at all the levels of education sector.

Today, one of the most important tasks before the state is to expand and strengthen its elementary education. To achieve this goal, even though the state has been putting enormous efforts, but it is essential to know the scenario of elementary education in this state. In this study, an attempt has been made to discern the growth, present status and initiatives taken for the improvement of elementary education in Chhattisgarh.

Objectives of the Study

The investigation was conducted with the following objectives:

1. To study the status of elementary education in Chhattisgarh since 2012 for a period of five years (2012–03 to 2016–17) in terms of— (a) number of schools, (b) students' enrolment and dropout rate, and (c) teacher population.
2. To study the various schemes implemented for the improvement of elementary education in Chhattisgarh.

Data Base and Methodology

The present study primarily utilised the secondary sources of information. Data for the study were obtained from several sources such as, census of India 2001, 2011 and U-DISE, NUEPA. Also, data were collected from the Department of Education, Government of Chhattisgarh.

No specific tool has been used to collect the data. No sample has been drawn for conducting the research work. All the units of population have been taken into consideration. The data were tabulated and analysed by using appropriate techniques like frequency and percentage analysis. Graphical representations of the data were made wherever required.

Results and Discussion

(a) Status of Elementary Schools in Chhattisgarh

The analysis of the growth of elementary schools was made for a period of five years (2012–13 to 2016–17). The description regarding the growth or decline of elementary schools is presented in Table 1 and Table 2.

Table 1
Status of Elementary Schools in Chhattisgarh (2012–13 to 2016–17)

Year	Primary	Upper Primary (UP)	Total
2012–13	35672	14210	49882
2013–14	35325	12682	48007
2014–15	35149	12601	47750
2015–16	32826	12014	44840
2016–17	32969	11884	44853

Source: U-DISE, NUEPA

In Chhattisgarh, there were a total of 49882 elementary (Primary and Upper Primary) schools in the year 2012–13. The number of elementary schools declined up to 44853 by the year 2016–17, i.e., 5029 elementary schools were closed down within a period of five years, on an average 1006 schools per year (Table 1).

Table 1 shows that there were 35672 Primary schools in the year 2012–13 and it decreased to 32969 by the year 2016–17. It was that the number of Primary schools decreased from the year 2012–13 to the year 2016–17. However, the number of Primary schools increased in the year 2016–17 with respect to 2015–16. So far, the number of Upper Primary schools are concerned, it was found that there was a continuous fall in the number of students from the year 2012–13 to 2016–17.There were

14210 Upper Primary schools in the year 2012–13, then the number decreased, and by the year 2016–17, the number of Upper Primary schools reached to 11884.

Table 2
Management wise Distribution of Elementary Schools in 2016–17

Type	Primary	Upper Primary	Total
Govt.	30938 (93.84)	11662 (98.13)	42600 (94.98)
Govt. Aided	212 (0.64)	68 (0.57)	280 (0.62)
Pvt.	1819 (5.52)	154 (1.30)	1973 (4.40)
Total	32969	11884	44853

Source: Source: U-DISE, NUEPA

Note: Figures in the parentheses indicate percentage.

It is evident from Table 2 that there are three types of elementary (Primary and Upper Primary) schools in Chhattisgarh viz. government, government aided and private. As per the statistics of 2016–17, 93.84 per cent of the Primary schools were government schools and very less per cent, i.e., 0.64 and 5.52 per cent schools were government aided and private schools. On the other hand, 98.13 per cent Upper Primary schools were government schools and the remaining 0.57 per cent and 1.3 per cent Upper Primary schools were government aided and private respectively.

There was a total of 44853 elementary schools in year 2016–17, which accounted of 94.98 per cent government schools, 0.62 per cent government aided schools and 4.40 per cent private schools.

(b) Enrolment in Elementary Education (EE) in Chhattisgarh

The analysis of the growth or decline of enrolment of elementary (Primary and Upper Primary) school students was made for a period of five years (2012–13 to 2016–17). The description regarding the number and percentage of growth or decline of students in various years with respect to the year 2012–13 is presented in Table 3.

