

Dropout Education in Andhra Pradesh: Current Status and Prospects

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Abstract: *The Government of Andhra Pradesh has unleashed a new era in School Education by introducing extensive curricular reforms by bringing in a curriculum of national standards, teaching methods and an appropriate third party assessment system to the children studying in the Government schools with a long - term objective of preparing children for the challenges and career opportunities of 21st century so that they would grow into Global Citizens. The School Education Department of Andhra Pradesh, the largest department of the state, manages and regulates schools in various districts of the state. The primary and secondary school education is imparted by government, aided and private schools. These schools are categorized as urban, rural and residential schools. In 1950 - 51, the enrolment of girls was only 16 lakhs out of total enrolment of 67 lakhs in Class VI - VIII, then it followed an upward trend and in the year 2011 - 12, the enrolment of girls was 299 lakhs out of 630 lakh total enrolment. The enrolment rate of girls was 23.88 per cent in 1950 - 51 session and it increased up to 47.46 per cent in the 2011 - 12 session. The increase in this percentage is more than double, but even in 2011 - 12, fewer girls were enrolled in elementary school as compared to boys. Gender gaps in education increased with the level of education and if there are gaps in school enrolment then these gaps continue till higher education.*

Keywords: School Education, Dropout Rate, Primary, Secondary, Enrolment, Teacher, Students

1. Introduction

At the time of India's independence from colonial rule in 1947, only 12% of its population was literate. In 1947, not only in education but also as an independent country, India was suffering from multiple problems like poverty, the caste system, population growth, a lack of infrastructure, etc. In light of this, Indian constitution writers provided so much protection for all sections of people in the society by providing fundamental rights like equality before the law, the right to education, freedom of speech, etc. By taking the spirit of the constitution writers, Indian government policymakers adopted five - year plans and focused all the sectors like agriculture, industries, science and technology, education, and health on equal weightage for the progress of the nation.

In low - income schools, the concept of individual attention does not exist. The existing infrastructure also does not support it. The children remained absent for days due to various family functions or obligations. The end result was the students knew no mother tongue, Hindi or English; maths and science were a far cry. The problem in poor government schools is not the medium of instruction, but the absence of a studious, caring atmosphere. Teaching became boring and repetitive task. Students are not taught well. Instead of getting lost in the language maze, schools need interactive teaching aids to make teaching interesting, well - paid, affectionate teachers trained in student - centric learning - teaching methods to provide an excellent education, and a positive engagement with the community. Research shows children below the age of 10 can easily master multiple languages (including English). So, why not give them an equal chance?

The Government of India has funded the programme since 2005 - 06. The programme recognised the centrality of education for women empowerment and adopted an innovative approach towards the process of education. It has

been pointed out that the programme has succeeded in achieving the objective of women empowerment by educating girls and women at their own pace. Lok Jumbish (People's Movement for Education for all) Programme was an innovative and joint initiative of Government of Rajasthan and local NGOs started in 1992 with assistance from Swedish International Development Agency (SIDA) to achieve the goal of universalization of elementary education through mass mobilization and participation of people. The project was an area - based approach to address the learning needs of every single child in the village and priority was given to the children who belong to the communities marginalized from centuries ago. Kasturba Gandhi Balika Vidyalaya (KGBV) was launched in 2004 for setting up residential schools at upper primary level for girls belonging to SC, ST, OBC and minority communities in educationally backward blocks of the country. Under this scheme, a minimum 75 percent of seats are reserved for girls belonging to SC, ST, OBC or minority groups and 25 per cent seats are given to girls coming from families below the poverty line. The main objective of this scheme is to ensure access and quality education to the girls of disadvantaged groups of society by setting up residential schools with boarding facilities at the elementary level. The scheme of National Programme of Nutritional Support to Primary Education (NP - NPSE) commonly known as Mid - day Meal Scheme (MDM) was formally launched on 15th August 1995 to boost the universalisation of primary education by increasing enrolment and retaining students in the government schools. It has been considered as the world's largest feeding programme of school children. The number of children covered under this scheme has increased from 3.34 crore in 1995 to 12 crores in 2007. The recent global monitoring report applauded the midday meal scheme of India in expanding the access to education among children from disadvantaged sections of the society. National Programme for Education of Girls at Elementary Level (NPEGEL) is a focused intervention of Government of India and an integral, yet separate, component of SSA launched in

July 2003 to provide access and to facilitate retention of girls and to ensure equal participation of women and girls in the field of education. The scheme recognizes that the key to girls' education is community mobilization and so the cluster level group along with women volunteers, mother/parents and other volunteers will work collaboratively to monitor the enrolment, attendance and achievement of girls the enrolment of girls in Class VI - VIII remains significantly low as compared to boys.

