Examining the Status of the Right to Education in Government Elementary Education in Himachal Pradesh

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Abstract

The Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan (SSA), launched in 2002, followed by the incorporation of the Right to Education (Act) under Article 21A in Part III of the Constitution of India in 2009, made free and compulsory education a fundamental right for all children aged 6–14 years. With this, India embarked on the journey of achieving education for all. Both the Central and state governments are responsible for ensuring the effective implementation of the Act.

This study examines the changes experienced in the realm of elementary education in government schools of Himachal Pradesh from 2006 to 2016. A significant shift has been observed in government elementary education system across India, as the government has to ensure effective learning at this stage, besides ensuring the universalization of elementary education (UEE). For the purpose of analysis, the selected period is divided into two parts—before the enactment of the RTE Act 2009 (i.e., 2006 to 2009) and after its implementation (i.e., 2010 to 2016). The researcher has collected data for two broad indicators viz. human resource and physical infrastructure for the state of Himachal Pradesh. The data have been retrieved from the District Information System of Education (DISE) report published by the National Institute of Education Planning and Administration (NIEPA); the Elementary Education Department of the Government of Himachal Pradesh; the Ministry of Human Resource Development (MHRD), Government of India, and the Annual Status of Education Report (ASER) by Pratham, an NGO. Physical and human resource play a vital role in ensuring quality education, while addressing the goal of equity and access. Indian states have moved at their own pace in achieving the goal of UEE. Thus, it would be worth exploring the case of Himachal Pradesh for understanding the trajectory of its journey in achieving UEE.

Keywords: *Elementary education, physical and human resources, Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan, Right to Education, Himachal Pradesh*

Introduction

Modern concepts of education are said to be a 'tri-polar process', which involve three components, i.e., the teacher, the taught and the social environment (Hoque, 2020). These components help an individual learn, adjust and socialise in society. Reading, writing and arithmetic are integral parts at the preliminary stage, forming the basic foundation for higher-order cognitive processes. Primary education constitutes the most crucial stage, as it builds the foundation for the overall learning process. On one hand, these skills determine the basic literacy level of citizens, while on the other, they serve as stepping stones for continuing education. Thus, for realising the full potential of its citizens, the state must ensure the provision of quality primary education.

In 1950, the Constitution placed education under the Directive Principles of State Policy, which entrusted the state with the responsibility to provide free and compulsory education to all children aged 6 to 14 years within a period of 10 years after India became

a republic (Govinda & Mathew, 2018). It is argued that the Policy, in the realm of primary education in India, has been derived from three types of instruments: the national five-year development plans, national policy and the Constitution (Dyer, 1999). Therefore, many constitutional amendments were made to strengthen elementary education in India. India took a bold step by effecting the 86th constitutional amendment in 2002. Furthermore, it made a phenomenal shift by enacting the RTE Act 2009; Section 3 confirmed citizens' legal protection by making free and mandatory elementary education a fundamental right for all citizens aged 6 to 14 years (Uma, 2013).

India's ratification of the RTE Act 2009 was considered a big leap for the state in ensuring the democratic rights of citizens by empowering them through education. Nonetheless, a decade has passed since the promulgation of this Act, yet there are serious concerns if it has succeeded in ensuring quality education for its citizens. The RTE Act specifies financial and programmatic responsibilities for implementation on central and state government (Government of India, 2009, Section 7). Furthermore, the Act has tried to strengthen teaching–learning process, as well as the physical infrastructure in government schools in India. The provision made in Section 25, followed by the Schedule, defines pupil–teacher ratio as 30:1 for Classes 1 to 5 and 35:1 for Classes 6 to 8 (Government of India, 2009, Section 25). With regard to infrastructure, Sections 19 and 20 of the RTE Act authorise the governments to frame regulatory mechanism for schools that do not comply with the basic infrastructure norms. Furthermore, a separate schedule has been added to the RTE Act to ensure minimum infrastructure facilities in schools, such as a playground, boundary wall, barrier-free access, separate restrooms for boys and girls, a kitchen for preparing mid-day meals is prepared for children, and a safe and sufficient drinking water supply for all children (Government of India, 2009). However, framing these provisions do not guarantee that adequate facilities are available in government schools to attract children for admission, unlike private schools in India. Since social and material inequalities are deeply ingrained in India and other countries, it is impossible to ensure that the state will provide facilities for high-quality education by merely passing legislation. This is because responsibilities are not always assigned in just or consensual terms. The individualised and decontextualised accountability redirect shortcomings in the educational system to personal accountability issues or implementation flaws (Dyer, 2022).

