



## Examining in Elementary School: a Comparative Study of Alternative Perspectives from Brazil and India

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Education is the cornerstone of a nation's progress and development. The primary education phase plays a pivotal role in shaping young minds, equipping them with essential skills, and nurturing their intellectual curiosity. However, across the globe, there are discrepancies in educational systems, particularly in developing countries like Brazil and India. This article delves into a comparative study of alternative perspectives on Elementary School in Brazil and India, highlighting the challenges faced by each country. The diverse approaches taken to address these issues. Justifying the choice of the two countries is the fact that one country has the western culture and the other the eastern culture.

They are countries in economic development. Education is an essential part of life and plays a crucial role in shaping the future of individuals, communities and nations. The education system doesn't meet the need of all students. Different students have different needs, and some students need more individual attention. The methodology used is qualitative, it uses the subjective interpretation of textual information formulated with scientific content. It was found that in Brazil, basic education is divided into three stages and in India four.

**Keywords:** Elementary Education, Brazil, India, Social Inequality..



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### 1. INTRODUCTION

As basic education expands, learning inequalities reveal inequalities that once more severely affected enrollment and progression. Learning problems in primary education are barriers for students to enter higher education. For students from lower socioeconomic backgrounds, lower competence puts them at a

disadvantage in following school and career paths. In Brazil, Basic Education is under Law n<sup>o</sup> 9.394/1996. – Law No. 4,024/1961

Education is an essential part of life and plays a crucial role in shaping the future of individuals, communities and nations. However, there is growing concern that the education system does not meet the needs of all students.

There is a significant discrepancy between desired and actual outcomes in basic education and this need to be addressed. This essay explores alternative perspectives on the gap between desired outcomes and actual outcomes in basic education. For example, students with learning disabilities need more specialized attention to thrive in a classroom setting. Additionally, students from disadvantaged backgrounds may need additional resources to be successful.

The educational system has progressed. More students are graduating from high school than ever before, and the achievement gap has narrowed in recent years. The education system is more diverse than ever, and that means students from diverse backgrounds are more likely to succeed. In addition, there has been an increase in the number of students pursuing higher education, which is a positive development.

All of this is just not the wish of many students, parents, teachers, and administrators. It also stipulates the Federal Constitution, but it is still a reality Far from what happens in practice with basic education. The country was divided into three phases and the 1988 Charter also defined the Government's areas of responsibility. Brazil, as one of the largest countries in South America, faces significant challenges in providing quality primary education to its population, (Bruns, & Luque, 2014). One of the primary issues is the stark disparity between urban and rural regions. While urban areas often benefit from better infrastructure and educational resources, rural regions suffer from a lack of access to schools, trained teachers, and modern learning materials.

(<https://harvardpolitics.com/brazil-social-inequality>, 2023).

Another challenge is the socio-economic divide. Low-income families struggle to provide adequate educational opportunities for their children, perpetuating a cycle of poverty and limited opportunities. Moreover, Brazil's vast cultural diversity poses additional hurdles, as there is a need for inclusive education that embraces and respects different cultural background, (Torraco, 2018).

To address these challenges, the Brazilian government has implemented various initiatives,

such as the Bolsa Família program, which provides financial assistance to low-income families, encouraging school attendance. Additionally, there are efforts to improve teacher training and infrastructural development in rural areas. However, despite these efforts, more comprehensive measures are required to bridge the educational gaps effectively, (Sperandio, Rodrigues, Franceschini, & Priore, 2017).

## 2. REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Elementary Education in Brazil is under the Law. In Brazil, Basic Education is under Law nº 9.394/1996. – Law No. 4,024/1961.

When considering basic education as a mandatory level of education in Brazil, one cannot think of science teaching as preparatory teaching aimed at effective learning. Children are not citizens of the future, but they are already citizens today and, in this sense, understanding science is expanding their current possibilities for social participation and allowing them to fully engage in society in the future.