2. Review of Literature

Meenakshi Sharma Yadav and Manoj Kumar Yadav (2023) study investigate from 200 students on the implicit impact of executing English language teaching and learning programs. The impact was evaluated across four categories: high, medium, neutral, and low, and the analysis of the data showed the high impact of implementing the National Education Policy (NEP) in India.

Radhika Misquitta and Rudri Joshi (2022) paper analyzed the outcomes from a professional development programme (PDP) in India designed to support inclusion of students with disabilities. 107 practicing teachers including general educators, special educators, school leaders, and counselors, among others participated in a six - month PDP.

Sujatha Varma. P (2022) stated that the teachers should make subject - wise lesson plans following the model prescribed in the academic calendar and incorporate latest developments in the subjects concerned and employ innovative methods to make the classroom teaching interesting.

Sarbjit Kaur (2020) The paper has covered various issues relating to education. The latest National Education Policy 2020 also puts a strong emphasis on the education of girls and states that prejudice and bias based on gender and other such factors affect people's capacity to benefit from the education system. The Policy gives due consideration to the needs of all children especially girls and transgender students in all levels of education.

Udayakumar K and. S. Rajendran (2016) The paper explained the growth of school education in India. According to the 2009 Right to Education Act, the schooling is free and compulsory for all children from the ages of 6 to 14. Elementary education consists of primary (for 6 - 10

year olds) and upper primary levels (for 11 - 14 year olds) although secondary education levels (for 16 - 18 year olds).

Geeta Gandhi Kingdon (2007) The paper reveals an overview of school education in India. According to the author India's educational achievements in international perspective, noting that while it does relatively better than its South - Asian neighbors, Pakistan and Bangladesh, in certain educational indicators, it lags seriously behind the other countries with which it is increasingly compared, such as BRIC economies in general and China in particular, especially in terms of secondary school participation and youth literacy rates.

Number of Schools

Table 1 gives information on number of schools established in sample district and at the State level. The school education system has been segmented into six different levels namely (i) Primary, (ii) Primary with Upper Primary, (iii) Primary with UP, Secondary & Higher Secondary (iv) UP With Secondary & Higher Secondary, (v) Primary With Upper Primary & Secondary (vi) Upper Primary With Secondary. Education in Andhra Pradesh is imparted via the government and private institutes. There are as many as 61514 schools in Andhra Pradesh while in Visakhapatnam district boasts of 5427 schools. The total number of schools were distributed in the following manner: (39388) 64.03% primary schools followed by Upper Primary with Secondary schools (10095) 16.41%, (9282) 15.09% of primary with upper primary schools, (2257) 3.67% Primary With Upper Primary & Secondary schools, (290) 0.47% UP With Secondary & Higher Secondary schools and only (202) 0.33% Primary with UP, Secondary & Higher Secondary schools in Andhra Pradesh, while the corresponding figures were 3521, 648, 743, 482, 9 and 24 in Visakhapatnam district.

The major part of the school education like in any society is covered by primary schools in Andhra Pradesh as well as the sample district Visakhapatnam. The proportion of primary schools slightly lower in Andhra Pradesh (64.03) compared with Visakhapatnam (64.88). In Visakhapatnam district Primary With Upper Primary & Secondary had a lion's share i. e., 21.36 next in order Primary with UP, Secondary & Higher Secondary 11.88, Primary 8.94, Primary with Upper Primary 8, Upper Primary With Secondary 6.42 and UP With Secondary & Higher Secondary 3.10.

Table 1: Number of Schools in Andhra Pradesh and Visakhapatnam: 2019 - 20

Si. No.	Schools	Andhra Pradesh		Visakhapatnam		% share in State
		No.	%	No.	%	
1	Primary	39388	64.03	3521	64.88	8.94
2	Primary with Upper Primary	9282	15.09	743	13.69	8.00
3	Primary with UP, Secondary & Higher Secondary	202	0.33	24	0.44	11.88
4	UP With Secondary & Higher Secondary	290	0.47	9	0.17	3.10
5	Primary With Upper Primary & Secondary	2257	3.67	482	8.88	21.36
6	Upper Primary With Secondary	10095	16.41	648	11.94	6.42
	Total	61514	100.00	5427	100.00	8.82

Source: Districts at A Glance, Directorate of Economics & Statistics - 2020, Government of Andhra Pradesh, Vijayawada.