To safeguard these rights, the RTE Act includes provisions like Section 31, empowering national and state commissions for the protection of child rights to enforce children's rights through adequate classroom space, facilities, and access to essentials like textbooks, uniforms, sports gear and mid-day meals, while also prohibiting discrimination and physical punishment. However, Section 22 exempts private and minority institutions from creating School Development Plans (SDPs), which affects educational uniformity even though it emphasises the need for ensuring children's rights, facilities, teacher availability, classroom quality, assessments, high-quality instruction and inclusive learning environments in government schools. The Central government designates the National Council for Teacher Education (NCTE) as the academic authority, with Section 23 of the Act detailing the requirements and service conditions for school instructors, who must regularly attend school, complete curriculum on time, provide extra help, assess student learning and engage with parents. Section 25 further mandates that the government and local authorities maintain a preserved student–teacher ratio, though this clashes with Section 19's three-year timeline for meeting quality standards, for which an amendment bill has been introduced.

Under Section 27 of the Act, teachers cannot be assigned non-academic duties, except

during tasks like the decennial census, disaster relief and elections. However, critics argue this section inadequately supports quality public education by allowing 'non-teaching work' to be assigned to government school teachers, while private school teachers are not expected to perform these duties. Private schools are also allowed to raise their fee freely, burdening low-income families, while public schools remain under-resourced (Bhuyan, 2013). The RTE Act also includes a 25% reservation in private schools for students from disadvantaged groups, yet only 6–7% of eligible children benefit, while most low-income students attend underfunded government schools. Sadgopal (2010) argues that this reservation and reimbursement scheme is a neo-liberal policy, diverting public funds to private, corporate and religious institutions, seemingly as school vouchers. He further says that due to the lack of fee regulation, low-income families bear additional costs for essentials like books and uniforms, while government schools continue to lack basic facilities, such as drinking water and toilets.

The increasing diversity in classrooms can enrich language and experiential learning. Kumar (2012) notes classrooms that embrace diversity can improve the educational process for students. However, it is speculative to assume that diversity alone will support students from disadvantaged backgrounds, as students and teachers bring diverse attitudes, beliefs, habits and perspectives shaped by their social backgrounds, making it challenging to separate school instruction from its social context. Children from upper socio-economic backgrounds often thrive in elite school cultures, whereas children from lower socio-economic backgrounds may feel marginalised or excluded in such environments (Bhat, 2012). Kumar, et al., (2019) observes that in the post-RTE Act period, free education has declined and monthly per capita expenditure (MPCE) on elementary education has increased sharply. Under this backdrop of the RTE Act 2009, this paper attempts to examine the dynamics of changes in government elementary education system of Himachal Pradesh. The state has better Gross Enrollment Ratio (GER) in elementary education as compared to the rest of India. In 2004–05, the GER was reported 108.90 and 108.50 for primary and upper primary stages, respectively; whereas the GER for elementary level was 108.74 (Government of India, 2007, p. 59). For 2014–15, the GER for primary and upper primary stage was 99.43 and 103.09, respectively; whereas the GER in elementary schools remained 100.81 (Government of India, 2018, pp. 48–50). There is an overall decline in GER in a decade for Himachal Pradesh. The state's enrollment in the government primary education system dropped from 58.6 to 54.1 per cent between 2018 and 2020 (ASER, 2021, p. 24). Moreover, the government elementary and secondary education system in the state faced a major setback when 4,994 primary schools, 1,092 middle schools, 32 high schools and 9 senior secondary schools were closed due to declining student strength, with less than 20 students in 2019. During this period, 80 primary schools in the state had no enrollment (Hindustan Times, 2020). Hence, mere enrollment in elementary education system does not guarantee equality education.

In the present context, the term 'elementary education' refers to implicit learning from Classes 1 to 8 . Early childhood education comes first, followed by elementary education, before secondary education. This stage of education is critical to a child's future development and personality, and as such, it is essential to the socio-economic advancement of the country (Sen, 2009). It also serves as a base or foundation for building citizen, society and the nation, as this is the stage where a child can identify their interests, aptitudes and potential. The promulgation of the RTE 2009 has placed India among 135 countries, which have made education a fundamental right for children (6–14 years). Education is placed under concurrent list of Indian Constitution

since 1976, therefore the central and state governments both have to shoulder the responsibility for effective implementation of the Act (Juneja, 2003).