While we have very little discussion and research on science teaching in elementary school, it is worth highlighting a recent recommendation to collaborate and value interactions with innate skills such as "hands on". The purpose of this project is based on the link between experimentation and expressive development for children, both verbal and written, which undoubtedly values the active participation of students and stimulates the emergence of new cognitive skills and abilities, (da Costa Ramos & da Silva Rose 2016).

The importance of practical activities lies in the interaction of students with concrete materials, whether objects, instruments, books, microscopes, etc. Through this engagement, which becomes natural and socialized, relationships are built that will open up possibilities for acquiring new knowledge. This type of activity is used in practical science classes to better grasp the theoretical content in the classroom, creating a dialogue between theory and practice (Bartzik, & Zander, 2016).

### 2.1. Social inequality

Social inequality refers to the unequal distribution of resources and opportunities among different groups in society, such as income,

education, health and employment. It is a phenomenon in which some individuals or groups have more privileges, power and wealth than others, creating disparities in quality of life and opportunities for development. Social inequality can be caused by a variety of factors, such as discrimination, social exclusion, economic, political and cultural institutions, etc. This is a complex issue that affects many societies around the world, and tackling it is an important challenge in building a more just and egalitarian society, (Gohn, 2019).

Social inequalities in schools have an impact on a child's future, as they are more likely to drop out of school or have learning difficulties because of poverty, food, housing, health, unemployment, etc., but it is also through education that increase your chances of breaking the cycle of poverty. The social inequality portrayed in the room sometimes occurs to the extent that it aggravates differences in access and quality of available resources, but this not only leads to poor allocation of income, resources, lack of investment in society, culture, health, education, lack of job opportunities and corruption. As a result of this social inequality, what affects the individual is pain, fear and humiliation, (Norberto, 2023).

Inequalities also reflect the way in which low-quality school provision and socially disadvantaged home environments combine to prevent early acquisition of basic skills and place students from lower socioeconomic backgrounds on a trajectory that leads to poor school performance, with high dropout rates and limited life opportunities. (Silva, 2022).

## 2.2 Brazil and India

This contribution aims to expand the possibilities of comparative work by covering the cases of two countries, both in the Brazilian academic environment and outside it: India and Brazil, two countries that have rarely been studied together. The selection of these cases becomes even more important given the recent tendency to see them, along with the group of emerging powers: BRICS. It is known that, despite recent economic growth, these countries still face the challenge of eliminating serious economic and social inequalities.

Our objective is not to analyze the results of these policies, but the debates that surround them and, more specifically, the arguments against these measures by scholars in Brazil and India. We intend to demonstrate that, in both experiences, the arguments against affirmative actions can be categorized around certain discursive strategies. Although Brazil and India are very different countries in many aspects, the arguments against affirmative action in the public debate have many similarities, mainly on social and educational issues (Feres & Daflon, 2015).

Brazil and India increase interest in the joint strategy, in 2012, Brazil became the seventh largest economy in the world and India ranked 11th. The positions, however, are considered developing countries. There are enormous social and institutional inequalities. This social problem is reflected in the literacy rate coefficient and the corruption perception index, (de Abreu et al., 2015).

## 3. RESEARCH OBJECTIVES

The objectives of the study are. This article delve into a comparative study of alternative perspectives on Elementary School in Brazil and India, highlighting the challenges faced by each country.

## 4. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The type of research in this study is qualitative, as it uses the subjective interpretation of textual information formulated with scientific content. The technical procedures used were consistent with the bibliographic research, as scientific articles scattered in numerous journals were surveyed. This bibliographic study was carried out according to the systematics suggested by Lakatos and Marconi (2012), from the choice of themes, selection of books, articles, manuals and periodicals, to the writing of the texts that constitute the study.

## 4. RESULTS

### 4.1 Results in Brazil

#### 4.1.1 Basic Education in Brazil

Early childhood education in Brazil starts from the nursery: from 0 to 3 years old, it is an obligation of the state and the right of all Brazilians, but it is not a mandatory stage of education. Preschool includes: 4 to 5 years old,

mandatory teaching phase since 2016 according to Constitutional Amendment nº 59/2009. Municipalities (prefectures) are responsible for providing the first phase of the basic cycle.

