

Present scenario of Rural Education in India

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ABSTRACT

The real India lives in villages, this saying is as true as it was when the country got independence 65 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 a human being liver is responsible for the proper functioning of the body, in the same way, education acts as a backbone of the economy. To explore this significant role of education in Indian especially in rural India, this paper tries to explain the present condition of rural education, rural education v/s urban education failures, and problems being faced by rural education. It also focused on the various initiatives been taken by the government and some of the suggestions for improving the education system in rural or remote areas.

INTRODUCTION

Half of the population in India lives in villages. The contribution of rural India towards economic development is not hidden from any of us. Earlier the people used to correlate rural development with agricultural development and thus focus was only on increased agricultural production. But with changing time, this misbelief has also changed. Today the concept of rural development is fundamentally different that is used to be 2 or 3 decades ago. Now rural development includes development improving the quality of life of rural people. It constitutes an improvement in their health and nutrition, education, safe and healthy environment, fairness in income distribution, and no discrimination in gender.

The continuous growth of the Indian economy forces the Indian government to accelerate the process of developing all the branches of the Indian education system. As more than half of the population lives in villages, therefore the educational system in rural areas also plays a significant contribution to the growth of the economy. Education has a desirable controlling influence over the development of the rural individual, family, community, and society that leads to reduce poverty and controlled unemployment. The functions of education include imparting social change, making rural people aware of their rights, improving the individual standard of living, providing income and employment opportunities to rural people, and so on. 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 government at the states formulated the education policy and planning.

Present scenario of Rural Education in India:

Right to education is the primary right of every citizen of India, whether a child resides in a high profile society or a faraway not-so-developed secluded village. In India, the condition of rural education is still improving, the condition of these rural schools is still very poor. There are very few schools in the rural areas and children have to travel to far away distance to avail these facilities and most schools in these locations do not provide drinking water. The quality of education is so very poor. The teachers get very less income so, most of the time the teachers are either absent or they do not teach properly.

Schools in rural areas are promoted to raise the level of education and literacy in rural India, the main aim of running these types of schools in India is to increase the rates of literacy in rural areas. More than 40 percent of India's population is illiterate and cannot read and write. And schools in rural areas are inadequate and often equivalent to being non-existent. Thus, governments' initiative to set up schools in rural areas came into the picture. According to just Indian schools, the condition of rural education in India is improving steadily and the government is also proving with many initiatives. The fee structure in these schools is also very low so that every child can study and afford it. There are many initiatives taken by the government, but they are not implemented in the schools, so the present scenario remains the same.

Though there are very few schools in rural areas, children and parents are showing interest and availing of school facilities in these remote locations. Children have to walk miles to reach their schools. Rural schools pay special attention to children in these locations so that each child gets an equal and important opportunity. They promote reading and writing and enhanced basic education. These schools also provide study materials to every student apart from meals during school hours, uniforms, etc. Rural village schools also have implemented a library system, which provides books, newspapers, and magazines to children. They not only provide science kits and equipment for hands-on learning but also notebooks, textbooks, and pencils to poor children. Apart from that they also give scholarships to deserving students regularly who wish to study ahead. They create community awareness, about the need for education and world literacy. Many direct benefits of basic rural education include poverty reduction, disease control, enhanced employment opportunities, and an increasing rate of literacy. The curriculum includes English, mathematics, general knowledge, and drawing. Apart from that, they can also provide valuable education and computer education. With the help of rural education, every family and child has access to basic primary education. Individual's special talents are recognized. The teaching methodology ensures that every student is exposed to the educational experience in an active and dynamic environment so that they can achieve excellence. Teachers also encourage every student to express their views, observation, and experiences. The main objective of rural schools is to ensure that every child in rural India receives quality education which prepares them to compete in the competitive global environment. Rural education initiative has the following objective:

- To provide free standard education to rural children.
- Supporting children of higher education.
- Guiding and supporting research scholars in educational development.
- Implementing new technologies and assessment system,
- Promoting all schools to a stress-free environment.

Urban education v/s rural education:

- There are many schools in cities and towns whereas; there are very few schools in villages and rural areas.
- There are transportation facilities like bus pick up in urban schools whereas children in rural areas have to walk miles to reach their schools.
- Basic amenities like drinking water is not provided in some of the schools in villages
- The level of education in urban schools is far advanced as compared to the basic level taught in rural schools.
- Computer education is given high importance in urban areas whereas very few schools in villages give computer training.
- Group classes are taken using video conferencing and audio conferencing in urban schools whereas no such facilities are provided for students in rural schools.
- The teachers are given tools like laptops, printers to provide notes and other important notices to children in urban schools while there is no such facility in the rural schools.
- School infrastructure in the case of cities and urban areas is much more advanced as compared to that in schools in rural areas where sometimes children are even made to sit on the floor due to the non-availability of furniture.
- School education in urban areas is more advanced especially since there is a lot of computer-aided teaching.
- 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.

