Chapter - 1
Introduction

CHAPTER –I

INTRODUCTION

1.1 INTRODUCTION

> Education is freedom.
> From the time of my birth,
> Learning new skills, new sounds, new images.
> Education is freedom.
> Learning in my family,
> Learning with my friends,
> Learning about birds, trees and many more interesting things.
> Education is freedom,
> Please, teacher, make it fun,
> Make it relate to me,
> Help me to learn at my own pace,
> Help me to learn new skills,
> Help me to learn values for life,
> Help me to enjoy reading,
> Help me to discover,
> To get excited about new knowledge,
> And if it helps me to get a job that will be good, too.
> But most of all
> Help me to be free.[1]
>
> *-Sarojini Vittachi*

Education is considered the foundation of the country and every individual has a fundamental right to quality education. Education is considered as the vehicle of change. Education, if looked at beyond its conventional boundaries, forms the very essence of all our actions. What we do is what we know and have learned, either through instructions or through observation and assimilation. When we are not making an effort to learn, our mind is always processing new information or trying to analyze the similarities as well as the tiny nuances within the context which makes the topic stand out or seem different. The importance of education in society is

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[1] Vittachi, Raghavan, Raj, 2007) Alternative school in India ,New Delhi

indispensable and cohering, which is why society and knowledge cannot be ever separated into two distinct entities. Receiving a good education helps empower us.

Education is as old as civilizations are. Education holds a central position in every civilization. It is considered as the means of growth and development. It lays the foundation of every country. Citing the importance of education, it has become an important aspect of every plan in modern societies. Education fulfils the aspiration of society.

India has been the hub of education since ages. India has a history of worlds some of the best universities such as Nalanda vishwavidhyalaya, Takshila etc. It is well known for grandeurs of its world famous universities in ancient times. The ancient India was well known for its education but the education was not for all. Since than one section of society was neglected in the field of education. Earlier being deprived from education was not a problem because at that time economics was driven by skills that were inherited from generation to generation. But 19th century i.e. the British era has created a new picture of Indian education system. Various faulty policies like downward filtration has distorted the Indian education system.

After independence, leaders saw education as the vehicle for change and made education s its one of the prime agenda. Several policies were introduced to strengthen the education system in India.

A common school system in India was suggested by **Kothari commission 1964**. The prime objective of common school system is equalization of educational opportunities, various steps were taken by the government in this regard .Despite of many efforts by government and different agencies we are unable to create common school for our future citizen. The education that was supposed to bring equality has widened the gap. Those who can afford are getting best opportunities and doing better and those who can't there social life is degrading .As a society it is our responsibility to provide equal educational opportunities to all children.

"The State shall endeavor to provide, within a period of ten years from the commencement of this Constitution, for free and compulsory education for all children until they complete the age of fourteen years."(**Art.45 DPSP**)

The 86th constitutional amendment act 2002 made education a fundamental right for children in the age group of six to fourteen years, as Right of children for Free and Compulsory education Act,2009.To ensure that children universally – including both boys and girls – will be able to complete a full course of primary education by 2015.(millennium development goals)

Yet there is a huge disparity in the quality of education, between a rich child and a poor child in India. In the same city, a rich child gets the best infrastructure as School, the best Teaching Aids, and many Teachers for 1 class, whereas a poor child gets max 5 rooms as infrastructure, No Teaching aids, and 1 Teacher for many classes. If there is a disparity in the foundation itself, how can we dream of equality in our country?

1.2 CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

Under various schemes of government regarding school education there are many types schools that has opened in the country. There are formal school and informal school. Due to various reasons like population, poverty, geographical barriers etc. there is huge lack of formal schooling in India. As a result of this informal or alternative schools came in to existence. Alternative school is a broad term under which comes a variety of schools. These alternative schools may range from single teacher single classroom to schools without classrooms or schools having no proper structure etc. like *brick cline* or *boat school* in Orissa. There are schools that are different based on their pedagogical approach like *Mirambika* that is based on theory of free progressing school in Delhi.

1.2.1 ALTERNATIVE SCHOOL

An alternative school is an educational establishment with a curriculum and methods that are non-traditional. Such schools offer a wide range of philosophies and teaching methods; some have strong political, scholarly, or philosophical orientations. while others are more *ad hoc* assemblies of teachers and students dissatisfied with some aspect of mainstream or traditional education.

Some schools are based on pedagogical approaches differing from that of the mainstream pedagogy employed in a culture. while other schools are for gifted students, children with special needs. children who have fallen off the track

educationally, children who wish to explore unstructured or less rigid system of learning, etc.

There are many models of alternative schools but the features of promising alternative programs seem to converge more or less on the following characteristics:

- the approach is more individualized;
- integration of children of different socio-economic status and mixed abilities;
- experiential learning which is applicable to life outside school;
- integrated approach to various disciplines;
- instructional staff is certified in their academic field and are creative;
- low student-teacher ratios;
- collective ownership of the institute as teachers, students, support staff, administrators, parents all are involved in decision making;
- An array of non-traditional evaluation methods.

Subject of the present study is one of these types of alternative school. It focuses on providing education free of cost to the economically marginalized section.

1.2.2   THE MUSEUM SCHOOL

The Museum School is an innovative concept aimed at bringing quality education to urban slum children without much investment. Many big cities with a large population of non-school-attending slum children also have many museums, which are subject-focused and house knowledge for those of all ages. The model identifies museums in the city and collaborates with them to make them the school for the children, matches the museum's exhibits and working models with curricula in different classes, and collaborates with colleges conducting Bachelor of Education (B.Ed) courses for B.Ed students to practice teaching.