Dynamics of Elementary Education in Himachal Pradesh (2006–16)

Free and compulsory education is the most remarkable attribute of the RTE Act 2009 to affect the responsibility on the state (any representative government) to ensure quality education for every citizen, irrespective of their social, cultural and economic status (Government of India, 2009, Section 3). As the legal provisions were enacted by the parliament of a democratic state, the onus to ensure the implementation of this fundamental right fell on the shoulders of the state. With the implementation of this Act, it was expected that there would be an increase in enrollment and that government schools would impart quality education.

In Himachal Pradesh, the state government claimed that the state's literacy rate had reached 88% and the enrollment ratio for elementary education had touched almost 100% (Business Standard, 2016). However, this bold claim by the government did not reflect the reality at the grassroots level regarding the state's role in elementary education and ensuring quality education. During the decade of 2006–16, there was an increase of 107 schools at the elementary level, although in the same period, the enrollment rate declined significantly. Approximately, two lakh students at the primary and six lakh students at the upper primary level had left the government elementary education system. Thus, the ambit of enrollment in government elementary education system has reduced significantly, even as the state is responsible for ensuring free and compulsory education for all children aged 6 to14 years.

Table 1: Schools and Enrolment in Himachal Pradesh in 2006–16

	School	2005–06	2010–11	2015–16
Government School	Primary	10,625	10,719	10,716
	Primary with Upper Primary	8	7	5
	Upper Primary	2,112	2,304	2,131
	Total	**12,745**	**13,030**	**12,852**
Enrollment	Primary	54,4251	4,23,313	3,23,802
	Primary with Upper Primary	914	837	683
	Upper Primary	1,29,169	1,06,089	65,560
	Total	**6,74,334**	**5,30,239**	**3,90,045**

Source: Elementary State Report Cards (2005–06, 2010–11, 2015–16), NUEPA http://udise.in/src.htm

Similarly, when data is being analysed for the expansion of schools, there is a slight increase of 0.85% and 0.83% at the primary and upper primary stages, respectively. As the RTE Act 2009 has made it mandatory for governments to provide school in neighbourhoods within a distance of 1 km for the students of Classes 1 to 5 and at 3 km for students of Classes 6 to 8, the state government hastily opened schools with little concern for facilities (Hindustan Times, 2022). Considering the financial and human resource management of the government, this provision seems to be impractical. It was reported that 99 primary schools with enrollment of less than five students had been closed (Digital Learning, 2016). Further, during the same period, enrollment in

private schools had increased considerably, as evident from ASER data. By 2023, a significant decline in student enrollment in government schools in Himachal Pradesh took place; it was reported that 228 primary, 56 middle and 2 high schools run by the government had zero enrollment. These schools were closed by the government from the new academic session in April 2023 (Hindustan Times, 2023).

Table 2: Student Enrollment in Class 5 in Private Schools Across Different States

Name of the State	% Class 5 Students in Private Schools			
	2012	2014	2016	Significant difference from the years (2012 to 2016)
Uttar Pradesh	50.8	51.7	51.3	0.5
Rajasthan	42.1	40.0	42.0	−0.1
Haryana	45.0	52.2	54.8	9.8
Uttarakhand	34.3	36.3	44.4	10.1
Punjab	42.3	45.5	51.6	9.3
Himachal Pradesh	27.8	34.8	40.2	12.4
Madhya Pradesh	15.5	20.4	23.7	8.2
Chhattisgarh	10.6	17.9	20.3	9.7
Maharasthra	43.6	41.0	43.4	−0.2
Tamil Nadu	28.2	33.0	34.2	6.0
Kerala	58.7	56.2	70.0	11.3

Source: ASER (Rural) 2016: p. 11

The report revealed that for the period 2012–16, there is a significant increase of 12.4% in the enrollment figures for private schools in Himachal Pradesh, the highest among the states surveyed by ASER. In the same report, Kerala stood ranked second with regard to the increase in enrollment in private schools. There were some states, like Rajasthan and Maharashtra, where the enrollment in private schools had declined during this period. States, like Kerala and Himachal Pradesh, which performed relatively better in terms of enrollment as compared to rest of India, were slowly shifting towards private schools. The choice of school by parents is influenced by various factors, but the inadequacy of resources and facilities in government schools, compared to private schools, plays a major role in the decision to choose private schools.

