

## FINANCIAL ALLOCATION TRENDS FOR SCHOOL EDUCATION: AN INTERSTATE COMPARISON

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### ABSTRACT

*Finance is a vital element for the development of an Inclusive, equitable, just and efficient system of Education. Primary education is the foundation which the child needs at this formative stage, provides first-hand experience of group life outside the family and prepares the foundation for secondary education. While elementary education forms the foundation for education, and higher the finishing of the education edifice, it is the secondary education that provides effective links between the two. Hence, it becomes the priority of the government to expand school education in order to expand higher and professional education, which is a sufficient and necessary condition for economic development. But real or imaginary inadequacy of finance has always remained the major problem in front of the Nation. On one side of the edifice, there is Kerala which is leading the nation from the past three decades in academic achievements, and on the other side, Bihar is at the bottom, while Punjab is at number 21. Kerala had allocated nearly double the percentage share of its SDP to school education from its establishment to first decade of Economic-Reforms(1991-2000) period as compare to Punjab. This has created a momentum in the field of educational development of Kerala state. This huge share of SDP allocations to school education by Kerala resulted in establishing the lead of the state in the educational attainments among the Indian states. But on the other side, Punjab was not able to achieve a higher position in financial allocations as a share of its SDP to school education than Kerala. This situation resulted in poor educational attainment in the school education of the Punjab. Punjab has also been found to spend 2.88 per cent of the SDP on education. Punjab has not accorded priority to education in general and school education in specific in its Five-Year Plans allocation. However, this percentage is really less, as there are clear-cut recommendations by various commissions and committees that the investment on education should reach 6 per cent of the national GDP as well as 15-18% of the State SGDP. Allocation of finance to school education has been skewed towards secondary level of school education, which leads to neglect of elementary level of school education in terms of financial allocation. Punjab need to accord priority to the elementary level of school education in financial allocation to school education.*

**KEYWORDS:** *Elementary Education, School Education, Financial Allocation, SDP, Kerala and Punjab.*

## INTRODUCTION:

Finance is a vital element for the development of an Inclusive, equitable, just and efficient system of Education. The education which the student receives at school provides the foundation of his harmonious development. Sound elementary education gives a fillip to sound secondary and higher education. Primary education is the foundation which the child needs at this formative stage, provides first-hand experience of group life outside the family and prepares the foundation for secondary education. The secondary school must make itself responsible for equipping children with civic as well as vocational efficiency and the qualities of character that go with them so that they may be able to play their part worthily and completely in the improvement of national life. (Tilak, 2007)

It is secondary education that consolidates the gains received from elementary education; secondary education helps in innovating technology and in sustaining growth; it is secondary education that provides skill that could be useful in the labour market; it is secondary education that can keep the people above poverty line without such a danger of falling back into poverty trap – educational poverty or income poverty; and in fact, it is secondary education that can take people to much above poverty line, by increasing the social, occupational and economic levels of the households. While elementary

Education forms foundation for education, and higher the finishing of the education edifice, it is the secondary education that provides effective links between the two (Tilak, 2007). Further, it is also realized that the rapid increase in elementary education leads to an increase in demand for secondary education, and hence the need to increase the priority to secondary education. The importance of secondary education and the need to expand it is now being slowly recognized and the government of India has of late initiated some measures toward recognising the importance of the role of Secondary education in national development Rashtariya Madhyamik Shiksha Abhiyan (RMSA) was launched in 2007 in a mission-mode exercise, which is presently known as SAMAGAR SHIKSHA to universalize secondary education till 2020. In view of this, the Central and the State/UT governments jointly initiated planning to implement the agenda of universal and free secondary education in the first phase by the year 2015 and then extend it to senior secondary education in the second phase by the year 2020. This renewed emphasis on Universalising secondary education under NEP - 2020 necessitates that issues of barriers to access and inequality of opportunity and inefficiency of secondary education system should be brought center stage. (Tilak, 2008).