Initial primary school (1 to 5 years): 6 to 10 years, compulsory education phase. Last years (6th to 9th grade): 11 to 14 years old, compulsory schooling. The municipalities share the responsibility with the States and the Federal District, which leaves Brazil displaced.

In most other countries, there is no such division of labor. The Law of Directives and Fundamentals of Education (Law 9.394/1996) is the most important regulatory framework for this sector in Brazil, stipulating that the municipality will give priority to activities in elementary schools. State schools, with priority for secondary education. In fact, city halls concentrate the highest percentage of enrollments (67.3%) in the first years, while in these final years, admissions are more dispersed (42.9% 41.6% in municipal and state networks), this arrangement is divided, it manifests itself in different ways across countries, which have increased since the mid-1990s. (Menezes et al.,2022).

It is a national reference for systematic curriculum development and school networks in the states, federal district and municipalities, as

well as educational institutions, BNCC teaching recommendations combined with the national basic education policy, will help coordinate other policies and actions at the federal, state and municipal levels, referring to standards for teacher training, assessment, development and delivery of educational content adequate infrastructure for the full development of education.

In this sense, it is expected that the BNCC will contribute to overcoming the fragmentation of educational policy, leading to the strengthening of the cooperation system between the three areas of government and becoming the light and quality of education. Throughout elementary school, the essential learning defined in the BNCC should contribute to students developing the ten generic skills that are demonstrated in the teaching context, (Saviani, 2016).

#### 4.1.2 Structure of Basic Education

Table 1 will present the general competences of basic education in Brazil, with the guidelines for learning and development as well as the field of experiences both in kindergarten, fundamental and secondary education. As a way of contextualizing teaching and the age range.

**Table-1: Basic Education General Skills**

Child education	Elementary School	High school
Learning and development rights		
fields of experiences	Knowledge areas	Knowledge areas
	area-specific skills	area-specific skills
	Curricular components	
	Portuguese language	
	Math	
	Component specific skills	
Babies (0-1st 6m)		
Very young children (1y7m - 3y11m)		
Toddlers (4a-5a11m)		
Learning and development objectives	Early Years	Final Years
	Thematic units	
	knowledge objects	
	Skills	Skills

**Source:** BNCC. Adapted by the authors in 2023.

However, in this article, only Elementary School is being addressed, which covers the ages of 6 to 15 years, and goes from the first to the ninth grade. Table 2 shows the general competences of Elementary Education.

**Table-2: General Elementary School Skills**

ELEMENTARY SCHOOL	Knowledgeable areas	
	Curricular components	
Early Years (1st to 5th year)	Final years (6th to 9th grade)	
Languages	Portuguese language	Portuguese language
	Arts	Arts
	Physical education	Physical education
		English language
Math	Math	Math
Natural Sciences		Natural Sciences
Human Sciences	Geography	Geography
	History	History
	Religious education	Religious education

**Source:** BNCC. Adapted by the authors in 2023

Table 2 shows the mandatory areas of knowledge in Elementary School, emphasizing that English classes are inserted and mandatory from the 6th to the 9th grade.

In table 3 we have the specific competences of Elementary Education. As well as mandatory areas of knowledge.

**Table-3: Specific competences of Elementary Education.**

ELEMENTARY SCHOOL	SKILLS
Knowledge áreas	
Area-specific skills	Each knowledge area builds domain-specific skills to promote development over a nine-year period. These skills
	Interpret the ten competencies expressed in these fields.
Curricular componentes	
In areas with multiple curricular components (languages and humanities), specific competences are also defined for that component (Portuguese, arts, physical education, English Language, Geography and History) will be developed by students throughout their studies.	
Component specific skills	
early years	final years
The specific competences allow the horizontal articulation between the areas, permeating all the curricular components, and also the vertical articulation, that is, the progression between Basic Education – Initial Years and Basic Education – Final Years and Continuity, taking into account their specificity.	
Thematic units	Knowledge objectives
To ensure the development of specific skills, each component of the course provides a set of skills. These skills are related to different objects of knowledge - here understood as content, concepts and processes - among which, arranged by thematic area.	