Table 3: A Comparison of Reading Abilities of Children in Government and Private Schools of Various States

Name of the State	% of Children in Class 5 Who Can Read English Sentences							
	Private School				Government School			
	2012	2014	2016	Significant difference from the years (2012 to 2016)	2012	2014	2016	Significant difference from the years (2012 to 2016)
Uttar Pradesh	26.6	34.7	31.9	5.3	4.4	7.7	4.8	0.4
Rajasthan	27.8	30.4	35.0	7.2	5.1	5.4	9.4	4.3

Haryana	71.1	74.8	75.0	3.9	17.3	23.6	29.4	12.1
Uttarakhand	55.1	64.2	58.6	3.5	16.9	13.8	22.8	5.9
Punjab	72.3	77.9	83.2	10.9	36.9	29.7	34.0	−2.9
Himachal Pradesh	79.3	81.5	91.0	11.7	45.5	38.8	44.0	−1.5
Madhya Pradesh	27.3	30.0	35.9	8.6	48	43	56	8.0
Chhattisgarh	24.7	31.0	43.4	18.7	50	62	95	45
Maharashtra	26.9	31.7	34.8	7.9	16.7	14.6	22.7	6.0
Tamil Nadu	43.8	52.4	58.3	14.5	17.7	24.2	26.4	8.7
Kerala	70.0	81.5	77.7	7.7	52.4	51.4	57.4	5.0

Source: ASER (Rural) 2016: p. 11

Furthermore, the ASER also highlights the standard of learning in government and private schools. During 2012–16, there was a significant increase (11.7%) in the English reading ability of Class 5 students of private schools in Himachal Pradesh, while government schools saw a decline of 1.5%. Moreover, the report revealed that by 2016, the difference in the performance of government and private schools had widened In 2012, the difference was 33.8%, whereas in 2016, it rose to 47%. The ASER data also show that on one hand, the learning outcomes in private schools were improving, on the other, government schools' performance was consistently deteriorating, as observed from the figures for states like Punjab and Himachal Pradesh.

Table 4: Arithmetic Proficiency of Class 3 Students of Himachal Pradesh

Year	% of Children in Class 3 Who Can Subtract		
	Government	Private	Government & Private
2010	53.9	76.0	60.4
2012	39.5	72.6	50.3
2014	40.6	70.6	52.4
2016	48.4	66.7	57.4

Source: ASER (Rural) 2016: p.11

With regard to learning arithmetic at the primary level, the state did not perform satisfactorily. The ASER indicates that arithmetic proficiency at the primary level had declined in both government and private schools during 2010–16. At the primary level, only 48.4% Class 3 government school students were able to solve subtraction problems, compared to 66.7% private school students. The state government's promise to provide free and compulsory education is meaningless if that education does not improve the learning outcomes of students from marginalised sections of society. Thus, with regard to language and arithmetic, the learning outcomes of government schools were not satisfactory. Moreover, the deteriorating quality of education in government schools had reduced the social prestige of this system, gradually leading to a decline in the student enrollment ratio in these schools.

The RTE Act and Teachers in Government Elementary Schools

India is celebrating its 75th year of Independence; yet policymakers have not reached a consensus on how many teachers should be appointed at the primary stage. Section 25, along with the Schedule of

the RTE Act, has established a scheme for pupil–teacher ratio at the primary and upper primary stages. The criterion has been fixed with regard to the total number of students in a school, irrespective of their distribution across classes or subject-specific specialisations. This has diluted the norms and standards for ensuring adequate number of teachers in primary schools.

According to the RTE Act 2009, the student–teacher ratio (excluding the head teacher) should not be more than 40. There should be one teacher for every 30 students, two teachers for up to 60 students, three teachers for 61–90 students, four teachers for 91–120 students, five for 121–200 students, and one head teacher along with five instructors for 150–200 students. sThe statute specifies that social studies, languages, and science and math would each require a single teacher (RTE Act, 2009 Schedule). It is surprising to note that the state does not have a dedicated position for a Trained Graduate Teacher (TGT) in English. Effective language learning can only be ensured if schools have dedicated teachers for both the languages i.e., English and Hindi.

