



**CHALLENGES OF OUR BASIC EDUCATION:
WITH SPECIAL FOCUS ON A.P STATE GOVERNMENT SCHOOLS – INDIA**

Dr. B Sreekanth Reddy

English Trainer

TVTC College of Technology

Kingdom of Saudi Arabia

Abstract

My teaching career in a foreign country has raised so many questions in my head regarding Indian school education system. In this article the word 'schools' refers to government schools. The present article is the product of my musings on our educational system and its objectives. This article presents the views and deliberations into debates about the development of basic education, especially in government schools. European basic education has attracted much interest for almost ten years now, because international comparisons of learning outcomes have shown them to be among the best performers. We are one of the biggest countries in the world in terms of population. As part of change, the school must continuously review its way of imparting information, understand the teaching and learning process and carry out operations accordingly. We have to do our very best to promote the high standards of teaching and learning opportunities. First, we have to create opportunities for success for our children and young people by providing the best education. Social, intellectual and technological changes challenges our basic education in many ways. Our entire education system must be ready to respond to these challenges.

Keywords: Artistic, dyslexia, dysphasia, pedagogy

In order to be able to determine the course for development, we need to analyse the challenges facing our basic education. We have access to plenty of national and international research and assessment data, which not only highlights the strengths of our basic education, but also provides signals for current and future challenges. Meeting these challenges calls for reform of basic education. Upgrading the standards of basic education is intertwined with development of the education system as a whole. The contents should be integrated and it helps the students to perceive the relationships between different branches of knowledge and





build his own understanding of the world. The subject matter must be so selected and designed that it reflects closely to our day to day spheres of life. This involves identifying the essential objectives and contents of education and integration of subject contents. This provides opportunities to learn more about the importance of knowledge and skills.

Development of education system is a continuous process. The idea of the need for and purpose of this publication emerged through interaction with the development programme of educational management and the development network of global leadership. This article aims to promote and support valuable ideas that can lead to the development of our basic education.

Challenges of Our Basic Education

The present scenario

The existential culture of the school is strongly influenced by the way it defines information, knowledge and learning. The knowledge learned at school is not linked with the learners' day to day life. School education is criticised for giving more emphasis on command of individual pieces of information. The comprehensive school has become troubled with information overload: the large amounts of curricular content have burdened lessons and there is not enough time for understanding and learning. The mismatch between the amount of content and the time available creates instructional practices that do not promote high-quality learning.

Changes of the world, challenge our learning and education system. Changing society, work and education call for new ways of learning and mastering knowledge and skills – new citizen skills. In order to reinforce these skills in their students, the policy makers need to review and reform the objectives, contents and forms of education. New skills and competences are important for individuals future and national welfare. There is an immediate need to prepare students for higher order skills and skills that value innovation, creativity and originality so that they will be able to survive and succeed in the globalised world.

Fundamental objectives of future Education

Today's schoolchildren are required to be creative, flexible and able to absorb new things quickly in the future. In addition to basic knowledge and skills, students need more and more capabilities for effective communication, interaction, capabilities for problem-solving, analytical and creative thinking, capabilities for participation and influence, capabilities for self-





knowledge and responsibility, as well as manual and expression skills. Instead of being bound to any one subject, these skills form an essential part of any learning process.

School plays a key role in building society. Only through 'Education' it is possible to create high-level competence, which forms the foundation for society to continue to develop and prosper. Instructional practices be developed to support students' equal learning opportunities. Equal opportunities must be provided to acquire the knowledge and skills required in society and working life. Girls and boys must be supported through teaching and guidance counselling to allow them to make subject, educational and career choices based on their individual qualities, strengths and motivations.

Flexibility, consideration for individual interests and diversity of learning experiences are key elements of learner-centred pedagogy. Ensure students' equality in terms of eligibility for further studies. Students' equality in options can be realised by creating a clearer structure for optional studies both in the distribution of lesson hours that specifies the time available for instruction and within the National Core Curriculum.

Priorities of future learning

The priorities of basic education reform are determined on the basis of both current developmental needs and the competence required in the future. The priorities for development of education are:

- **Strengthening of Reading and Writing literacy, Languages and Communication.** This means giving significance to comprehensive reading and writing skills, diverse communication modes related to interaction and expressive skills. Requirements of proficiency in foreign languages are increasing.

- **Increasing scientific, technological and mathematical competence.** Competence in these fields is the basis for the development and well-being of any society. The ability to apply technical, scientific and mathematical knowledge enhances logical thinking in everyday life. On the other hand, there is growing concern about climate change, the depreciation of natural resources and sustainable development and solving these problems requires scientific understanding and utilisation of technology.

- **Increasing civic competencies, participation and initiative skills.** The prerequisite for civic competencies, participation and influence is a better understanding of one's own community and society and the resulting interest in societal phenomena. In the future, people will need more and more competencies relating to changes and a more entrepreneurial attitude.





- **Strengthening artistic expression and production skills.** This aims to strengthen areas of competence related to self-expression, interaction, aesthetic structuring of the environment, artistic production and planning processes.
- **Strengthening health and functional capacity.** Schools must provide students with the skills and capabilities to look after their own health and well-being. The aims to strengthen the competencies related to health, physical education, nutrition, economic thinking and life management. This in turn will create a good foundation for strengthening the nation's well-being. A healthy population and a health environment are key resources that builds a well-being and lifelong learning.

