



Primary Education in Japan and India: Its Problems in 21st Century

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ABSTRACT

Educational problems of a country reflect and focus themselves on the human development of the children and young people who live there. Children and young people in Japan and India have many problems in the course of their growth which reflect the present state of economic and social conditions of Japan and India. In both countries so called bullying in schools, where some pupils or students, in groups, often use their strength to hurt weaker ones or to make them afraid. Home violence, school violence and the rejection of schooling are another. Making many strict regulations and sometimes having recourse to force, teachers try to govern the behavior of the students. Those restraints are likely to result in ill feeling toward the school and teachers and increase educational problems. In this article I have investigated the various problems and causes of primary education in Japan and India. The main objective in this paper is to study problems appear in primary education in Japan and India. This paper focuses on various problems in schooling in Japan with respect of others developed and underdeveloped countries.

Keywords: Educational problems, schooling, Japan, children, economic and social conditions

Elementary education in Japan is infested with many psychological and social problems. Among the problems pointed out were excessive uniformity and strengthened administration leading to an excessive degree of control over children's behavior. The growing seriousness of the problems was frequently alluded to in the media. These include ARE (violence) KIRE (angry outbursts), IJIME (bullying), FUTOKO (refusal or fear of schools attendance caused by social anxiety), unhealthy student-teacher relationships, and an unnatural aura of passivity in the classroom. These problems are of general nature and are common to all the Prefectures in variant degrees of depth and nature.

Homeroom teachers and teachers on student guidance committees have been responsible for addressing the problems, such as *school refusal syndrome*, *bullying*, and *juvenile delinquency*. Concerned with the increasing

number of school related problems, since 1995 the Ministry of Education had deployed professional school counselors to schools to consult with students, parents, and teachers. The researcher has attempted to present current school-related problems and discussed how schools are solving these problems in cooperation with parents, counselors, volunteers, and law enforcement. The main causes leading to wastage and stagnation in Japanese elementary education are: (1) School Refusal Syndrome, (2) Bullying (Ijime).

School Refusal Syndrome

School refusal syndrome is a phenomenon where students do not go to school or cannot go to school, despite a desire to go to school, due to some psychological, emotional, physical and social factor, and environment, with the exception of illness or economic factors. Since 1980s, the number of students with school refusal syndrome has

been increasingly rapidly, and school refusal syndrome has become a nationwide school problem. Until 1990 'Long Absentees' were those pupils who were absent from school for total of 50 days or more in the school year. However, since 1991, the MOE has counted those who were absent from school for 30 days or more in terms of school refusal syndrome. These students are called 'the students of non-attendance at school'.

Table 1: Showing data regarding number of Long Absentees in elementary Schools in Japan 2011

Year	Elementary Schools	Total
1960	79818	155684
1970	31206	61921
1980	24660	57430
1990	25491	94639
2000	78044	229062
2010	52594	182442
2011	54340	181781

The above table reveals that the number of students of elementary school with school refusal syndrome in the 2000-2001 school year was the second highest since the first records were kept in 1960. Approximately 155684 children, including 79818 elementary school students were out of school for at least 50 days in 1960. However, the study also revealed that, in the 2010-11 school year, the number of students with school refusal syndrome decreased from 182442 to 181781 of 2009 -10 school year.

Table 2: Showing data regarding Reasons for no. of Long Absentees in 2011

Reasons	Elementary Schools	Total
Disease	19595	40601
Economic	47	123
School Non-attendance	22622	117517
Others	12076	23540

There are two types of students having school refusal syndrome (1) those who cannot go to school because of emotional or neurotic problems, (2) those who do not intend to go to school because of truancy. Truants deliberately skip school to spend time with their friends. They tend to be low-achievers, act rebelliously toward

teachers, be late for school, ditch classes, and have family problems.

Table 3: Showing data regarding Types of school refusal in Elementary Schools

Sl. No.	Types of school refusal	Elementary School
1	Problems in school	5.3%
2	Delinquency	0.7%
3	Not feeling like going, apathy	17.9%
4	Emotional Disturbance	32.8%
5	No intention of going	3.4%
6	Several reasons	30.7%
7	Others	9.2%

Many students with schools refusal syndrome want to go to school and think that they should go to school, but cannot because of emotional disturbance, anxiety, or some other neurotic problem.

School refusal syndrome frequently means the type of behavior of the students as mentioned in Table 4 not the truant. These children usually stay at home and do not like to meet people. Many of the students with school syndrome have sleep disorders and abnormal hormone secretion. To all appearances, they are ordinary children with average or above average school performance. However, they tend to be over sensitive, anxious, serious, perfectionist, selfish, timid, and anti-social. Their parents, specially their mothers, are likely to be overprotective and demanding.