Taking into account the multiple possibilities of organizing school knowledge, the thematic units define the arrangement of objects of knowledge throughout basic education in order to adapt to the specificities of the different curricular components.	
Each thematic unit considers more or less the scope of knowledge objects, as each knowledge object is associated with a variable number of skills.	

**Source:** BNCC. Adapted by the authors in 2023

Table 3 shows the areas of knowledge as well as their curricular skills and competences, specific competences for initial and final years, thematic units and knowledge objectives and minimum necessary skills.

As a way of exemplifying, a thematic unit will be demonstrated, which is science in the first year, which covers children aged 6 years. Table 4 will present the subject matter of knowledge and required skills.

**Table-4: Thematic unit and object of knowledge**

<b>SCIENCES - 1st YEAR</b>		
Thematic units	knowledge objects	<b>Skills</b>
life and evolution	Human body	Respect for diversity
	Locate, indicate and graphically represent (drawing) the parts of the human body and explain their function.	
	Discuss why physical hygiene practices (washing hands before meals, brushing teeth, cleaning eyes, nose and ears, etc.) are necessary to maintain good health.	
	Compare physical characteristics between colleagues, recognize diversity and value, welcome and respect differences.	

**Source:** BNCC. Adapted by the authors in 2023

Skills express basic knowledge that must be learned in different school environments. For this purpose, they were briefly described in Table 04.

It will be here only as a way of comparing what the BNCC says and the point of view of a parent, a 6-year-old child and a teacher.

**Table-5: Comparing what the BNCC says and in the view of those involved**

<b>SCIENCES - 1st YEAR</b>		
<b>Thematic units</b>	<b>knowledge objects</b>	<b>Skills</b>
life and evolution	Human body	Respect for diversity
	Locate, indicate and graphically represent (drawing) the parts of the human body and explain their function.	
	Discuss why physical hygiene practices (washing hands before meals, brushing teeth, cleaning eyes, nose and ears, etc.) are necessary to maintain good health.	
	Comparing physical characteristics between colleagues,	

	recognizing diversity and value, welcoming and respecting differences.	
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### **In the perception of parents, teachers and students**

#### ➤ **In the perception of a 6-year-old student at a private school:**

When a student from a private school was asked what she was learning about the human body, she replied:

"I don't know anything".

When asked how are the classmates and what games are played at school?

She replied:

"She doesn't have friends and that the children don't play with her, and there's a boy who screams when she talks."

She concluded by saying:

"Yes, but the teacher does nothing."

#### ➤ **In the view of a public school teacher:**

When asked how the 1st year Science classes are conducted, the teacher reported:

"There are classes on the environment, soil, plants, the human body. When they are going to explain the human body to the students, each student lies on the floor on top of paper and the body is drawn by another colleague. Then it is exposed in the classroom, where each part of the human body is labeled, and the functions of each part are explained.

Students listen to children's songs that talk about the head, arms, and legs. They also compare the height of each other, so they can get an idea of weight and height.

When they talk about the environment, they learn the importance of taking care of their surroundings. They make cardboard boxes to separate garbage in the classroom, and it's explained how to separate waste properly. They also learn how improperly disposed garbage dirties the river water and harms aquatic animals. All of this is done in a playful manner."

#### ➤ **In the view of a private school mother:**

When asked whether they teach about the environment and human body, and how children learn, she said:

"Yes, they learn and tasks that parents need to participate in come home every day. I think it's very important because they also learn English from the first year, which helps a lot and is very important."

**Source:** BNCC. Adapted by the authors in 2023

Table 5 contains a thematic unit, the necessary evolution, objectives and skills according to the BNCC. And, a parallel in the vision and application of the same skills in the perception of a student, a teacher and a parent. This information was observed in June 2023.

In Brazil, according to the Continuous National Household Sample Survey (Continuous PNAD) 2019, the illiteracy rate of people aged 15 or over was estimated at 6.6% (11 million illiterates). The 2018 rate had been 6.8%. This reduction of 0.2 percentage points in the number of illiterates in the country corresponds to a drop of just over 200,000 illiterate people in 2019, (IBGE, 2019). Official IBGE 2022 data is not yet available.