Table 3
Enrolment in Elementary Education in Chhattisgarh (2012–13 to 2016–17)

Year	Primary	% Decline/ Growth	Upper Primary	% Decline/ Growth	Total	% Decline/ Growth
2012–13	3057283		1695256		4752539	
2013–14	2922943	-4.39	1666621	-1.69	4589564	-3.43
2014–15	2887939	-5.54	1660741	-2.03	4548680	-4.29
2015–16	2793005	-8.64	1664350	-1.82	4457355	-6.21
2016–17	2710696	-11.34	1639555	-3.28	4350251	-8.64

Note: The minus (-) sign (-) indicates decline.

Source: Source: U-DISE, NUEPA

In the year 2012–13, students enrolment at Primary stage was 3057283, which declined to 2710696 by the year 2016–17. Analysis reveals that the enrolment at Primary stage declined in all the years. The percentage of decline was highest in the year 2016–17, i.e., 11.34 per cent and was lowest in the year 2012–13, i.e., 4.39 per cent w.r.t. the enrolment of 2012–13. The enrolment at Upper Primary stage in 2012–13 was 1695256 (Table 3). During the subsequent years, enrolment declined and there was about 2.03 per cent drop in enrolment by the year 2014–15. However, a slight increase in enrolment occurred between 2014–15 and 2015–16. By the year 2016–17, the enrolment at Upper Primary stage reached to 1639555, it dropped down by 3.28 per cent as compared to the base year 2012–13. The total enrolment (Primary and Upper Primary) was 4752539 in the year 2012–13 (Table 3). There was found a gradual decline of enrolment in the subsequent years. The enrolment became 435025 by the year 2016–17, which accounted a decline of 8.46 per cent w.r.t. the base year 2012–13.

Table 4
Enrolment in Class I in Chhattisgarh
(2012–13 to 2016–17)

Year	Boys	Girls	Total	% Growth/ Decline
2012–13	309478 (51.17)	295320 (48.83)	604798	
2013–14	282989 (51.27)	269018 (48.73)	552007	-8.73
2014–15	294028 (51.37)	278290 (48.63)	572318	-5.37
2015–16	290797 (51.34)	275625 (48.66)	566422	-6.35
2016–17	286533 (51.27)	272286 (48.73)	558819	-7.6

Note: The minus (-)sign (-) indicates decline.
Source: Source: U-DISE, NUEPA

The data in Table 4 reveals the enrolment of Class I in Chhattisgarh from the year 2012–13 to 2016–17. It was found that the enrolment in Class 1 declined from 604798 in 2012–13 to 558819 in 2016–17 (Table 4), showing a decrease of 7.6 from the base year 2012–13. The enrolment was highest in 2012–13 and lowest in 2013–14. It is pertinent to note that in all the years, percentage of girls enrolment was less than that of boys enrolment and the ratio of boys and girls enrolment was quite consistent, i.e., about 51:49.

Table 5
Gross Enrolment Ratio in Elementary Education in Chhattisgarh
(2012–13 to 2016–17)

Year	Primary			Upper Primary			Elementary (Primary+Upper Primary)		
	All	***Boys***	***Girls***	***All***	***Boys***	***Girls***	***All***	***Boys***	***Girls***
2012–13	110.90	DNA	DNA	97.56	DNA	DNA	104.23	DNA	DNA
2013–14	103.99	104.06	103.92	100.72	100.35	101.10	102.78	102.69	102.87
2014–15	102.75	103.04	102.44	100.37	100.20	100.54	101.86	101.99	101.73
2015–16	99.69	99.91	99.46	101.45	100.92	101.99	100.34	100.98	100.40
2016–17	97.07	97.26	96.87	100.81	99.55	102.12	98.45	98.11	98.81

Note: DNA- stands for Data Not Available.
Source: U-DISE, NUEPA

Table 5 shows the Gross Enrolment Ratio (GER) of Elementary Education in Chhattisgarh from 2012–13 to 2016–17, indicating the extent of participation of students in elementary education over the years. The GER at Primary stage declined from 110.90 to 97.07 between 2012–13 and 2016–17. Similarly, the overall GER at elementary level declined from 104.23 to 98.45 between 2012–13 and 2016–17. However, the GER at Upper Primary stage increased from 97.56 to 100.81 in the said period (Table 5). It is found that there is an optimum degree of access to elementary education over the years.

