



No detention policy: Rethinking education system of India

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Abstract

The education sector in India has changed drastically and dramatically. Government introduced 'No Detention Policy' (NDP) under Right to Education Act, 2009 which has had serious implication on the education system of India. The quality of education in India has been deteriorating since its inception. The policy was designed to reduce school dropout rates and create stress free environment for students by removing the fear of being detained. However, students face tough challenges when they reach class IX because safety net of no detention policy is till class VIII. The policy has led to the development of lackadaisical attitude of stakeholders towards Indian education system. The paper provides the impact and consequences of the policy on the Indian education. A lot needs to be done and modification in the policy is required to improve the education system in the country and save the future of our country.

Keywords: no detention policy, comprehensive, continuous evaluation system, right to education act, education ministry, etc.

Introduction

Under the Right to Education Act, all the students up to class 8 will neither be expelled nor be failed till they complete their elementary education covering class I to class VIII. They will automatically be promoted to the next class till class VIII. To make it easier for the students to pass, the Act mandates the implementation of Continuous and Comprehensive Evaluation (CCE) process to assess and evaluate the student's learning. No Detention policy is a consequence of the 68th Amendment of the constitution Act, 2002 under Article 21A. The Article provides free and compulsory education of all children aged between 6-14 years which is a recognized as a Fundamental Right. Through comprehensive and continuous evaluation (CCE) pattern, schools are expected to use test results to improve teaching and learning of the child. This process will help visualize the evaluation as a diagnostic tool to improve learning.

To implement this provision, Right to Education (RTE) Act was passed in 2009 which states that students up to class VIII will be promoted to the next class without being detained irrespective of the marks obtained by the student. In other words, even if student does not get passing marks, he/she will not be held back. This was termed as 'No Detention Policy' (NDP). Under the RTE Act, 2010, Continuous and Comprehensive Evaluation (CCE) system was introduced which evaluates the child throughout the year based on the co-curricular activities and other tests conducted throughout the year. The idea was to ensure all-round development of students. It is believed that principles of pedagogy and assessment criteria under CCE pattern are sound and recognised worldwide. CCE pattern assesses students on the basis of their non- cognitive learning ability and evaluates them on non-academic areas.

The rationale behind introducing NDP was to provide stress free environment to the students which will help them to learn and grow in self paced mode. It was expected that dropouts

among students will reduce and weaker sections of the society will be benefitted the most as they cannot afford expensive private education. NDP will embrace equity among students and avoids academic and social effects on the child of repeating a class due to detention.

However, outcome of the NDP policy has been worse than expected. It has resulted in poor quality of students who can't read and write properly. In fact, they are not suitable for the class they are studying in. Thus, the policy has produced quantity of students in schools and deteriorated the quality of students. Undoubtedly, students have cleared till class VIII but they face challenges when they enter class IX. This is due to the fact that, even if the basic concepts of the students aren't clear, he/she was allowed to enter the next level. It has been observed through radio advertisements in Delhi in which Deputy Chief Minister Manish Sisodia urged the support of the parents and teachers to help students develop reading skills. It was a matter of grave concern that students have reached higher classes without being able to read properly. Due to no fear of detention, students, teachers and parents have developed lackadaisical attitude towards studies. Students do not bother to study as they will clear the exam and will be promoted to next class with no efforts. They show unreasonable and undisciplined attitude towards teachers and parents. Parents are not bothered as their child will not be detained in the class. On the other hand, teachers in the school have been lenient and are not bothered to give feedback to the students for any improvement as they have to clear the student irrespective of the performance in the class. The CCE pattern makes no difference between good and bad students as all get promoted to the same class. There is no incentive for the students to work hard and perform well. The impact of the policy is as follows:

1. Lower standard of education: Due to lack of infrastructure and untrained teachers, no detention policy has negatively affected the education system of India. It

has rather lowered the standard of education in the schools especially schools in interior places. Hence, continuation of ‘no-detention policy’ will make the future hard and harsh for the children.