Secondary education further leads to demand for higher and professional education. It was realised that due importance should be given to develop all levels of school education. Thus, school education forms the foundation for higher and professional education. School education lays the foundation of education in the modern societies. The nature, quality and content of education in the schools leave indelible imprints on the tender minds and shape them in the desired direction. The outlook towards life, society and humanity, behavior towards fellow citizens and value systems of individuals as well as society are formed in the early stage of education. Indeed, without a sound school education, excellence at the higher level of education is unthinkable. Hence, it becomes the priority of the government to expand school education in order to expand higher and professional education, which is a sufficient and necessary condition for economic development. The most important problems with regards to Indian system of school education is the unequal access to

education, adequacy of financial resources and inefficiency of school education system. Yet, India had chalked out a number of plans, i.e. SSA, RMSA, SAMAGAR and now NEP 2020, to mobilise financial resources for universalising the School Education. But real or imaginary inadequacy of finance has always remained the major problem in front of the Nation. On one side of the edifice, there is Kerala which is leading the nation for past three decades in academic achievements, and on the other side, Bihar is at the bottom, while Punjab is at number 21(Census, 2011). Punjab is poorer than the poor on the basis of literacy Indices. The present paper aims to analyse the financial allocation trends to school education in Punjab and Kerala to get insight into the pitiable education scenario of Punjab.

### **STATE PROFILE OF PUNJAB:**

The present Punjab, which emerged as a state on 1st November 1966 on the linguistic basis, is known as most developed states of India. Punjab has a total population of 2,77,04,236 including males 1,46,34,819 and females 1,30,69,417 (Office of the Registrar General & Census Commissioner, India, 2011). Punjab, which occupied 1<sup>st</sup> position in per capita income for three decades from 1960 to 1990, is now ranked at 10<sup>th</sup> position among Indian states on the bases of per capita income in 2022 (Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation, 2022). Punjab, being the most developed states of India, has not effectively intervened in the area of School education. Punjab has never prioritised School education in its financial allocation policy (Singh, S. 2017). Punjab, which bagged the Best Educational Infrastructure Index award in 2011 and 2021 from SSA, has not been successful in establishing a lead in Human Resource Development (Singh, 2023). Punjab's literacy rank is 21<sup>st</sup>, among Indian states with an overall literacy rate of 76.7%, male literacy 81.5% and female literacy 71.3% (Office of the Registrar General & Census Commissioner, India, 2011). Punjab has allocated approximately 13% of its total expenditure towards school education from its inception, which is half of the general recommended allocations for school education i.e. 25%. This inefficiency of financing policy has been reflected in the meager educational attainment of the State and does not commensurate with its economic Development.

### **STATE PROFILE OF KERALA:**

Kerala, which has been recognized as educationally advanced state of India from more than last three decades. Both the states have many similarities as these were emerged as a result of the States Re-organisation Act, 1956 of India. Kerala has the highest literacy rate; 93.91%, highest Human Development Index (HDI); 0.98, highest life expectancy; 77 years, the highest sex ratio; and 1,084 women per 1000 men. A survey in 2005 by Transparency International ranked Kerala as the least corrupt state in the country. Kerala's lead in all Index is a result of its best educational attainments. But Punjab's rank on literacy rate is 21<sup>st</sup> among Indian States with 75% total literacy and Human Development Index (HDI) rank is 4th with HDI 0.73 (Census, 2011 & UNDP Reports, 2011). Both states are basically agrarian economies and agricultural sector contributes a significant portion to the total output of both the states. This has made it imperative to compare Punjab and educationally advanced state Kerala on the basis of financial allocations to school education as a share of SDP to know the factors leading to variations in educational attainments of these states.

## **OPERATIONAL DEFINITIONS OF THE TERMS:**

### **School Education:**

School Education connotes the education provided to the students from 1<sup>st</sup> to 12<sup>th</sup> standard in the schools run by the State government and Local Bodies.