Table 6
Enrolment of Boys and Girls in EE in Chhattisgarh
(2012–13 to 2016–17)

Year	Primary		Upper primary		Both (P+UP)	
	Boys	***Girls***	***Boys***	***Girls***	***Boys***	***Girls***
2012–13	1560784 (51.05)	1496499 (48.95)	858689 (50.65)	836567 (49.34)	2419473 (50.90)	2333066 (49.09)
2013–14	1491507 (51.03)	1431436 (48.97)	844684 (50.68)	821937 (49.32)	2336191 (50.90)	2253373 (49.50)
2014–-15	1476869 (51.14)	1411070 (48.86)	843386 (50.78)	817355 (49.22)	2320255 (51.01)	2228425 (48.99)
2015–-16	1428455 (51.14)	1364550 (48.86)	843779 (50.70)	820571 (49.30)	2272234 (50.98)	2185121 (49.02)

2016–-17	1387044 (51.17)	1323652 (48.83)	826579 (50.41)	812976 (49.59)	2213623 (50.88)	2136628 (49.12)

Note: Figures in the parentheses indicate percentage.
Source: Source: U-DISE, NUEPA

As evident in Table 6, in the year 2012–13, the percentage of enrolment of boys and girls were 50.9 and 49.09 respectively at elementary level (Primary and Upper primary). The ratio reached to 50.88:49.12 by the year 2016–17, which was almost same as in the year 2012–13 (Table 6). It is pertinent to note that there is no such change observed in the gender gap in the enrolment at the elementary stage during the five years of study. It is also revealed that the participation of girls in the state was found relatively constant over the five years.

At Primary stage, the boys-girls enrolment ratio was 51.05:48.95 in the year 2012–13 and by the year 2016–17, the ratio was 51.17:48.83 (Table 6). Analysis reveals that the boy and girl enrolment ratio at Primary stage was more or less same throughout the five years of study.

On the other hand, the enrolment ratio of boys and girls at Upper primary stage in the year 2012–13 was 50.65 and 49.35 respectively. Over the five years of study, the boys-girls enrolment ratio at Upper Primary stage was almost the same and by the year 2016–17, the ratio stands at 50.41:49.59. Further analysis (Table 6) reveals that the gender gap in enrolment is lesser at Upper Primary stage as compared to the Primary stage. The findings showed that the total enrolment (boys and girls) at Upper Primary stage is lesser as compared to the Primary stage, due to the fact that at this stage, the rate of dropout of students is higher than the Primary stage.

Table 7
Enrolment of Boys and Girls of Different Castes in the Year 2016–17

	Scheduled Caste (SC)			Scheduled Tribe (ST)		
	Boys	***Girls***	***Total***	***Boys***	***Girls***	***Total***
Primary	199189 (50.76)	193214 (49.23)	392403	452726 (51.21)	431321 (48.79)	884047
Upper Primary	122586 (50.18)	121715 (49.82)	244301	255139 (50.26)	252503 (49.74)	507642

Note: Figures in the parentheses indicate percentage.
Source: Source: U-DISE, NUEPA

Data in Table 7 shows the enrolment of boys and girls of SC and ST students in the year 2016–17. It is evident from Table 7 that at Primary stage, the enrolment ratio of boys and girls among Schedule

Caste (SC) and Scheduled Tribe (ST) students are almost same. Similarly, at the Upper Primary stage, the ratio of boys-girls of both categories is not much different in the year 2016–17. However, it was observed that in both Primary and Upper Primary stages, the enrolment of ST students (boys and girls) is higher than SC students (boys and girls). It is surprising to note that the gender gap in enrolment of both SCs and STs are slightly higher at the Primary stage than the Upper Primary stage. Compared to the overall gender gap, the gender gap in the enrolment of SCs and STs is slightly more. It is one of the findings that caste is a factor associated with gender gap in the enrolment in Primary and Upper Primary schools. Analysis indicates that in all the categories, safe gender gap in enrolment is a common phenomenon in elementary education. In all cases, the percentage of boys' enrolment at elementary level is higher than the percentage of girls' enrolment.