Use of ICT

The opportunities provided by new technology-focused learning environments, tools and materials are significant. The schools should invest in educational technology. At some schools, tools such as interactive whiteboards, e-learning materials and various mobile devices, is beginning to be part of everyday life. Regardless, of its huge impact in terms of educational use of information and communications technology (ICT), studies have shown that the ICT is not adequately used in education.

It is an urgent requirement for schools to introduce educational technology. Today's learners live in a society that is deeply permeated by ICT at all levels. Students obtain skills outside school at an early stage and on their own. Today's students have excellent IT capabilities in terms of recreational use of technology. These citizens of the information society are completely adept at using technology, but not necessarily in a most productive or desirable way. ICT education at school will make them to enhance the use of information and media skills.

Support challenged learners

The children come to school from diverse families in terms of social, cultural and financial resources. This aspect is reflected in everyday school life. Gender differences, individual developmental differences and students' different backgrounds and learning styles must be taken into account during pedagogical instructions. Students in the same classroom have varying learning abilities and competence. Classroom Instructions should provide students with appropriate challenges and experiences of success.

Communities also cast their influence where the young children are growing up. For many reasons most of the families are not able to fulfil their task of bringing up their children. Social





challenges like poverty, ill health, mal nutrition, parent's illiteracy, broken relations in the family and many other issues spill over into schools. In this regard, there is a need to provide for special education. The number of students admitted to special needs education has increased during the 21st century. The most common grounds for special needs education includes dyslexia, learning difficulties in mathematics, developmental delays, learning difficulties due to dysphasia, and varying degrees of cerebral dysfunction or physical disability.

Are teachers ready to cope up with the challenges?

Teachers' work is subject to diverse, conflicting demands and expectations. Teachers ought to be facilitators of learning and builders of new learning environments. Provision of learner centred instruction creates new types of needs for differentiation and use of various teaching and learning methods. The work is also influenced by changes in the social structures and increasing multiculturalism, changes in the world of work and even the threat of violence and crises. Teachers feel that their educational task has become more difficult. There are less and less opportunities to get into details. Teaching and education should also take account of changes brought about by technological developments to the use of working methods, materials and tools. Communication via different media shapes the character of studying and learning, which in turn has a bearing on teaching as well.

Teaching work also involves more and more co-operation with different stakeholders and partners and pedagogical management in multidisciplinary co-operation networks. In addition, teachers are expected to play an active role in development projects, produce reports and follow instructions. Teachers are not capable of meeting these demands and expectations on their own. It is absolutely necessary to develop schools collaboratively as a cluster. Collective competence at root level is not very strong as yet – our operational culture rests more on doing things alone.

The attractiveness of the teaching profession is one key challenge when aiming to secure the availability of competent and qualified teaching staff. Working conditions, work equipment and opportunities to receive support through continuing training, workplace supervision and working communities influence teachers' coping at work. Only a fraction of the teachers in our schools have personal computers at their disposal at work. The opportunities of teachers to participate in continuing training have varied according to teacher groups and to the educational institution where they work. Continuing training has also paid relatively little attention to changes in training needs in the different phases of teaching careers.





Changing roles of teachers

Teacher as a facilitator of learning

Teachers' work is not limited to imparting knowledge and skills; instead, a significant part of their work is bound to the social, educational and cultural values. The ethical and social dimensions of the teaching profession are playing a more important role in the cultural, economic and social structures of society. Being a teacher requires creating conditions for meaningful and inspiring learning and for the student group's positive co-existence.

Students' learning styles and differences in temperament require differentiation of teaching and use of diverse working methods and tools. Teachers are versatile and networked professional knowledge workers to find studies to be meaningful and be ready to commit to schoolwork. The prerequisite for goal-oriented and suitably challenging studies is for teachers to master the subject matter that they teach and the pedagogical know-how related to teaching the subject. It is just as important for teachers to know their students and be capable of supporting every individual's learning process. It is important for students to be able to feel that they are involved in matters concerning their studies and learning environment. Involvement can be supported by respect for students' experiences and open interaction practices. Students' active participation and motivation can be promoted by providing them with opportunities to influence selection of contents and to produce contents themselves.

Diverse working methods foster learning among both individual students and the whole group. Students' different learning styles and differences in temperament require differentiation of teaching and use of diverse working methods and tools. Teacher identity means readiness to participate in and influence the development of school's operational culture and pedagogy. Teacher identity is also about the ability to co-operate with all stakeholders who are able to support and promote learners' learning and growth. In addition to ensuring opportunities for continuing in-service training, this also requires teachers' self-motivated readiness and motivation for developing themselves.

Finally in addition to the above, administrative heads of the institutions should promote continuous professional development programs for the teachers. Head master's play an important role in supporting newly graduated young teachers as they start their work at the school. They are also responsible for ensuring that teachers receive support through continuing training in accordance with their needs.





References

Beane, J. (1997). Curriculum integration. Designing the core of democratic education. New York: Teachers College Press.

OECD (2008). Trends Shaping Education - 2008 Edition. Retrieved on 8th March 2010 from: <http://www.oecd.org/document>

OECD (2009). 21st Century skills and competences for New Millennium Learners in OECD-countries. Retrieved on 15th April 2010 from: <http://www.oecd.org>.
<http://www.oecd.org/LongAbst>

OECD (2009). Centre for Educational Research and Innovation (CERI) - Schooling for Tomorrow. Retrieved on 5th March 2010 from: <http://www.oecd.org/document>

OECD (2009). Definition and Selection of Competencies. Retrieved on 16th April 2010 from: <http://www.oecd.org/document/>

Education at a Glance 2009: OECD Indicators. Retrieved on 18th April 2010 from: <http://www.oecd.org>