### **Financing of School Education:**

Financing refers to the patterns, procedures and quantum of financial provisions to school education, for establishment of school buildings, for providing essential infrastructure and facilities, for the recruitment of teachers and providing incentives to socially and economically backward students, made by the government.

### **Punjab:**

The state, which came into existence on November 1, 1966 as result of bifurcation of PEPSU state on the language basis in state of Punjab and Haryana. It comprises 22 district and has total 50362 Sq. KM area.

### **Financing of School Education:**

Adequacy of finance in the context of the present study connotes increase in financial allocations to elementary and secondary level of education in relation to increase in school age population, number of schools, number of teachers and other facilities.

### **State Domestic Product (SDP):**

State Domestic Product or SDP, is the total value of goods and services produced during any financial year within the geographical boundaries of the State. It is, also called the state income.

### **Analysis of the Data:**

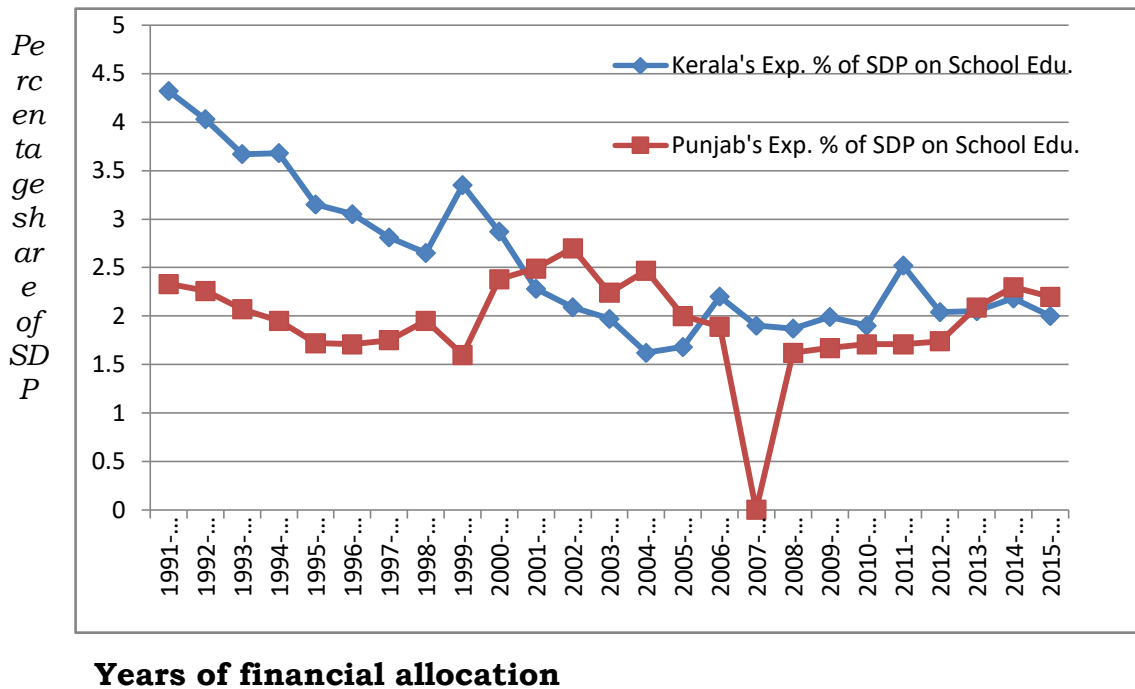
The perusal of the table 1 and figure 1 reveals that Kerala has allocated nearly double percentage share of its SDP to school education from its establishment to first decade of Economic-Reforms(1991-2000) period as compare to Punjab. This has created a momentum in the field of educational development of Kerala state. This huge share of SDP allocations to school education by Kerala upto 1999-2000, even more than national allocation of 3.4%, resulted in establishing the lead of the state in the educational attainments among the Indian states. Although, the decline was evident in financial allocations to school education during the first decade of 21st century 2000-2010 in Kerala, but it seems that it is a result of