Dropout Rate at Elementary stage

Dropout rate of boys and girls at different stages of school education over five years, i.e., from 2012–13 to 2016–17, has been presented in Table 8.

Table 8
Dropout Rate of Boys and Girls in Elementary Education in Chhattisgarh (2012–13 to 2016–17)

Year	Primary (I–V)			Upper Primary (VI–VIII)		
	Boys	***Girls***	***Total***	***Boys***	***Girls***	***Total***
2012–13	4.24	4.05	4.14	6.09	4.73	5.42
2013–14	1.45	1.38	1.42	4.09	3.51	3.80
2014–15	1.45	1.38	1.42	4.09	3.51	3.80
2015–16	3.08	2.74	2.91	6.47	5.22	5.85
2016–17	3.42	3.07	3.25	7.05	5.29	6.18

Source: Source: U-DISE, NUEPA

As per the data in Table 8, it was found that the dropout rate has decreased from 4.14 in 2012–13 to 3.25 in 2016–17 in Primary schools. But the reverse trend of dropout rate was observed at Upper Primary level. It was found that the rate of dropout was 5.42 in the year 2012–13 and by the year 2016–17, it increased to 6.18. Dropout rate at Primary stage was highest in the year 2012–13, i.e., 4.14, however, at the Upper Primary stage, it was highest in 2016–17. Compared to Primary stage, the dropout rate remained consistently higher at Upper Primary stage over the five years of study, indicating the fact that more children leave school before completing Class VIII. Further analysis of the statistics of 2016–17 revealed that out of every 100 children enrolled in Class I, approximately 96

students could reach Class V and 94 students could reach Class VIII.

It is evident from Table 8 that there is no such substantial difference in the dropout rate among boys and girls at Primary stage during the last five years of study. However, at the Upper Primary stage, the dropout rate of boys was considerably higher than that of girls over the five years. This result thus revealed that gender is not a significant factor associated with dropout rate at the Primary stage where as at Upper Primary stage, gender is associated with the dropout rate among children. Henceforth, it is felt that the dropout rate of children at elementary stage in general and boys in particular are a major cause of concern.

(c) Teacher population

An analysis was made to find out the percentage of male and female teachers in elementary (Primary and Upper Primary) schools for a period of five years (2012–13 to 2016–17). The detailed description is given in Table 9.

Table 9
Percentage of Male and Female Teachers in Elementary Schools of Chhattisgarh
(2012–13 to 2016–17)

Year	Primary		Upper Primary (UP)	
	Male	***Female***	***Male***	***Female***
2012–13	63.43	36.57	68.24	31.76
2013–14	63.13	36.87	68.09	31.91
2014–15	62.43	37.57	67.90	32.10
2015–16	62.12	37.88	67.85	32.15
2016–17	61.62	38.38	67.75	32.25

Source: U-DISE, NUEPA

At Primary stage, the percentage of male teachers was 63.43 and that of female teachers was 36.57 in the year 2012–13 (Table 9). In the subsequent years, the percentage ratio of both the teachers was almost same. By the year 2016–17, the ratio of male-female teachers was 61.62:38.38. Similarly, at the Upper Primary stage, the percentage of male teachers was 68.24 and that of female teachers was 31.76 in the year 2012–13. After five years, i.e., by the year 2016–17, the percentage of male and female teachers became 67.75 and 32.25 respectively.

Analysis indicates that the proportion of female teachers increased consistently in comparison to male teachers both at the Primary and Upper Primary stages of school education. It also indicates that gradually women are showing affinity towards the teaching profession.