2. **Casual attitude of students:** Due to the policy, students developed a lackadaisical attitude towards classroom teaching, examinations and school attendance. Students know that they have no risk of failing which demean the efforts of students who work hard to get good scores. The policy makes no distinction between efficient and inefficient students.
3. **Efforts from teachers:** Teachers are no more concerned about the result of the students as they have to pass every student irrespective of what they have written in their exams. They have causal approach towards classroom teaching and have no motivation to adopt innovative methods of teaching to make class interesting and interactive. The checking of answer sheets has no significance as they have to pass each and every student who appears for the exam.

4. **Dark future of students:** When the elementary education is not effective and students are given feedback of their performance, their future will be dark. The basic foundation is laid in class I where teachers build conceptual knowledge of every subject and develops the interest of the students. However, no detention policy has made those classes fearless and riskless for the students.

The sources of collecting educational statistics are the educational institutions and households. Household provide data such as private expenditure on education, education level, literacy, etc. whereas the data on enrolment and number of teachers is made available by the educational institutions.

In India, a literate person is defined as any person aged 7 years and above who is capable of understanding both reading and writing in any language. The Adult Literacy rate consists of the percentage of population aged between 15-24 years old who can both read and write with understanding. The adult literacy rate has increased from 61% to 69.3% for females as well as males during the period 2001-2011. Adult Literacy rate is 70.5% for year 2014 as per NSS 71st round.

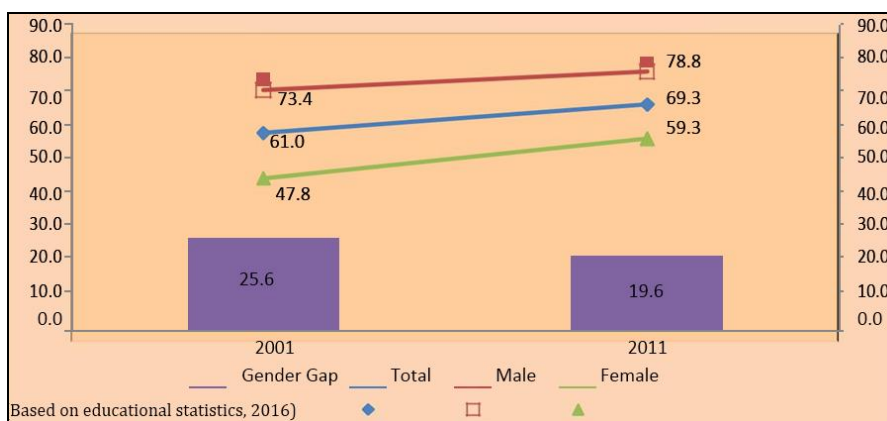


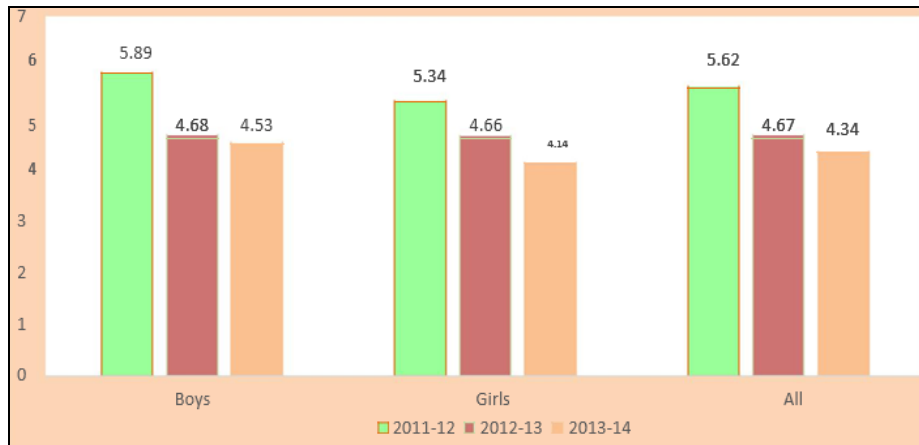
Fig 1: Adult Literacy Rate (%)

