

RURAL EDUCATION

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Abstract

Education is the doorway to the wider world and an explosion on rural infrastructure is incomplete without an assessment of the extent to which we have been able to open this door for the children of rural India. We provide, in this chapter, an overview of the education system. The real India lives in villages, this saying is as true today as it was when the country got independence almost 70 years back. As more than half of the population of the country lives in villages, rural development is an eminent factor for the development of our economy. The crucial motivating factor for the development of the economy in today's time is Education. Like in the body of human being liver is responsible for the proper functioning of the body, in the same way education acts like a backbone for the economy. To explore this significant role of education in India especially in rural India, author tries to explain the failures and problems being faced by the rural education. It also addresses the various initiatives taken by the government. There are broadly four stages of school education in India: namely, primary, upper primary, secondary education (SE), and higher secondary education (HSE). The combination of primary and upper primary schooling is termed elementary education. It is important to note that there is also a programme of pre-school education (for three to six year olds), early childhood care and education (ECCE).

Keywords: Development, Education System, Elementary Education.

Introduction

Rural development in fact improves both economy as well as social status of rural people. Indian government is bound to accelerate the process of developing branches of the Indian education system and its expansion. The present system of education in India was introduced by the British in the 20th century. The system so given has a western style and content, ignoring traditional structures and so has declined. After independence, the Central Government has taken the responsibility of technical and higher education. The central government through the Ministry of Human Resource Development's Department of education and the governments at the states formulated the education policy and planning.

Considering the process & structure of rural education in India, the following issues were highlighted step by step:-

1. Overview of the education system in India.
2. Progress in elementary education and literacy.
3. Post education progress.
4. Infrastructure requires to provide effective rural education.

An overview of the Education system

There is no doubt in terms of providing the benefits of education to the whole population the country could have done better to provide benefit of education particularly in respect of Scheduled Caste (SC), Scheduled Tribe (ST), minority groups, the disabled, and girls. There has been considerable variation in the progress made in education across Indian states, 'with some states lagging behind and others surging ahead' (Clarke and Jha 2006).

Progress in Elementary Education and Literacy

The literacy campaigns are also successfully run by the state govt. or district administration. According to the national Sample Survey (NSS) estimates, literacy rate has increased by about 13.17 percentage points in a period of ten years, from 52.21 in 1991 to 64.4 percent in 2001.

Progress in post Elementary Education

While the growth of elementary educational institutions has been most impressive, there has also been considerable growth in other, higher, recognized education institutions. This growth in all recognized education institutions in India is having 23.8 million student enrolments by 2001-02

As per the available data the period 1950-51 to 2000-01 the number of primary schools in the country increased by a factor of three, while the upper primary schools and secondary schools increased at an even faster rate: by sixteen and eighteen times respectively. The number of colleges for general education and vocational education and training also increased rapidly: by about twenty- four and twelve times respectively. The number of universities in India increased by ten times during the period. The growth in enrolment has been equally impressive. In 1950-51 the total student enrolment at all levels of education was 23.8 million and by 2001-02 this had grown to 189.2 million- a massive increase. While this progress in enrolments is impressive, the graph in participation at higher level of education in rural area indicates the significant gaps and the significant gender disparities that exist at all levels. Currently an estimated 95 percent of the rural population living in 826,000 habitations has a primary school within 1 km and about 85 percent of population has an upper primary school within 3 km.

Infrastructure Needs for Providing Effective Rural Education

It is most valuable asset to improve rural education since infrastructure broadly includes teachers, teachers guides to the curriculum and syllabus non-consumable learning materials (such as curriculum materials for students textbooks visual aids, and equipment), consumable learning materials (such as chalk, paper, pencils, exercise books), school buildings including water facilities, latrines, and school furniture.

A highly qualified, experienced, and competent teacher could probably be an effective educator with fewer resources than an untrained, poorly educated and inexperienced teacher (DFID, 2001). To be effective teachers must be competent and knowledgeable about the subject that they teach. But they must also love learning and be able to pass on skills and knowledge to their students in countless assessments of education systems in developed and developing countries conclusive evidence has been established that shows the critical role of teacher in ensuring positive learning outcomes for students.

Problems faced by Schools in Rural India

Through India is developing rapidly and many initiatives had been taken for the development of rural India, still much more have to be done. There are several problems being faced by the schools running in rural India. Some of these problems are stated below:

1. **Lack of Transportation Facilities:** This is one of the biggest problems being faced by the children going to village schools. As there are no proper transport facilities available children don't like to travel miles to come to school.
2. **Low income:** teachers in the villages also get very less income in comparison to the teachers that teach in urban schools. As teachers are not satisfied with their income, they generally do not give proper attention to the students.
3. **Lack of Infrastructure:** Many schools in villages lack proper infrastructure facilities. There are no proper facilities for sitting as sometimes children are even made to sit on the floor due to non-availability of furniture. The school building lacks doors and windows and so the wind and animals enter unimpeded.
4. **Lack of Basic Amenities:** Even the basic amenities like drinking water, clean toilets etc. are also not available in many of the schools at villages.
5. **Less in Number:** In comparison to the number of the schools present in urban area i.e., cities or town, there are very few schools in rural areas.
6. **Lack of Extra-Curricular Activities:** Apart from the course curriculum rural schools are not able to involve children in other activities like sports, co-curricular activities and competitions. Such events and activities tend to help in the overall development of the children.
7. **Deficiency of Funds:** One of the severe hurdles in the education system in rural India is the unavailability of funds. Some schools do not have funds even for purchasing benches, blackboards etc.