Vygosky, in his theory of learning, has identified speech and language as the fundamental stage for learning, as well as an important area of skill in its own right (Camileri, 2012). The state government schools in Himachal Pradesh have five approved teaching positions for upper primary level viz. TGT non-medical (for teaching science and arithmetic), TGT Arts (for teaching English and social studies), Oriental Teacher (for Sanskrit and Hindi), Drawing Master (DM) and Physical Education Teacher (PET for physical education). If these teaching positions are compared with Central School and Navodaya Vidyalaya, which are considered as model schools to be emulated by state governments, there is a wide discrepancy with regard to TGT positions between central and state government schools at the upper primary level. Central Schools have dedicated TGT positions for each subject, including TGT-English, TGT-Hindi, TGT-Sanskrit, TGT-Maths, TGT-Science, TGT-Social Science, TGT-Art Education, TGT-Work Experience, TGT-Library, TGT-Physical and Health Education. As the upper primary stage is the most critical stage for conceptual understanding, any shortfall in the availability of specialised subject teachers hampers the learning process.

Table 5: Single–Teacher Schools in Himachal Pradesh (2002-16)

Years	% of Single–Teacher Schools		
	Primary	Primary + Upper primary	Upper Primary
2005–06	13.2	0.0	3.5
2015–16	11.9	0.1	6.0

Source: Retrieved from www.udise.in Act 2009. NIEPA, New Delhi

During 2006–16, there was a decline of 1.3% point (13.2–11.9) in single–teacher schools at the primary level. However, during the same period, the number of teachers in primary schools decreased from 25,402 to 25,002, reflecting a reduction of approximately 400 teachers. Further, at the upper primary level, single–teacher schools increased to 6% for the year 2016 from 3.5 in 2006, with the actual number of teachers declining from 8,746 to 7,562, marking a drop of 13.53%. By 2022, 12 primary schools were working without teachers, while 2,969 primary schools and 51 middle schools were functioning with a single teacher (Hindustan Times, 2022).

Primary education constructs the foundation of cognitive processes, and without adequate teachers or with a single

teacher, how far we can expect the holistic development of children as the role of an adult as a facilitator has been underscored (Vygotsky, 1978; Wertsch, 1985).

Table 6: Teachers working in Government Schools in Himachal Pradesh (2006–16)

Years	Teachers		
	Primary	Primary + Upper primary	Upper Primary
2005–06	25,402	58	8,746
2015–16	25,002	47	7,562

Source: Retrieved from www.udise.in Act 2009. NUEPA, New Delhi

The data reveal that a decline in single–teacher schools. It is also evident that the actual number of teachers and enrollment has simultaneously decreased during this period. Although a decline of 1.3% point in single–teacher schools at the primary stage did not indicate how many schools have the full strength of teachers, as no consensus or standard has been established by the government with regard to the required number of teachers per school at the elementary level. How can we ensure that providing two or three teachers for the lower primary level will guarantee quality education, given that the learning process and cognitive skills vary significantly, even among students in Classes 2 and 3?

The state's elementary education system is struggling to ensure quality education. There is a shortfall of approximately 1,600 teachers in the elementary system over a decade from 2006 to 2016. During the period, the upper primary stage experienced a decline of 13.53% teachers, highlighting the state government's commitment to education. According to the U-DISE data, the pupil–teacher ratio had improved from 20 to 12 between 2006 and 2016. But this statistic is misleading as at this stage, two lakh children had left government primary schools during this period. Similarly at the upper primary stage, pupil–teacher ratio had improved from 15 in 2006 to 9 in 2016. This happened because six lakh children withdrew themselves from the system.