As a way of understanding the educational difference, we will pass on information from India.

#### 4.2. Results in India

India, as one of the world's most populous countries, faces its own set of challenges in providing primary education to its vast population. The sheer scale of the country makes it challenging to ensure uniform access to education across all regions. Remote and economically backward areas often lack proper schools and facilities, leading to low attendance rates and high dropout rates.

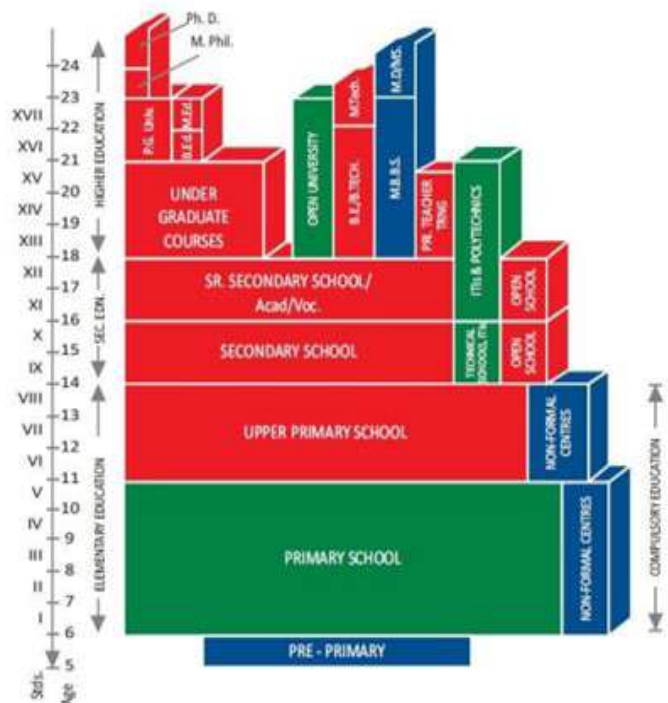
The Indian education system was established in 1854, still under the control of the British Empire, to train local administrators. After India's independence in 1947, compulsory primary education for children aged 6 to 14 was written into the Constitution. However, universal primary education remains a challenge to this day. One of the main difficulties faced in the area of education is the linguistic diversity that exists within the country.

At least 22 languages coexist and another 1,576 minor expressions are used locally. India is the one who has the largest and most population society in the world and also the most socially dispersed. In a country with over a hundred languages and hundreds of dialects, even the most widely spoken languages are spoken by less than a third of the population (Morche, 2013). India also faces issues related to the quality of education. Rote learning and an exam-centric approach prevail in many institutions, stifling creativity and critical thinking among students. Furthermore,

issues like teacher absenteeism and inadequate training hinder the effective delivery of Education

The Ministry of Human Resource Development, Government of India, has drafted a detailed and comprehensive National Education Policy 2020 (NEP2020). Prior to independence, education in India was completely under the control of the "Masters of the British Empire". Obviously, Macaulay's education policy is not to provide Indians with high-quality education, but to cultivate "babs"; clerks and bureaucrats only serve the master. After independence, some changes have taken place in society, policies have been formulated, and certain reforms have been carried out, but they still have not achieved results. In 2015, the Indian government revised the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and gave corresponding impetus, (Panditrao, & Panditrao, 2020). The Figure 01 shows the structure of the education system in India.

**Figure-1: Diagram of India's education system**



Source: University Grants Commission, 2012.

Indian basic education is divided into four stages: The first called "lower primary" comprises the first five years of schooling for children aged 6 to 10. The "upper primary" or "middle" comprises the 6th to 8th grades and caters for the 11 to 14 age group. The third stage, no longer compulsory,



is the first level of secondary school for 15 and 16 year olds and is made up of the 9th and 10th grades. The last stage, called "senior secondary school", is aimed at 16 and 17 year olds and is made up of the last two years of basic education, (Bardhan, & Mookherjee, (2006); (Morche,2013).