Table 4: Showing data regarding Direct Causes of Schools Refusal at Elementary Schools in Japan

Sl. No.	Causes of school Refusal	Elementary School
1	Friends (bullying, quarrels)	10.8%
2	Teachers (punishment, scolding)	2.2%
3	Poor academic performance	3.2%
4	Extracurricular clubs	0.2%
5	School rules	0.4%
7	New schools, new classes, transfer	2.9%
8	Change of home life (father's transfer)	8.2%

9	Parents (scolding, rebellion)	16.5%
10	Family problems (quarrels between parents)	4.2%
11	Illness	7.3%
12	Other reasons related to themselves (extreme anxiety and stress)	29.3%
13	Others	8.2%
14	Unclear	6.6%

The major causes can be school related, family and home problems, and the students' own physical and emotional health. However, the main cause of school refusal syndrome is problems with peers, especially bullying. Poor academic performance accounts for school refusal syndrome, many of whom are also troubled students. Family problem, such as divorce, poor relationships with parents, can also cause school refusal syndrome. More than one fourth of the cases of school refusal syndrome are linked to the psychoneurotic problems, such as emotional disturbance, extreme anxiety, and stress. Many more students drag themselves to school with the burden of anxiety and tension, and exhibit the symptoms of school refusal syndrome.

Bullying (IJIME)

The Ministry of Education defines bullying as a physical or psychological attack against weaker one, which brings deep suffering to the victim. Ijime²¹ or bullying is also seen as a disturbing feature of Japanese school life. Curiously, explanations of bullying in Japan often dwell on the personalities of the bullied rather than the bullies themselves because in a country where uniformity and conformity are highly valued, students that are slow, quiet or secretive stand out from the group and appear to become victims of their own marginality. The Japanese word for bullying, Ijime is defined by Morita as: "type of aggressive behavior by which someone who holds a dominant position in a group-interaction process, by intentional or collective acts, causes mental and physical suffering to another inside a group."

As this definition clearly indicates, the most outstanding characteristic of Ijime is that it is mostly group bullying. Group bullying often involves the whole class, and is

typically supported by a four-layered structure of victim, bullies, spectators, and bystanders. The group dynamics function is the key to exacerbating bullying. It has been found that the more frequent the bullying is, the longer it trends to last and that the more persistent the bullying is, the larger the number of students involved. Although bullying that involves the whole class is not unique to Japanese schools, the fact that it is one of the most common forms of bullying in Japan is noteworthy. It is also notable that in Japan classroom is main venue of peer victimization, where some 75% of bullying among school occurs. It is therefore, uncommon for the bully to belong a higher grade than the victim.

Table 5: Showing data regarding Type of Bullying in Japan

Sl. No.	Type of bullying	Elementary Schools
1	Verbal insults	16.3%
2	Being ridiculed	30.1%
3	Having belongings hidden	8.1%
4	Being ostracized	19.1%
5	Being ignored by a group	5.7%
6	Physical violence	13.7%
7	Blackmails	1.4%
8	Forced intrusive friendliness	1.3%
9	Others	4.3%

When the group dynamics does not involve the whole class, the victimization often occurs within a small group of close friends. In a situation where every student in the class belongs to a small circle of friends, to be bullied within the group creates a really difficult situation. For fear of being isolated in the class, the victim clings to the group despite being bullied, trapping him or her into victimization. This form of bullying is quite different from the one often seen outside Japan, which involves perpetrators who are not in the victim's friendship circle. At the same time, bullying in the schools in Japan often involves ordinary and good students both as victim and bully. Ijime can be very violent, and can involve threat and extortion. Bullying, on the other hand, can be psychological as well as physical, indirect as well direct, relational as well as verbal.

Problems of Primary Education in India

The problems of primary education in India may be explained in the areas of Wastage and Stagnation.

Wastage at the Primary Stage in India

Wastage means drop-out of pupils or leaving the schools before completing the primary course. Despite the level of expansion of education, vast ground is yet to be covered for fulfilling the Constitutional mandate of UEE. Drop-out rates are significant; retention of children is low; wastage is considerable.

Primary education in the country lacks a methodological approach. There is a dearth of suitable schools buildings, trained teachers, essential equipments, libraries and necessary amenities. This lack of bare necessities at primary stage leads the students to lose interest in their education. They, therefore, leave primary education unfinished. It is also difficult for the teachers to set-up efforts aimed at the mental, physical and moral development of the personality of their students in the absence of basic things necessary for primary education.

A huge population in India is still illiterate. These illiterate people do not understand the worth of education. When the parents are illiterate and the primary education is not capable of enabling the children to earn money, the natural consequence is that the guardians soon make their children leave the schools and join some work or trade to earn wages.