Class - wise Gross Enrolment Ratio

The Gross enrolment ratio was total enrolment in a specific level of education, regardless of age, expressed as a

percentage of the eligible official school age population corresponding to the same level of education in a given school year. The Government of Andhra Pradesh has

directed officials to ensure a significant increase in the Gross Enrolment Ratio (GER) in the State though the effective implementation of the Amravodi and Mana Badi Nadu Nedu schemes had helped increase the Gross Enrolment Ratio, it is not enough. The data extracted from the secondary sources on Class - wise Gross Enrolment Ratio in Andhra Pradesh and Visakhapatnam district and these details are presented in Table 2. The Gross Enrolment Ratio for all the classes i. e., Class - 1 to X were significantly more in Visakhapatnam district compared with the State of Andhra Pradesh for the last three years. In the year 2019 - 20 the Gross Enrolment Ratio for primary schools (I - V) had increased to 92.09 from 85.59 in 2017 - 18, the figures for

upper primary classes (VI - VIII), it increased to 87.74 from 83.93 and Secondary schools GER rose to 84.22 from 79.14 during the same period in the state of Andhra Pradesh. In case of Visakhapatnam district Gross Enrolment Ratio for the three year period reveals that for primary schools it increased from 88.54 in 2017 - 18 to 100.59 during 2019 - 20, for upper primary it increased from 89.73 to 97.89 and for the secondary schools it also increased from 86.74 to 96.15 during the same period. The above analysis indicates that there was a clear difference in Gross Enrolment Ratio in different classes. Overall, for the last three years, the Gross Enrolment Ratio in all classes was more in Visakhapatnam district compared with the state of Andhra Pradesh.

Table 2: Class - wise Gross Enrolment Ratio in Andhra Pradesh and Visakhapatnam: 2017 - 18 to 2019 - 20

S. No.	Class - wise	Andhra Pradesh			Visakhapatnam		
		2017 - 18	2018 - 19	2019 - 20	2017 - 18	2018 - 19	2019 - 20
1	Classes I - V	85.59	87.36	92.09	88.54	91.06	100.59
2	Classes VI - VIII	83.93	84.82	87.74	89.73	91.46	97.89
3	Classes IX - X	79.14	82.36	84.22	86.74	91.27	96.15

Source: Districts at A Glance, Directorate of Economics & Statistics, Government of Andhra Pradesh, Vijayawada, 2018, 2019 & 2020.

Class - wise Annual Average Dropout Rate

Even today, many children in India are either deprived of education or drop out of schools before completion of studies due to many reasons. Making parents aware of the, importance of education, policies such as 'no detention policy' till class X, increased access to schooling facilities, government initiatives like midday meal scheme, growing parental involvement in school management, improved teacher - pupil ratio, etc. have improved the student retention rates over the years.

Table 3 gives the data on Class - wise Annual Average Dropout Rate among different Social Group in Andhra Pradesh and Visakhapatnam district. Across other social groups, the dropout rate recorded for secondary school for all the three years in the state of Andhra Pradesh as well as Visakhapatnam district. No single dropout reported for primary and upper primary for three years in Visakhapatnam district whereas the dropout rate identified among children in upper primary schools during 2018 - 19 and 2019 - 20 in the state of Andhra Pradesh. The dropout rate among

schedule caste were reported higher for secondary level education and also reported for upper primary schools for the last three year period in Andhra Pradesh while the dropout rate was very low for upper primary and secondary schools during 2018 - 19 in Visakhapatnam district. The dropout rate among scheduled tribe for all the Classes reported higher in the state of Andhra Pradesh as well as Visakhapatnam district except for primary during 2019 - 20 in Visakhapatnam district.

Overall, it was observed that one common feature i. e., dropout rate recorded among the children for secondary level for all the social groups in Andhra Pradesh as well as in Visakhapatnam district between 2017 - 2020 but this dropout rate were considerably higher among scheduled tribe. This dropout rate became a serious concern for the government of Andhra Pradesh even though various schemes were being implemented for reducing dropout rates particularly in SC and ST, these schemes were not helpful to reduce the dropout rate among these communities either at the state level or at the district level.

Table 3: Class - wise Annual Average Dropout Rate according to Social Group in Andhra Pradesh and Visakhapatnam: 2017 - 18 to 2019 - 20

S. No.	Item	Andhra Pradesh			Visakhapatnam		
		2017 - 18	2018 - 19	2019 - 20	2017 - 18	2018 - 19	2019 - 20
I	Other Social Groups						
1	Classes I - V	-	-	-	-	-	-
2	Classes VI - VIII	-	1.03	0.27	-	-	-
3	Classes IX - X	3.52	4.29	4.38	1.72	2.87	1.05
II	Scheduled Caste						
1	Classes I - V	-	-	-	-	-	-
2	Classes VI - VIII	1.35	1.38	0.36	-	0.01	-
3	Classes IX - X	5.22	5.10	5.54	-	0.62	0.46
III	Scheduled Tribe						
1	Classes I - V	1.6	0.66	0.14	1.27	0.97	-
2	Classes VI - VIII	4.83	4.57	5.61	5.84	2.76	4.21
3	Classes IX - X	7.82	10.55	12.37	10.09	7.94	12.28

