

## ROLE OF EDUCATION IN RURAL DEVELOPMENT: WITH REGARD TO PROBLEMS AND SUGGESTIONS

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### ABSTRACT

*'The real India live in villages', this saying is as true today as it was when the country got independence 64 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 a backbone for the economy. To explore this significant role of education in India especially in rural India, this paper tries to explain the failures and problems being faced by the rural education. It also addresses the various initiatives been taken by the government. The paper also highlights some of the suggestions for improving the education system in rural or remote areas.*

### Keywords

*Rural education, The Right of Children to Free and Compulsory Education Act, 2009, Ministry of HRD*

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## INTRODUCTION

The greater proportion of the world population rural people lives in the villages. The contribution of rural India towards the economic development is not hidden from any of us. The World Bank has defined Rural Development “as a strategy designed to improve the economic and social life of a specific group of people- the rural poor.” Earlier the people used to correlate rural development with agricultural development and thus focus was only on the increased agricultural production. But with the changing time, this misbelieve has also changed. Today the concept of rural development is fundamentally different that it was used to be 2 or 3 decades ago. Now rural development includes development improving the quality of life of rural people. It constitutes improvement in their health and nutrition, education, safe and healthy environment, fairness in income distribution and no discrimination in gender.

Rural development implies both the economic betterment of people as well as greater social transformation. 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 in India lives in villages, therefore the education system in rural area also plays a significant contribution in the growth of the economy. Education has a desirable controlling influence over development of the rural individual, family, community and society that leads to reduced poverty and controlled unemployment. Functions of education include imparting social change, making rural people aware about their rights, improving individual standard of living, providing employment and income opportunities to rural people and so on.

The present system of education in India was introduced by the British in the 20<sup>th</sup> 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.

### **Problems faced by Schools in Rural India**

Though 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 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.
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 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.
4. **Less in Number:** In comparison to the number of schools present in urban area i.e., cities or towns, there are very few schools in villages or rural areas.
5. **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.
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 help in the over all 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. 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 act as an obstacle in bringing the children to schools.

2. In several schools of villages, the premise of school is also not sufficient to accompany all the students.
3. Lack of illiteracy on the part of the parents also acts as an obstacle in attracting the students in rural areas.
4. 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%.
5. Students in the rural areas are also not interested in education because it is not appealing as any computers, laptops, internet facility 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. To attract more number of students and creating enthusiasm in them for learning, visual aids like projectors, television etc. can be used to show some educational movies.
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. Some special sessions or classes can be conducted for the parents to make them realize the significance of education for their children.
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 universalisation 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 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 girl's education, Angan Pathshalas are being run in three blocks. The programme at present covers over 150,000 students in 1,785 schools and 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 15<sup>th</sup> 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 100gms every day and positive results have gained with this scheme. By 1997-98 this scheme has covered around 110million 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 true education"*, very rightly stated by Martin Luther King, Jr. The fate of any country depends fully on 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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