Table 10
Teacher-Pupil Ratio in Primary and Upper Primary Schools (2012–13 to 2016–17)

Year	Primary	Upper Primary
2012–13	23	24
2013–14	22	23
2014–15	21	23
2015–16	21	23
2016–17	20	22

Source: U-DISE, NUEPA

As evident from the data given in Table 10, the Teacher-Pupil Ratio (TPR) at the Primary and the Upper Primary stage was 1:23 and 1:24 respectively in the year 2012–13. A decline was observed in both the type of schools in the subsequent years and by the year 2016–17, Teacher-Pupil Ratio (TPR) was 1:20 at the Primary stage and 1:22 at the Upper Primary stage. The decline trend of TPR is due to non-recruitment of adequate number of teachers. However, low TPR may not be interpreted as a major factor for imparting quality elementary education.

Implementation of Schemes for Improvement of Elementary Education in Chhattisgarh

In order to expand and improve elementary education, several schemes have been implemented. The functions and objectives of these schemes are presented below in brief:

(a) Preparation of textbooks and syllabus revision

With a view to improve the quality of education at elementary level, the state revised the syllabus/textbooks of various classes and implemented them in a phased manner in all the government and government aided schools of Chhattisgarh. State primary education programme authority and SCERT are working collaboratively to maintain the standard of primary education in the state. With the help of state resource persons (SRP), a phase-wise review of textbooks and syllabus has been carried out.

(b) Computer Literacy Project:

Realising the importance of computer in the learning process, the government has introduced computer education for students in elementary schools. The objective of the scheme is to enable the students to use computer as an important learning aid, both at school and home. ICT instructors have been appointed to teach the basic contents of computer hardware and software and practical classes have been provided to acquire computer-related operational skills by the students. Time to time, funding has been allotted to spread ICT-related infrastructure in a better and bigger manner across schools.

(c) Introduction of English in Class I

As decided by the Government, English has been introduced as a compulsory oral subject from Class I onwards in all the State Board schools in order to reduce the dropout rate of children in upper classes as the students find English as a difficult language in higher classes.

Bridge-books and linker-books have been prepared by the resource persons to mitigate the side effects of shifting from mother tongue to English.

(d) Appointment of teachers

Appointment of teachers is regularly doneby the state government. The state government has been appointing the required number of teachers every year at Primary and Upper Primary schools in order to strengthen the human resources and to improve the teaching-learning process. Stringent criteria are being followed to recruit a suitable teacher workforce for improving the quality of primary education in the State. A balance has been maintained through time to time appointment of teachers and also, cadres in teaching are being generated to attract qualified individuals towards teaching profession.

(e) Training for untrained teacher

The State has given training to train the un-trained teachers working at the Primary and Upper Primary schools of Chhattisgarh. In this state, teacher training through distance mode started on 7th May, 2012, to train 45,223 in-service teachers, which has been operated by State Council of Educational Research and Training (SCERT), Raipur. Later on, National Institute of Open Schooling (NIOS) also conducted a training programme for the remaining un-trained teachers of the State. DIETs are taking responsibility to organise content enrichment training and pedagogy-related training for both trained and un-trained teachers in the primary schools of the state by appointing resource persons at district, block and even cluster level. Training modules have been prepared by primary education programme authority and orientation is given at subsidiary level.

(f) Infrastructure facilities

The State has given top priority to the improvement of infrastructure facilities in government schools under the Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan (SSA). Under this scheme, some school buildings have also been renovated. In previous years, compound walls, additional classrooms, and toilets or urinals including separate toilets for girls have been constructed. Water connection has been provided to the maximum schools and many schools have been electrified. As a result, a large number of government schools of Chhattisgarh at present have acquired improved infrastructure and the required physical facilities. Proposals have been taken from the concerned DEOs and BEOs regarding infrastructural deficiencies in District Review Meeting (DRM) by the district collectors and the problem of infrastructure in schools have been tried to solve through tenders.

(g) Incentive schemes

The Government of Chhattisgarh has launched a number of schemes to ensure maximum enrolment and to check the dropout rate at the

elementary stage. The schemes that have been launched are listed below.

(i) *Free textbooks:* With a view to encourage the students for getting enrolled in the school, the Department of School Education, Chhattisgarh, supplies free of cost textbooks to all the students of state board elementary schools. DEOs, BEOs and CRCCs have taken the responsibility for smooth distribution of books among students.