Reasons for the failure of Rural Education

1. Lack of literacy on the part of the parents also acts as an obstacle in attracting the student in rural areas.
2. In several schools of villages, the premise of school is also not sufficient to accompany all the students.
3. The teachers do not get any support from the parents in villages on the part of curriculum. Parents in villages want that their children should be provided with education related to agriculture so that they can help them. This thinking acts as an obstacle in bringing the children to schools.
4. As teachers in rural areas get very less salary in comparison to the teachers teaching in schools located in towns or cities, therefore they do not give their 100%.
5. Students in the rural areas are also not interested in education because it is not appealing as there are no computers, laptops, internet facilities made available for them.

Suggestions for improving Rural Education in India

Here are some of the suggestions that can be adopted for improving the education system in rural or remote areas:

1. The curriculum of rural education can be updated and should accompany education related to farming, gardening etc.
2. Some special sessions or classes can be conducted for the parents to make them realize the significance of education for their children.
3. To motivate the teachers they should be made to feel proud that by teaching in the rural or remote area they are acting as a helping hand in the development of economy.
4. To attract more number of students and creating enthusiasm in them for learning, visual aids like projectors, televisions etc. can be used to show some educational movies.
5. To appreciate the efforts of students, some type of scholarships either in the form of gifts or books can be given to them who perform well in the class.

Initiatives taken by the Government

For promoting the importance of education in India, Ministry of Law and Justice had introduced 'The Right of Children to free and Compulsory Education Act, 2009'. It is an Act introduced to provide free and compulsory education to all children between the ages of six to fourteen years.

Several central and state level initiatives have been in operation from the early 1980s'. The main objectives of all these initiatives include increasing girls enrolment, improving educational outcomes, strengthening community involvement, improving, teaching and learning materials, and providing in-service teacher training in villages. Some of these initiatives are:

1. **Lok Jumbish Project:** The Lok Jumbish (LJ) project has 75 blocks covering approximately 12 million of population. LJ works hand in hand with government agencies, teachers, NGOs, elected representatives and the people in an interactive group effort to promote universalization of primary education. It works on seven guiding principles. These are:
 - a. A process rather than a product approach.
 - b. Partnerships.
 - c. Decentralized functioning.
 - d. Participatory learning.
 - e. Integration with the mainstream education system.
 - f. Flexibility of management.

- g. Creating multiple levels of leadership committed to quality and mission mode.
2. **Shiksha Karmi Project:** The Shiksha Karmi Project (SKP) is being implemented since 1987, with assistance from the Swedish International Development Cooperation agency (SIDA). It aims universalization and qualitative improvement of primary education in the backward and remote villages of Rajasthan, with special focus on girls. SKP has set up the Village Education Committee (VECs) in 2000 villages to promote community involvement in primary education and encourage village level planning. SKP also runs non-formal classes known as Prehar Pathshalas Schools of convenient timings. For girl's education, Angan Pathshalas are being run in three blocks. The programmes at present covers over 150,000 students in 1785 schools are 3,250 Prehar Pathshalas, involving over 4,271 Shiksha Karmis.
 3. **National Programme of Nutritional support to Primary Education (School Meal Programme):** This programme was launched on 15th August 1995 with a view to increase enrolment, retention and attendance in primary schools by augmenting nutritional meal to children. Under this scheme children attending the school are given free cooked meal of 100 gms every day and positive results have gained with this scheme. By 1997-98 this scheme has covered around 110 million children of primary school. It is implemented for the students of classes' I-V.
 4. **Uttar Pradesh Basic Education Programme:** The World Bank in June, 1993 has approved a project "Education for All". This programme was an initiative taken by the Government of Uttar Pradesh and is presently been operated in 12 districts. It has an outlay of Rs. 7,288 million for seven years. The motive behind this initiative is to provide training to teachers. The first cycle of In-service teacher training was completed in October, 1995. Nearly about 40,000 teachers have been benefited by this training programme.
 5. **Operation Blackboard:** This scheme was launched in 1987 with a motto of improving the school environment. For the sake of retaining and enhancing the learning skills of children this has been started. This scheme has brought a remarkable improvement in primary education. Nearly 5,23,000 primary schools have been covered in the beginning.

Conclusion

"Intelligence plus character- that is the goal of the true education" very rightly stated by Martin Luther King, Jr. The fate of any country depends

fully in the education of its people. Basic education is viewed worldwide as human right. For this reason 'The Right of Children to free and compulsory Education Act, 2009 came into picture. All educational innovations require strong community support and participation. 'People's acceptance and participation' can be used as an indicator for measuring the progress of the various programmes. Therefore to spread awareness among the rural people about the need and significance of education more efforts have to be taken by the government, educated youth of urban towns and cities, teachers, young scholars etc.

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