In 2012, Central Advisory Board of Education (CABE) set up a sub-committee under Haryana Education Minister Geeta Bhukkal, concluded that NDP has had a very bad impact on the children. According to National Council of Education Research and Training (NCERT) survey, 25 states and union territories are against NDP because they feel that policy is deteriorating the quality of education in India and only five states, Maharashtra, Goa, Karnataka, Telengana and Sikkim, want to continue NDP. Class X Board exams were made optional for the students under RTE, 2009.

CCE pattern has been imported from the west and there is no doubt that CCE system is efficient. The problem is that many government schools do not have adequate number of teachers and teachers lack training regarding new evaluation system. Our country lacks infrastructure and awareness about such evaluation systems. Teachers are over burdened with non academic activities which made implementation of NDP ineffective. The policy can be made effective only when teachers are professionally trained and work in an environment where they have focussed attention towards

assessing individual knowledge requirements, value individual differences and provide curative inputs to each student as per his or her needs. Teachers should not be burdened with massively occupied classes and be free from duties at polling booths, census or sample surveys. The teacher student ratio should be maintained. Funding allocation should be increased and value education should be imparted.

Let us look at the figures which can throw some light on the success and failure of NDP. The graph shows fall in the annual dropout Rate at primary level from 5.62% in 2011-12 to 4.34% in 2013-14 for all category students. At primary level, the Dropout rate for boys has decreased more than the dropout rate for girls by 1.36 and 1.2% percentage point respectively during 2011-12 to 2013-14. Though the dropout rate is low, does that mean the literacy rate is also high and students can read and write with understanding? Due to NDP, students are promoted from one class to the other without evaluating suitability for the next class. Studies have been made easy and risk free as there are less exams and no risk of failing during evaluation.



(Based on data from Educational Statistics, 2016)

Fig 2: Dropout Rates (%) from 2011-12 to 2013-14 at primary level

The mean achievement score of students at national level has improved in all the subjects. However, the mean achievement score in rural areas is still less as compared to urban areas. The result can be due to the difference in the school infrastructure,

quality of teachers, mode of teaching, etc. The policy of education has not contributed much in improving rural education and may have deteriorated the quality of education in urban areas through NDP.

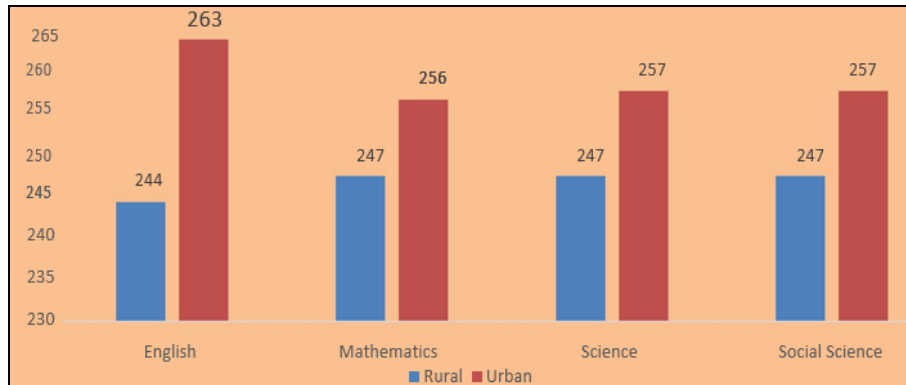


Fig 3: Mean Achievement Score of Students at National Level

The enrollment level of the students shows the number of students registered or attending the school. Higher the enrollment, more educated population India will have. Since 1950-51, the level of enrollment has increased from 192 lakhs to 1305 lakhs in 2014-15. The gap between the number of enrollments between girls and boys is reducing which shows

that the girl child enrollment is increasing at a fast rate. Since 2000-01, number of enrollments in females has increased from 498 lakhs to 629 lakhs in 2014-15. It may be due to the no detention policy which does not concern much to the parents at the primary level as there is no risk of failing at the primary level.