(ii) *Free uniforms:* Under this scheme, two pairs of school uniforms are provided free of cost to all the students of Class I to VIII irrespective of their socio-economic background to achieve the objective of hundred per cent retention and expansion of elementary education.

(iii) *Mid-day meal scheme:* Under the scheme, hot cooked food is provided to the Primary and Upper Primary school children of all the government and government aided schools. Food for Primary school children contains 450 calories of carbohydrates and 12 grams of proteins, while food for Upper Primary school contains 700 calories of carbohydrates and 20 grams of proteins. In order to know the proper operation of the scheme, monitoring committees have been constituted at the State, District, Block and School level to monitor the effective implementation of the scheme. Due its functional flexibility, additional funds are given to maintain the quality and quantity of MDM in elementary schools.

(iv) *Insurance for students:* The scheme aims at bridging the gap in enrolment and to ensure cent per cent retention in the schools of Chhattisgarh. Under this scheme, ₹10,000 is provided to each student's family for accidental death of a student, ₹5,000 is provided to each one of the completely disabled or Person with Disabled (PWD) students and ₹500 is provided to each student for partial body fracture and for the treatment of the students. This scheme started in the year 2016–17 and a large number of students are getting benefit from this scheme.

(v) *Scholarships for students:* The State Government made a provision for providing scholarships to encourage the SC, ST and OBC students (both boys and girls). Under this scheme, The State Government made a provision for providing scholarships to encourage the SC, ST and OBC students (both boys and girls). Under this scheme, The State Government made a provision for providing scholarships to encourage the SC, ST and OBC students (both boys and girls). Under this

scheme, ₹500/- is provided to SC/ST girls of Class III–V per annum, 800/- is provided to SC/ST girls of Class VI–VII per annum, 600 is provided to SC/ST boys of Class VI–VIII per annum, ₹450/- is provided to OBC girls of Class VI–VII per annum and ₹300/- is provided to the OBC boys of Class VI–VIII per annum. Personal bank account has been opened for individual students and students are getting benefits directly from the state and central schemes. 500/- is provided to SC/ST girls of Class III–V per annum, 800/- is provided to SC/ST girls of Class VI–VII per annum, 600 is provided to SC/ST boys of Class VI–VIII per annum, ₹450/- is provided to OBC girls of Class VI–VII per annum and ₹300/- is provided to the OBC boys of Class VI–VIII per annum. Personal bank account has been opened for individual students and students are getting benefits directly from the state and central schemes. 500/- is provided to SC/ST girls of Class III–V per annum, 800/- is provided to SC/ST girls of Class VI–VII per annum, 600 is provided to SC/ST boys of Class VI–VIII per annum, ₹450/- is provided to OBC girls of Class VI–VII per annum and ₹300/- is provided to the OBC boys of Class VI–VIII per annum. Personal bank account has been opened for individual students and students are getting benefits directly from the state and central schemes.

(vi) *Dr. APJ Abdul Kalam Shiksha Gunvatta Abhiyan:* With the objective to ensure the quality of Primary education, Dr. APJ Abdul Kalam Shiksha Gunvatta Abhiyan was launched by Chattisgarh government in September 2015. Under this scheme, schools are identified in a phased manner and their academic activities are analysed with the quality parameters. It is decided to cover all the schools within four years of the commencement of the scheme. The state and district machineries prepare valuable strategies to identify the best performing schools along with rewards to nurture a sense of positive competitiveness within an inclusive setting.

Summary and Conclusion

In the times when robotic learning, machine learning and virtual learning are spreading its wings, at the same time we are struggling to rehabilitate our education system and efforts have been displayed rampantly to gain mileage for a long term. In the pretext of responsibility, governments are coming with a new education plan and policy in every five years but showing its failure to implement the same at right place in right time. The status of primary education is changing slowly as compared to the increasing rate of various plans and policy, which

creates chaos in the implementation process. As far as Chhattisgarh is concerned, making plans and policies and their implementation for improving the standard of primary education is a herculean task due to its cultural diversity, language disparity and social variance. Although improvement has been seen since last few years, but an inclusive strategy needs to be adopted for homogeneous distribution of educational opportunities among all the students.