**Table 1: Showing comparison of Punjab and Kerala on financial allocations to school education as a percentage share of SDP. (Rs. in Crore\*BE)**

Years	KERALA (Rs. in Crore)			PUNJAB (Rs. in Crore)		
	Total Exp. on School Education	%age of SDP	SDP	Total Exp. on School Education	%age of SDP	SDP
1991-92	652.99	4.32	15102	473.14	2.33	20317.86
1992-93	693.42	4.03	17175	530.7	2.26	23441.17
1993-94	858.73	3.67	23401	569.45	2.07	27549.54
1994-95	1054.82	3.68	28697	615.36	1.95	31523.66
1995-96	1105.74	3.15	35087	665.64	1.72	38615.00
1996-97	1242.96	3.05	40819	755.3	1.71	44198.00
1997-98	1345.30	2.81	47924	850.33	1.75	48704.14
1998-99	1500.62	2.65	56563	1085.35	1.95	55735.64
1999-00	2094.79	3.35	62557	1073.9	1.60	67161.97
2000-01	2049.49	2.87	71465	1776.15	2.38	74677.45
2001-02	1802.40	2.28	79015	1979.23	2.49	79610.70
2002-03	2194.09	2.09	104887	2221.14	2.70	82249.20
2003-04	2351.89	1.97	119264	2016.3	2.24	90089.00
2004-05	2230.31	1.62	136842	2387.52	2.47	96839.00
2005-06	2579.51	1.68	153785	2177.2	2.00	108637.00
2006-07	3863.69	2.20	175141	2403.22	1.89	127102.30
2007-08	3850.47	1.90	202783	N.A.	N.A.	152245.00
2008-09	4331.07	1.87	231999	2820.25	1.62	174039.00
2009-10	4634.32	1.99	232381	3289.12	1.67	197499.81
2010-11	5277.92	1.90	276997	3870.69	1.71	226204.07
2011-12	7724.04	2.52	306173	4424.15	1.71	259223.00
2012-13	8006.26	2.04	391293	5145.97	1.74	296007.00
2013-14	8835.43	2.05	430211	6144.27	2.09	294517.00
2014-15	10146.19	2.18	465073	8070.46	2.30	349825.74**BS
2015-16	11454.06	2.00	570530	8787.98	2.20	398000.00***AE

*Source: Compiled from various Annual Budget Reports and Documents of Kerala and Punjab Governments for 1991 to 2015.*

*Note: \*BE-Budget Estimate Data. \*\*BS- Budget Speech data, \*\*\*AE-Advance Estimate*



**Fig 1: Showing financial allocations to school education as a percentage share of SDP of Punjab and Kerala.**

The global recession, which has also effected the Indian economy as well, by slowing down the growth rate of Indian economy and resulting in squeeze in financial resources. This situation has created a situation of financial crunch on the part of Indian state, which has also been reflected in the form of decline in financial allocation to education in general and school education in Kerala is not exception to it.

The upward swing in financial allocation was noticed in 2011-12, which seems to be a result of two contemporary phenomenon, which took place during this period. First, the increase in financial flow from Centre after implementation of RTE Act, 2009. Secondly, the revival of world and Indian economy, which increased the financial liquidity in the nation. But on the other side, Punjab was not able to intervene effectively, efficiently and adequately in the area of school education in terms of financial allocations during the period of pre-reforms era, which resulted in devastated school education attainment index of the state.

It was clear from the figure 1 that state was not able to achieve the higher position in financial allocations to school education than Kerala; except the period of four years for 2002-06, when Punjab had allocated higher share of its SDP than Kerala. There was an upward swing in the financial allocations to school education in terms of percentage share of SDP after 2009 and onwards. This might be due to the implementation of RTE Act, 2009 in April, 2010 in India which became the source of increase in the financial flow from Centre government to school education under centrally sponsored schemes as a constitutional obligations of the nation to provide free and compulsory education as a Fundamental Right to every child of specific age. In the year 2014-15 and 2015-16, Punjab has allocated a higher total amount to school education than Kerala, but state has not accorded the priority to elementary education in its allocation policy.