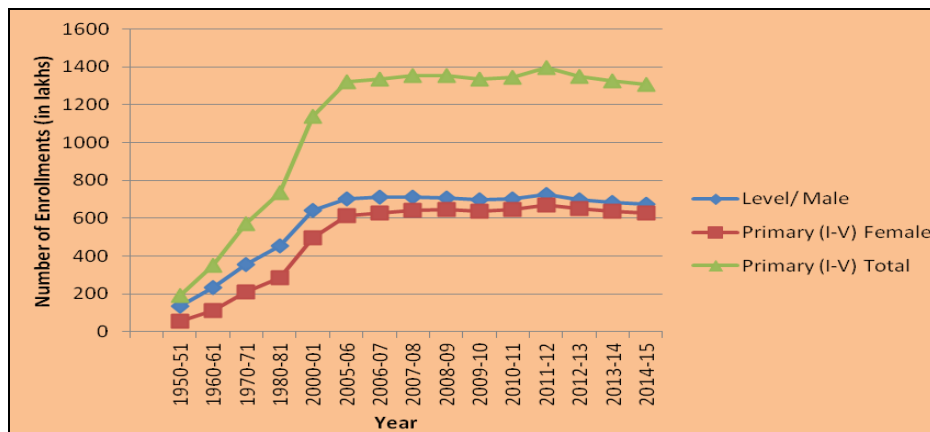


Fig 4: Level wise enrollment of primary 1-5

After an increase in the level of enrollment in the primary level, it is interesting to note the state of enrollment in the upper primary level. Since 1950-51, the total enrollment in the upper primary classes has increased from 31 lakh to 584 lakh till 2008-09. However, the level of enrollment has been consistently increasing during this period. However, after introduction of NDP, there isn't much increase in the number

of enrollments. After implementation of NDP in 2009-10, the level of enrollments is 595 lakh which has increased to 672 lakh in five years till 2014-15. It means there are 77 enrollments in five years as compared to 553 lakh enrollments in 13 years. It is important to assess the impact and contribution of NDP on the education system of India.

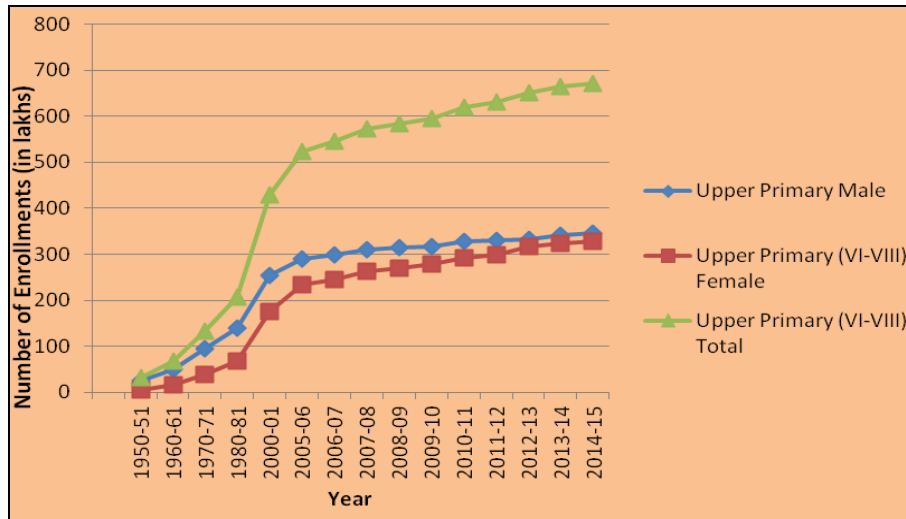


Fig 5: Level wise enrollment of Upper Primary (6-8)