Table 7: Pupil–teacher Ratio in Government Schools of Himachal Pradesh (2006–16)

Years	Pupil–Teacher Ratio (PTR)	
	Primary	Primary + Upper primary
2005–06	20	15
2015–16	12	9

Source: Retrieved from www.udise.in Act 2009 NUEPA, New Delhi

When analysing the DISE data for the number of teachers per school at the primary and upper primary stages, it was found to be less than one (0.42) and two (1.69) teachers, respectively. Although the data reveal that the pupil–teacher ratio has improved, it does not provide information on the actual number of teachers in each school across the state. Given the state's difficult geographical terrain, it is unlikely that teachers are evenly distributed across schools in different parts. In government schools, there are around 68,300 authorised teaching positions but 20% of these positions remain vacant. For primary, middle and senior secondary schools, the average teacher-to-student ratio is 12.83; for high schools, it is 11.32; and for both, it is 11.6. While this may be significantly higher than the national average, an unusual scenario has been created by the haphazard establishment of schools and the unreasonable deployment of teachers. (Lohumi, 2022).

A new trend has emerged in the state's elementary education system. The profession is attracting people with higher qualifications. There is rapid increase in the number of

people having graduation, post-graduation and M.Phil degrees. A significant shift has been observed with regard to more qualified people joining the primary level compared to the upper primary level. It can be argued that as job opportunities were greater at the primary level, more qualified people opt for it. Additionally, social security and lucrative salary have attracted qualified aspirants to the profession.

Physical Infrastructure

The primary education system in India is still operating with minimal resources. Operation Blackboard, launched in 1986, aimed to provide minimal infrastructure, including two rooms with blackboard, two teachers and teaching–learning aid in government schools (Government of India, 1987). Dyer (1999), in her case study on the implementation of Operation Blackboard, revealed that it was difficult to change the status quo because actors at all levels of implementation did not perceive themselves as having any stake in the changes that were suggested. The teaching–learning kit, which was designed in Delhi, was hardly used by the government school teachers in the villages and towns of Gujarat, as they did not know how to use it with their regular classroom instruction. It is a common misconception among policymakers that choosing to implement change will inevitably alter institutional behaviour or policy (Dyer, 1999).

More than three decades have passed since the launch of Operation Blackboard, yet the government has not made progress in equipping government primary schools with adequate facilities like five rooms for each class (1 to 5), a playground, indoor games, a library with books and a dining hall. Despite India aspiring to become the world's largest economy, it has not standardised its public education system. Data are still being collected for reflecting minimum facilities like single–classroom schools, schools with boundary walls, drinking water facility and toilets in government schools (NCERT, 2017).

Over a decade has passed since the RTE Act 2009 was implemented. However, by 2022, out of 15,313 government schools, seven primary and three middle schools had no classrooms. Additionally, 338 primary, 216 middle and 76 senior secondary schools had only one classroom, while 2,495 primary, 241 middle and 25 senior secondary schools operated from just two rooms in the state (Hindustan Times, 2022). Almost every school had restrooms and drinking water facility. Approximately, 89 per cent schools had libraries but there was no dedicated librarian in primary and upper primary government schools. There were 23.57 per cent schools without playgrounds and 31.71 per cent without boundary walls. Furthermore, 79.3% schools lacked computers, and 86.09% had no Internetaccess, despite the emphasis on technology-driven and online learning (Lohumi, 2022)..

Conclusion

The state experienced growth in elementary education after the Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan was launched in 2002. But after the implementation of the RTE Act 2009, this growth did not sustain, and there was a steady downfall in the number of schools and enrollment in government schools. The gaps and ambiguities in the RTE Act itself provided enormous scope for states to execute the Act in their own way. Himachal Pradesh, in particular, did not frame strict guidelines for implementing the RTE Act. Moreover, the state was not financially supported by the Central government to strengthen its education system. A large number of schools continue to operate with one or two teachers and only two to three rooms. The elementary stage requires greater focus and personal attention from teachers for effective learning, but it remains inadequately supported.

Growth in education; if it does not ensure quality it fails to qualify as 'free and compulsory' because the student enrolled in education could not utilize her/his education for exploring career opportunities nor they can prove his worth in hereditary occupation. During the decade from 2006 to 2016, 42.16%

students left the government elementary education system in the state. During the same period, enrollment in private schools rose from 27.8% to 40.2% at the primary level. This reflects the declining prestige of government schools and preference for private schools. The enactment of the RTE Act created the expectation that the state would take proactive measures to uphold this fundamental right by strengthening the public education system, thereby making education a tool to mitigate social inequalities and ensure equal democratic rights for all citizens. However, the weakening of the public education system and the emergence of a strong private education system at the elementary level not only undermines the state's responsibility towards its citizens but also weakens the participation of citizens in preserving and protecting public institutions.

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