This lacuna in the financial allocation policy is reflected in the educational attainments of the State. Punjab's position on the basis of literacy marks (21<sup>st</sup>) indicates that its financial allocations to school education as a percentage share of SDP are inadequate. To be an educationally advanced state of India, Punjab should allocate more than 15% percent of its SDP to school education. State should work to develop efficient educational and financial allocation system for better utilization of allocated sources.

### SUMMING UP:

- The inter-state comparison shows that Punjab's allocations to school education were always less than Kerala during the post-reforms period. Furthermore, the analysis of the data reveals that during the first decade of economic reforms i.e. 1991-2000, Punjab's allocation to school education was half of Kerala's allocation to school education.
- Punjab has also been found to spend 2.88 per cent of the SDP on education. However, this percentage is really less, as there are clear-cut recommendations by various commissions and committees that the investment on education should reach 6 per cent of the national GDP as well as 15-18% of the State SGDP.
- The findings of the study also reveal that the allocation of finance to school education has been skewed towards secondary level of school education, which leads to neglect of elementary level of school education in terms of financial allocation, whereas Kerala accord priority to elementary education as a share of revenue expenditure in comparison to secondary education.
- The perusal of the data reveals that Kerala had allocated nearly double percentage share of its SDP to school education from its establishment to first decade of Economic-Reforms(1991-2000) period as compare to Punjab. This has created a momentum in the field of educational development of Kerala state. This huge share of SDP allocations to school education by Kerala upto 1999-2000, resulted in establishing the lead of the state in the educational attainments among the Indian states. But on the other side, Punjab was not able to achieve the higher position in financial allocations as a share of its SDP to school education than Kerala; except the period of four years for 2002-06. This situation resulted in inadequate financial allocations and poor educational attainment in the school education of the Punjab.
- The study has also revealed that on the one hand, demand for schooling has increased at a very fast rate with the increase of school enrolment in the state in recent years, on the other hand, financial allocations have rather decreased. It has created a situation of financial crunch for school education.
- The adoption of neo-liberal policies by the government of India in the last decade of the twentieth century has ushered in an era of reduction of expenditure and subsidies to the social sector in general and the school education sector in particular which has led to the deterioration of the quality of school education. Further, the effect of economic reforms appears to be in the form of a squeeze in the financial allocation out of SDP share to different levels of school education in Punjab during the post-reforms period.

### TAKEAWAYS:

After drawing the already stated conclusions of the study, which reflect that all is not well with the financing of school education in the state of Punjab, the investigator suggested that the educational planner should:

- Punjab should accord priority in financial allocation to school education.
- Punjab has to invest 15-18% of the State SGDP to establish a lead in school education.

- Punjab has not accorded priority to education in general and school education in specific in its Five-Year Plans allocation.
- The findings of the study also reveal that the allocation of finance to school education has been skewed towards secondary level of school education, which leads to neglect of elementary level of school education in terms of financial allocation. Punjab need to accord priority to elementary level of school education in financial allocation to school education
- The perusal of the data reveals that Kerala had allocated nearly double percentage share of its SDP to school education from its establishment to first decade of Economic-Reforms(1991-2000) period, as compared to Punjab. This situation resulted in inadequate financial allocations and poor educational attainment in the school education of the Punjab.To create momentum in the field of educational development state should allocate huge share of SDP allocations to school education.
- The study has also revealed that on the one hand, demand for schooling has increased at a very fast rate with the increase of school enrolment in the state in recent years, on the other hand, financial allocations have rather decreased. It has created a situation of financial crunch for school education, this must be dealt with priority.
- The adoption of neo-liberal policies by the government of India, the effect of economic reforms appears to be in the form of a squeeze in the financial allocation out of the SDP share to different levels of school education in Punjab, but it is need of the hour to neutralise it with allocation of big chunk of finance to school Education.

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