The impact of NDP can be clearly seen in the enrollment level of secondary classes (IX-X) which will depict the participation of students at this level. The figure 5 shows the number of enrollments in 2000-2001 were 190 lakhs which has increased to 295 lakhs by 2008-09. After the implementation of NDP in 2009, the number of enrollments increased from 307 lakhs to 383 lakhs in 2009-10 and 2014-15

respectively. Thus, there is an absolute number of increases in number of enrollments to 66 lakhs after NDP which shows a good picture of education. However, the mean achievement score and the average success rate of the students will provide deep insights about the quality and success rate of education in India.

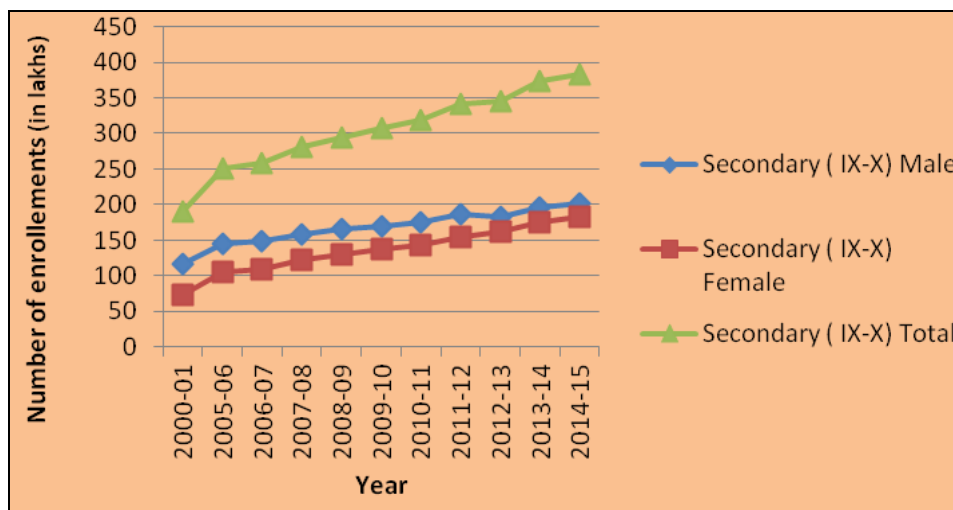


Fig 6: Level wise enrollment of Secondary (9-10)

To achieve the target of compulsory education to all, NDP has reduced the dropout rates tremendously. In 2011, the dropout rates for the boys and girls were 5.89 and 5.34 respectively which has reduced to 4.53 and 4.14 for boys and girls respectively in 2013-14. It is good news that the students are

continuing their education and very less number of students is dropping out of school. It is important to consider the quality of education, literacy level and other factors which may affect their dropout level in future.