Problems faced in Rural Education in India:

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

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 the non-availability of furniture. The school building lacks doors and windows, and so the wind and animals enter unimpeded.

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.

Lack of transportation facilities:

This is one of the biggest problems being faced by children going to village schools. As there are no proper transportation facilities available children don't like to travel miles to come to school.

Less in number:

In comparison to the number of schools present in urban areas i.e. cities or towns, there are very few schools in villages or rural areas.

Lack of basic amenities:

Even the basic amenities like drinking water, clean toilets, etc are also not available in many of the schools in villages.

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.

- There is no excess to supplemental education.

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 failure of Rural Education:

- The teachers do not get any support from the parents in the villages on the part of the 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 school.
- In several schools of villages, the premise of school is not sufficient to accompany all the students.
- Lack of illiteracy on the part of the parents also acts as an obstacle in attracting the students in rural areas.
- As teachers in rural areas get very less salary in comparison to the teachers teaching in schools located in towns or cities, they do not give their 100%.
- Students in the rural areas are also not interested in education because it is not appealing as any computers, laptops, internet facility is made available for them.

Suggestions for improving Rural Education in India:

Some of the suggestions that can be adopted for improving the education system in rural:

- The curriculum of rural education can be updated and should accompany education related to farming, gardening, etc.
- To attract more students and creating enthusiasm in them from learning, visual aids like projectors, television, etc. can be used to show some educational movies.
- 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 the economy.
- Some special sessions or classes can be conducted for parents to make them realize the significance of education for their children.
- To appreciate the efforts of the students, some type of scholarships either in the form of gifts or books can be given to them to perform well in class.

Initiatives taken by the Government:

For promoting the importance of education in India, the Ministry of Law and Justice has introduced 'The Right of Children to Free and Compulsory Education' to all children between the ages of six to fourteen years. Several Central and state level initiatives have been an operation from the early 1980s. The main objectives of all these initiatives include increasing girl enrollment, improving educational outcomes, strengthening community involvement, improving teaching and learning materials, and providing in-service teacher training in villages. Some of these initiatives are:

Lok Jumbish Project:

The LokJumbish (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 the universalization of primary education. It works on seven guiding principles. These are:

- A process rather than a product approach.
- Partnerships
- Decentralized functioning.
- Participatory learning.
- Integration with the mainstream education system.
- The flexibility of management.
- Creating multiple levels of leadership committed to quality and mission mode.

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 areas of Rajasthan with a special focus on girls. SKP has set up the village education committees (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 girls' education, Angan Pathshalas are being run in three blocks. The program at present covers over 150,000 students in 1,785 schools and 3,250 Prehar Pathshalas, involving over 4,271 Shiksha Karmis.

Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan (SSA)

The main goal of this programme is that all children of 6-11 years of age should complete primary education by the year 2007 and all children of 6-14 years of age should complete eight years of schooling by 2010. This plan covers the whole country with special emphasis on girl education and education of the Schedule caste(SC) and scheduled tribes(ST) children and children with special needs. The SSA centers are mainly opened in those areas, which do not have any schools or where schools are far off. Special girl-oriented programmes include: Girl education at the elementary level, National programme for the education of girls are elementary level (NPEGEL), Kasturba Gandhi Balika Vidyalaya(KGBV), Mahila Samakhya scheme.

District primary education program:

This programme was launched in 1994 with the objective of universalization of primary education. Its main features are universal access, universal retention, and universal achievement. It aims that the primary education should be accessible to every child of school-going age, once a child is enrolled in school he/she should be retained there. The final step is an achievement of the goal of education. The main components of this programme are:

- Construction of classrooms and new schools
- Opening of non-formal schooling centers.
- Setting up early childhood education centers.
- Appointment of teachers.
- Providing education to disabled children.

The programme has been successful to a large extent as 1,60,000 schools and 84,000 alternative schools have been opened under this program. And work is going on for the construction of new buildings of 52,758 schools. 4,20,203 disabled students have been successfully enrolled in the schools.

The national programme of nutritional support to primary education (school meal programme):

This program was launched on 15th august 1995 to increase enrolment, retention, and attendance in primary schools by augmenting nutritional meals to children. Under these scheme children attending the school are given a free cooked meal for 100gms 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 classes' I-V.

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 covered started. This scheme has brought a remarkable improvement in primary education. Nearly 5,23,000 primary schools have been covered in beginning.

CONCLUSION

The development of any country depends fully on the education of people. Basic education is viewed worldwide as a human right. For this reason "The Right of Children to Free and Compulsory Education Act" (2009) came into the 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 various programmes. Therefore to spread awareness among the rural people about the need and significance of education more efforts have been taken by the government, educated youth of urban towns and cities, teachers, young scholars, etc.

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