Source: As ex ante

Teacher - Pupil Ratio

The Pupil Teacher Ratio at different levels of education show availability of adequate number of teachers for teaching children enrolled at different schools. The increase in number of teachers in schools contributes to focused delivery of education. The Right to Education Act, 2009 mandates the pupil teacher ratio of 30: 1 at the primary level and 35: 1 at the upper primary level. As per National Education Policy 2020 the Pupil - Teacher Ratio (PTR) of under 30: 1 will be ensured at the level of each school; areas having large numbers of socio - economically disadvantaged students will aim for a PTR of under 25: 1. Teachers will be trained, encouraged, and supported - with continuous professional development - to impart foundational literacy and numeracy. The details on teacher pupil ratio of Andhra Pradesh and Visakhapatnam shown in Table 4.

In Andhra Pradesh, the pupil teacher ratio in Primary Schools increased from 23 in 2017 - 18 to 25 in 2019 - 20. The same trend continued to show for Primary with Upper Primary schools and Primary with UP, Secondary & Higher Secondary while the last three categories of schools the teacher pupil ratio has come down from 2017 - 18 to 2019 - 20. Teacher pupil ratio of primary schools has increased from 24 during 2017 - 18 to 26 in 2019 - 20 and further the ratio increased 29 to 38 for Primary with UP, Secondary & Higher Secondary and the other categories of schools like category two, five and six has come down this ratio during the same period. This shows that there was corresponding increase in the number of teachers so no proper teacher pupil ratio among six categories of schools.

Table 4: Teacher - Pupil Ratio in Andhra Pradesh and Visakhapatnam: 2017 - 18 to 2019 - 20

Si. No.	Schools	Andhra Pradesh			Visakhapatnam		
		2017 - 18	2018 - 19	2019 - 20	2017 - 18	2018 - 19	2019 - 20
1	Primary	23	23	25	24	24	26
2	Primary with Upper Primary	18	18	20	21	19	20
3	Primary with UP, Secondary & Higher Secondary	35	35	37	29	29	38
4	UP with Secondary & Higher Secondary	27	29	25	23	25	23
5	Primary with Upper Primary & Secondary	42	35	34	52	42	38
6	Upper Primary with Secondary	26	24	23	29	27	26

Source: As ex ante

Functioning of Anganwadi Centres

Anganwadi is a type of rural mother and child care centre in India. They were started by the Indian government in 1975 as part of the Integrated Child Development Services (ICDS) program to combat child hunger and malnutrition. Anganwadi means "Courtyard Shelter" in Indian languages. A typical Anganwadi centre provides basic health care in Indian villages. It is a part of the Indian public health care system. Basic health care activities include contraceptive counseling and supply, nutrition education and supplementation, as well as pre - school activities.

Table 5 shows the number of Anganwadi Centres functioning in state and district levels. There were no change in the number of projects as well as number anganwadi centers either at the state level (257; 55607) or at the district (25; 4952) level for all the three years. The total number of children benefited drastically declined from 2546111 in 2017 - 18 to 2262872 during 2019 - 20 in Andhra Pradesh. This is also true in case of Visakhapatnam district; it declined from 206120 to 180934 for the same period. It was quite interesting to note that the birth rate has increased in Andhra Pradesh while it was slow down in Visakhapatnam during the same period of time.

Table 5: Functioning of Anganwadi Centres in Andhra Pradesh and Visakhapatnam: 2017 - 18 to 2019 - 20

Si. No.	Item	Andhra Pradesh			Visakhapatnam		
		2017 - 18	2018 - 19	2019 - 20	2017 - 18	2018 - 19	2019 - 20
1	No. of Projects	257	257	257	25	25	25
2	No. of AWW Centers	55607	55607	55607	4952	4952	4952
3	No. of Children	2546111	2479727	2262872	206120	197185	180934
	Birth Rate	13.5	14.7	14.2	14.5	14.2	13.7

Source: Districts at A Glance, Directorate of Economics & Statistics, Government of Andhra Pradesh, Vijayawada, 2018, 2019 & 2020.

3. Conclusion

Improvement in the quality, efficiency, and equity of education, to a considerable extent, depends on the nexus of teaching and learning, which is in turn influenced by the quality of teachers. The teacher has been identified as the single most important factor influencing the quality of education by the Indian Education Commission and the National Policy on Education. The government needs to promote its schools and their traits through digital channels such as websites, Waatsapp, YouTube, Instagram etc. At the same time, the service properties and association are to be domineering and matched with the selected digital channels.

The government of India, like that of many other developing countries, has been trying to meet the challenge of improving the quality of education by improving teacher quality on several fronts—by raising pre-service education requirements, improving teacher training, increasing the diversity of the teaching force and promoting stronger participation by local government and community organizations.

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