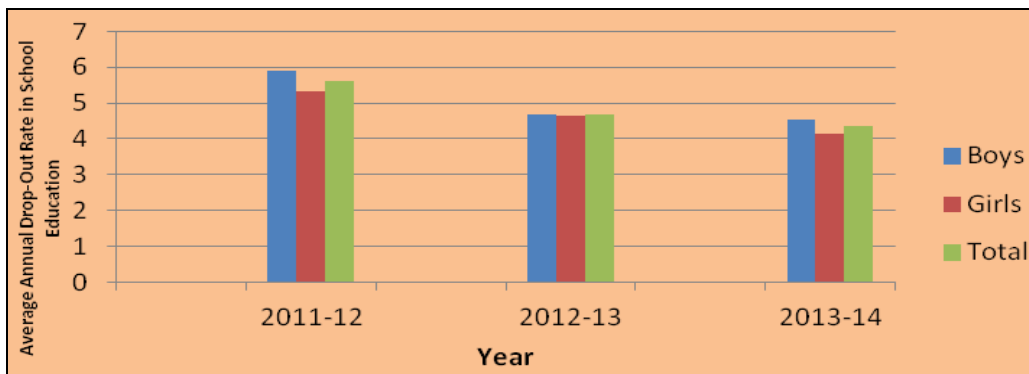


Fig 7: Drop Out rates in primary classes

The dropout rates in 2011-12 have been 2.13 and 4.2 for boys and girls respectively. But the dropout rate in 2013-14 as reduced to 3.09 and 4.49 for boys and girls respectively. It is a matter of grave concern that students are dropping out in the

upper primary classes where it is the time to face the challenge and apply what they have learnt at the primary level. This shows where NDP has failed in its implementations and flaws in its inception.

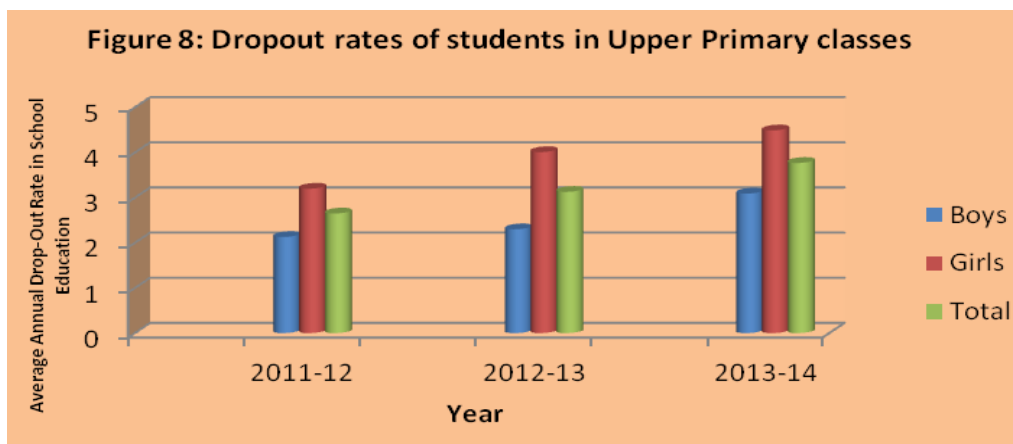


Fig 8: Drop rates of students in upper Primary classes

Measures that can be taken to achieve the target of Right to Education and maintain the quality of education in India

- State can provide scholarships to the students, fiscal incentives to the parent, awareness campaigns must be started to educate parents and students of the importance and trends in the education system.
- The teachers should be given adequate training to undertake any transformation of such kind.
- There is a need to upgrade school infrastructure and an increase in the teacher-student ratio which will create an environment to implement such policies.
- The students should be evaluated on a regular basis.
- It is important to involve parents in maintaining full attendance of their children.

Vaishali is a 14 year old girl studying in Government Senior Secondary school in class IX. After School hours, she cooks food for her family of seven members, completes her school homework and does other household work. Her father, Madan Lal is a rickshaw puller and her Mother, Malti Devi, works in a college as housekeeping staff. She has four brothers who go to the same school in the evening hours. They live in rented

one room flat in Seemapuri. The rent of the flat is Rs.5000.The total monthly family income is Rs. 20000. She hardly gets time to study because of her engagement in household activities. When her class IX results were declared, she could not clear her exams. Despite giving papers for rechecking, she could not clear. Now she is scared of repeating the class and her parents may take her out of school. If she drops out from the school, she will have to work to contribute to the family income. She can't find out the reason for being held back. Is it due to poverty or ineffective implementation of NDP? Why is NDP ineffective in her situation? How can students like Vaishali be helped? What can government do to help them improve their situation? How can awareness be created among parents about the importance of studies for their children, especially backward and economically weaker sections of the society.

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