There are relevant factors that make primary education a differentiating factor in India, because it follows some fundamental principles:

- Recognize, identify and promote unique products, each student's ability.
- This should be achieved by raising awareness of mutual support between teachers and parents Full development of students in both academic and non-academic areas.
- Basic literacy and numeracy skills acquired by all third grade students are a top priority.
- Flexibility in the learning process, students have the opportunity to choose their learning.
- Tracks and plans, choose your life path according to your talents and interests.
- No strict division between art and science, between curriculum and extracurricular activities.
- Multidisciplinary and holistic education in all areas. Sciences, Social Sciences, Arts, Humanities and Physical Education.
- Ensuring the unity and integrity of all knowledge.
- Emphasis on conceptual understanding rather than memorization, and studying only for the test, (Panditrao, & Panditrao, 2020)

The education systems in Brazil and India are different. Brazil has a more centralized education system, with the federal government responsible for defining education policies. India, on the other hand, has a more decentralized education system, with each state responsible for defining its education policies. Both countries have the same challenges in providing education to rural and remote areas, with limited access to education in some areas. While Brazil and India have distinct challenges in their primary education systems, there are also commonalities in their efforts to address these issues. Both countries recognize the importance of investing in education

and have taken steps to improve accessibility and inclusivity, (Stromquist, & Monkman 2014).

In recent years, both nations have embraced technology in education, attempting to bridge the digital divide and enhance learning opportunities for children. Online platforms and e-learning tools are being leveraged to reach students in remote areas and make learning more engaging, (Hillier,2020).

Furthermore, both Brazil and India have emphasized the role of teacher training and professional development. Recognizing the pivotal role of teachers in shaping young minds, these countries have sought to enhance the capabilities of educators through various training programs and workshops, (Espino-Díaz, et al., 2020).

## 5. LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY AND SCOPE FOR FURTHER RESEARCH

The gap between desired and actual outcomes in basic education is a complex issue that requires a multifaceted approach.

## 6. FINAL CONSIDERATIONS

It is concluded that elementary schooling that is appropriate to the need of each region is a differentiating factor in learning. The aim of this article was to investigate One comparative study of alternative perspectives on primary education in Brazil and India, highlighting the challenges faced by each country and the different approaches adopted to address these issues. Indian basic education is divided into four stages: The first called "lower primary" The "upper primary" or "middle". The third stage, which is no longer compulsory, is the first level of secondary education for 15 and 16 year olds and is made up of the 9th and 10th grades. The last stage, called "senior secondary school", is aimed at 16 and 17 year olds and is made up of the last two years of basic education. In Brazil, basic education is made up of three stages: basic, primary and secondary.

The methodology used was qualitative. It uses the subjective interpretation of textual information formulated with scientific content. It was found that in Brazil basic education is divided into three stages and in India four. Examining the discrepancies in primary education between Brazil and India provides valuable insights into the challenges faced by developing nations. While they have their unique set of issues, both countries are

committed to improving their primary education systems and investing in the future of their children. The focus on accessibility, inclusivity, and teacher training indicates a shared commitment to ensuring quality education for all.

As Brazil and India continue their efforts to strengthen primary education, it is essential for policymakers, educators, and stakeholders to collaborate, exchange ideas, and learn from each other's experiences. By leveraging alternative perspectives and innovative approaches, these nations can create more robust and effective educational systems that empower their youth to lead the way toward a brighter future.

The education system faces challenges beyond its control. The education system is affected by broader economic trends, and this can affect the availability of educational resources. In addition, the education system is affected by social problems outside the schools, such as poverty and crime. Finally, the education system is affected by political decisions, which can affect funding and policy.

In conclusion, the gap between desired and actual outcomes in basic education is a complex issue that requires a multifaceted approach. While there have been improvements in the education system, there is still much work to be done to ensure that all students have access to a quality education. Reforms such as more investment in education, more curriculum flexibility and more focus on individualized learning are needed to close the gap between desired and actual outcomes in basic education. The current technology and connectivity present in our society makes access to education happen quickly and easily. However, for basic education, this can reflect negatively if it is not used in an educational way.

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