The number of elementary schools (Primary and Upper Primary) declined in between 2012–13 and 2016–17. In the last few years, due to increasing demands for English medium education and privatisation of education, the number of private schools has been increasing. On the other hand, on account of decline in enrolment, a number of Government Primary and Upper Primary schools are being closed down every year.

Enrolment at the Primary and Upper Primary stages declined substantially over the past five years on account of gradual decrease of relevant age group of children. Enrolment in the elementary education in the year 2016–17 was approximately 8.5 per cent less as compared to the enrolment of 2012–13. The fall in enrolment between 2012–13 and 2016–17 at Primary stage was substantially higher compared to the Upper Primary stage during the said period. There was the highest decline in enrolment, i.e., approximately 9 per cent, in Class I between 2012–13 and 2013–14. Gross Enrolment Ratio (GER) in the elementary education in Chhattisgarh in the year 2016–17 was 98.45, which was far better than many other states of India and GER of All India figures i.e., 93.55. Participation of school going children in elementary schools of Chhattisgarh is quite satisfactory. Boys and girls ratio of Chhattisgarh at the elementary stage remained almost same during the last five years. The gender gap in enrolment is slightly less at Upper Primary stage as compared to the Primary stage. The percentages of girl enrolment in overall India at Primary and Upper Primary stages was 48.11 and 48.53 respectively, which were less than the girls enrolment of Chhattisgarh in the year 2016–17.

Caste is a factor somehow associated with gender gap in the enrolment in elementary education. Compared to SC students, the enrolment of ST students is higher both at Primary and Upper Primary stages, due to gradual decrease of relevant category of students in this state. With the reference of Table 7, it is depicted that at both primary and upper primary level, there is a slight difference in the enrolment percentage of SC and ST category students. Even though dropout rate at Primary stage in Chhattisgarh has declined over the years, it could not meet the expectation of RTE yet. Dropout is higher at Upper Primary

stage compared to the Primary stage. Dropout rate of boys both at the Primary and Upper Primary stages is slightly higher than girls.

The percentage of female teachers is higher at Primary stage compared to the Upper Primary stage. At Primary and Upper Primary stages, the percentage of female teachers increased consistently compared to male teachers over the years. The number of female teachers, at both Primary and Upper Primary stages in Chhattisgarh, is less in comparison to the number of teachers in many other states and in overall India. Teacher-Pupil Ratio (TPR) declined over the years in Primary and Upper Primary schools. Enrolment has also declined over the years along with the number of teachers.

State Government has implemented several schemes independently and certain schemes are implemented with the assistance of Central Government for the improvement of elementary education in the state. To improve the academic standard of elementary education, the Government has introduced computer literacy projects in elementary schools, English as a subject in Class I and syllabus and textbook revision work is going on regularly. In order to improve and strengthen the human recourses, teachers have been appointed time to time and training programme has been organised by SCERT to train the un-trained teachers through open and distance mode. Government has taken initiatives to improve the infrastructure facilities in the schools on a war footing. As a result, a large number of Government schools of Chhattisgarh at present have been equipped with adequate infrastructure and required facilities. To ensure cent per cent enrolment and retention in the elementary schools, the Government introduced many incentives and schemes such as free textbooks, free uniforms, insurance, and scholarships particularly for girls, SC, ST children and economically disadvantaged children.

The overall discussion provides a mixed picture of enrolment and dropout of students at elementary level in Chhattisgarh. Responding to the alarming trend, the State has implemented several programmes at institutional level with an objective to increase the access and improve the quality of elementary education. Time has come to do something serious in this regard. Government alone cannot do all this. It needs a concerted and continuous effort by all the compartments of the society. We as a parent, community member, and teacher need to come forward for helping our children to have a reasonable future in the changing context. Finally, it can be said that if we all come forward with innovative ideas to educate the children with a suitable and amicable environment, then these educated children, after a decade or two, will take over and take care of their state as well as of their motherland, which is the real dream of the present society.

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