Lack of proper planning and good administration has also adversely affected the development and quality of primary education. There has been an emphasis on the expansion of primary education without equal emphasis on the number of teachers and supervisory administrative personnel, equipment and buildings. The number of students has increased. However, the strength of teachers has not increased in proper proportion. Similarly, the strength of inspecting staff and administrative officers has also not increased. Due to this inadequacy, the teachers-students ratio has gone up and teachers find themselves unable to pay personal attention to each student. All these help to increase waste of funds and deepen stagnation in the primary education.

Poverty of the people in India is the most dominating factor responsible for wastage in the sphere of primary education. Most of the guardians are so poor that they are in great difficulty to manage two meals a day for their families. It is too much to expect from guardians in such condition to arrange books, note books etc. for their children. They find it easy to stop the children's education and put them into some trade to earn money. In this way, a large percentage of promising children become the victims of poverty and are deprived of even full primary education.

Many of the primary schools have yet not been under the umbrella of newly patterned basic schools. They still teach the old curriculum which is not interesting to children. The children find it monotonous. Gradually boredom creates in them a desire to leave the school.

India has yet not been able to give up conservative practices and adopt a more liberal and progressive attitude. Old traditions mainly still govern the Indian social life. The old traditions like child marriage, untouchability, secondary position of women folk, unfavourable co-education etc. are still in vogue. This results in wastage. People do not favour girl's education because they consider it a waste so far as money earning is concerned. Marriage of boys and girls give a severe jolt to education because most of the students give up studies as soon as they are married.

Stagnation at the Primary Stage

Stagnation means failure to complete the prescribed course within the prescribed time. It also means failure of students in the class for once or for a number of times. This stagnation is responsible for waste in primary education both directly and indirectly. Some of the main causes leading to stagnation in Indian education are as follows:

For primary classes there are as many as five subjects including arithmetic and science which are apparently dry subjects for children belonging to tender age group of six to eleven years. This leads to failure of many students in the class.

Lack of any definite rule relating to admission in primary classes is a factor responsible for stagnation.

Absence of any age restriction allows any child of any age to get admission to any class he desires for. The result is that children of different age groups and mental caliber are found in a class and their physical and mental development does not take place in a balanced manner. Many students, therefore, fail in their classes, thus causing stagnation.

A child joining a school finds an atmosphere there, which is quite different from the atmosphere prevailing in his home. He, therefore, faces a difficult adjustment problem. Many children who fail to adjust themselves in the environment develop an anti-social out-look and turn into juvenile delinquency. This may lead stagnation.

Physical weakness caused by unhealthy environment, malnutrition or diseases is also a cause of stagnation, because physically under-developed children cannot study hard to cover their courses. Their memory gets weak and they fail in their examinations. Bad social customs like early marriages also prove a cause for stagnation. Married boys and girls start enjoying their married life, thus neglecting their studies.

In primary schools the number of teachers is too small. In many schools there is only one teacher who cannot do justice to various subjects. The result is that it is very difficult for the children to complete their courses. Besides, the shortage of teaching and reading material, in sanitary conditions of school building and unhealthy environment play havoc with children's studies causing stagnation.

The present system of examination is defective in as much as it does not take into account the work done and labour put in by the student throughout the year. It tries to evaluate the child's worth within a few hours and if for any reason the child is unable to answer a particular question satisfactorily his entire year's labour is lost. This outdated defective examination system causes stagnation.

CONCLUSION

Primary education is essentially directed towards the modification of human behavior and bringing about desirable changes to individuals. It is not merely the teaching about the shapes of alphabets and numbers

and later on literature and theories, but a training of pupils for a perfect operation of their minds and bodies and attaining true knowledge. It is key factor in the development of human potentials. Every country gives due importance to her education system through which all types of challenges are possible to be forced. It is possible to reach all the people with the benefits of economic and technical developments through well-planned and well-implemented system of education.

In the case of India, there are multi-faceted problems in education system regarding objectives, curriculum, teaching approach, infrastructure budget, etc. We do not have a uniform pattern of education for different levels of education in our country. Even within the same state these differences are very prominent, which raise the questions of effectiveness in education especially at primary levels.

However, Japan has already introduced a strong unified educational system and the progress is highly satisfactory. In Japan, attendance of children in the primary schools is nearly cent percent. The curriculum was modernized, educational methods have been changed, and school accommodations were renovated for the primary schools in Japan. The governmental machinery for educational affair is centered in the Ministry of Education which plans and administers the whole education system of Japan. The literacy rates of Japan and India differ largely. Since 2001 Japan has achieved more or less 100% literacy rate whereas in India it was 74.04% in 2011. In many ways, there are sharp differences in the systems of education between Japan and India. But universalization of elementary education is very much needed to achieve the goal of social development of our country.

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