The children of The Museum School come to the museums (their schools) every day by school bus, just like privileged children do, and are taught by the B.Ed students through the exhibits of the museums according to the curriculum. Thus, the model provides poor children with the best infrastructure already set up by the government (the museums), the best teaching aids (exhibits and working models in the museums), and the best teachers (B.Ed students practicing teaching) and removes the disparity in

quality of education without any further investment. Knowledge comes from a conceptual understanding of the exhibits. Educated girls from the same slums are hired as literacy teachers and are trained on innovative, fast-learning approaches that use naturally available resources.

The model follows a curriculum designed to provide holistic education ranging from behavioral changes to literacy, to academics, physical education, and adolescence education, to vocational skills and entrepreneurship development.

Besides B.Ed students and literacy teachers, citizens and volunteers with different skill sets come to share their skills with the children. While the children are mainstreamed into regular schools or National Open School as per their choice, the objective is to make the employable or self-employable, confident, socially responsible, and independent in society.

(Concept of alternative school and museum school is dealt in detail in separate chapter under the heading 'Alternative schools: rainbow concept'.)

1.3   STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

"Alternative Schools in Practice: Parvarish the Museum School-A Case Study".

In this research work, an effort has been made to analyze the educational process of museum school and its relevance as an alternative school.

1.4   RATIONALE OF THE STUDY

Education is the base for the growth of any country. It is said that you don't need weapons to destroy a country; a poor education system destroys it. Kothari commission recommended common school system for all. Common school system is at providing equal educational opportunity for all. But this is not possible just by depending on government, but as a society we also need to take this responsibility.

In our country there are several reservations for the weaker sections in the field of education. But still we are lacking in providing education opportunity to all. In the same city there are kids having all kind of facilities and kids earning bread for their

survival. This is because they can't afford education. Why can't we provide free education for all?

OASIS foundation is trying to answer this question through the initiative - PARVARISH THE MUSEUM SCHOOL. Here, they provide free and quality education to children living in slum area of a city.

This is a unique idea, as here they are using historical monuments /museum to mould the future of the children. This is a model museum school. The study focuses on the idea, aims, perspective and management of the school. The study focuses on the proper understanding of the model school.

1.5 OBJECTIVS

Objectives of the study are as follows

a) To study the history and development of the school.

b) To understand the administration of the institute.

c) To study the aims and objectives of the school.

d) To understand the pedagogical practices followed by the museum school.

e) To study about the learner and their achievement in the school.

1.6 RESEARCH QUESTIONS

a) What is the rationale behind the development of museum school?

b) What are the aims and objectives of the museum school?

c) Who are the targeted audience of the school?

d) How the pedagogical practices are incorporated with the concept of museum by the school?

e) What are the barriers in expansion of the school?

1.7 OPERATIONAL DEFFINATION OF TERM

1.7.1 Alternative School

The alternative schooling refers to non-traditional public and private educational approaches available by choice to both the parents and students.

The schools set up in un-served habitations (with no schooling facilities within one km) under the Education Guarantee Scheme (EGS) component of the EGS&AIE Scheme to provide education to out of school children are termed as Alternative Schools. EGS schools in the States of Madhya Pradesh, Orissa, Uttar Pradesh; Maavadi in Andhra Pradesh; Multi-grade learning centers in Kerala; Shishu Shiksha Karamsuchi Kendras in West Bengal; Contract schools in Maharashtra; Rajiv Gandhi Swarna Jayanti Pathshalas in Rajasthan are some of the examples of Alternative Schools. (8th all India education survey)

There are various types of alternative schools based on their pedagogy, audience oriented school etc. Present study is focused on the school that is based on museum pedagogy and it is basically for students belonging to urban marginalized class.

1.7.2   Museum School

Museum school means a school that operates through museum and uses museum pedagogy for the purpose of education.

1.7.3   Museum Pedagogy

Museum pedagogy is the process of teaching and learning using museum exhibits.

1.8   DELIMITATION OF THE STUDY

The delimitation and definition of specific terms used is as stated below. Alternative school is a broader term used for various schools different from formal schooling. Researcher in the particular research has used a school that is particularly set up for weaker section of the urban society. It is different from formal schools and other alternative school.

A deeper understanding of this requires a lot of time which was not possible for the researcher to devote. Therefore researcher has taken only two dimensions for study in particular. Particular case study focused on administrative and pedagogical process of the school.

1.9 STRUCTURE OF THE DISSERTATION

The present dissertation is divided in five chapters. The chapter one is *Introduction*. It introduces the research problem. This chapter explains the concept of alternative school and why we need alternative school education. It also contains objectives and statement of the research. The later part of this chapter explains rationale and delimitation of the study.

Second chapter, *Alternative Schools: a Rainbow Concept*, deals with the conceptual understanding of alternative education and museum schools around the world.

Third chapter is *Review of Related Literature* related with the previous researches conducted in this particular area. Since this is an institutional case study researches are not being conducted on the particular school so the researches are related to alternative school in India and out of India.

Fourth chapter is *Methodology*. It explains the methodology followed for research process. It contains a brief description of case study method and tools and the strategies used in this research.

Fifth chapter is a detailed analysis of the school on the basis of Data *collected*.

Sixth chapter of the dissertation is *Summary* and *Conclusion* it contains a brief explanation and conclusion of the research and also mentions scope for further researches in this particular area.