



A REVIEW ON PROBLEMS AND CHALLENGES OF RURAL EDUCATION SYSTEM IN INDIA

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Abstract :

Half of the population lives in the villages. The contribution of rural India towards the 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 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.

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. 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 in a faraway not so developed secluded village. In India, condition of rural education is still improving, the conditions of these rural schools is still very poor. There are very few schools in the rural areas and children have to travel far away distances to avail these facilities and most schools in these locations do not provide drinking water. The quality of education is also very poor. The teachers get very less income so, most of the time the teachers are either absent or they do not teach

Keywords: Elementary school, Challenges of rural, Economic development, agriculture development, rural development



Introduction

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.

India is a country of 1.3 billion people, where 67% of the Indian population lives in rural areas. Approx. 196 million elementary school going children, out of that 146 million are enrolled in rural schools. The good news is that almost all of these children are enrolled in school, enrollment of children for the age group 5 to 14 has been above 95% in rural India.

The school education in rural India is mostly dependent on Government and Government aided schools. For rural India journey of education is not easy, children from rural areas face many challenges till they finish their education. Few of them listed below.

Objects of the study

- To analyses Challenges of rural Education system in India
- To study the what steps taken to improve infrastructure and the quality of primary education

Methodology

The literature used to write and analyse the primary education system in this paper is collected from various secondary sources like internet, research articles, government reports and websites.

Sources of the study

The primary and secondary sources have been consulted to achieve the desired goals of the study. The primary sources include government documents and data collection from respondents using questionnaire and interview methods. Secondary sources include books, journals, newspaper articles, websites, ministry of education and e-resources accessible on the Internet.



Tools for Data collection

Questionnaire and Interview method has been adopted to collect the primary data from the Lambani community under study and officers of the concerned department in the state government in pursuance of socio-political empowerment.

Urban and the Rural Education System:

Number of Schools – In urban areas, there are large number of schools, colleges, universities and other training centers. On the other hand, in rural areas, there are lesser number of schools. Higher educational institutions are not available in rural areas and individuals, belonging to rural communities are required to migrate to urban areas in order to pursue higher education. In the present existence, there have been establishment of training centres in rural areas, which aim to enhance the skills and knowledge of the individuals, in terms of various subjects, such as, technology, agriculture, farming practices, handicrafts, child development, health care and so forth.

Transportation Facilities – In urban areas, adequate transportation facilities are available to the students. The schools make provision of bus services to the students and they are picked up and dropped after the school hours at the bus stops, located closer to their homes. With the provision of the transportation facilities, they find it easier to commute to schools. In rural areas, the students are required to either walk to schools or make use of their own personal transportation. In most cases, where schools are located at a distance, where it is not possible to walk, then bicycles are made use of.

Provision of Civic Amenities and Facilities – In urban schools, there are provision of civic amenities and facilities, which are important in facilitating education. These are availability of restrooms, clean drinking water, classrooms, infrastructure, furniture, machinery, equipment, and technology. These aspects have rendered a significant contribution in making provision of education. On the other hand, in rural schools, these facilities and civic amenities are not available. This is imposing unfavorable effects upon the acquisition of education. There have been formulation of laws and policies by the Government and measures are being implemented to make provision of restrooms, mid-day meals, technology, infrastructure, machinery, equipment and proper classrooms in the schools in rural areas.

Level of Education – The level of education in urban schools is at an advanced stage. Apart from academic concepts, there are number of tasks and activities that students get engaged in.



These include, extra-curricular and creative activities such as, sports, physical activities, dance, music, singing, artworks, handicrafts and so forth. In addition, there are organization of picnics, competitions and events, which provide opportunities to the students to enhance their knowledge and depict their skills. On the other hand, in rural schools, the level of education is basic and the provision of extra-curricular activities is not in a much developed state.

Computer Education– In the present existence, technology has gained prominence. The use of computers has facilitated the acquisition of education to a major extent. In urban areas, schools are providing computer education to the students and also making use of technology in the implementation of tasks and functions. Students make use of the internet to a major extent to acquire knowledge in terms of various areas and also when they are required to prepare their assignments and projects. In rural schools, there are few schools that provide computer education to the students. Whereas in most cases, schools do not provide computer education.

Organization of Group Classes – In urban schools, there are organization of group classes. Through these classes, students interact with each other, share ideas and perspectives and are able to enhance their knowledge. In other words, group discussions are encouraged. In some cases, they even work on projects and assignments jointly. Group classes enables the students to provide solutions to problems and difficulties. On the other hand, in schools in rural areas, there are not any organization of group classes. The students do interact and discuss their matters and concerns with the teachers and fellow students to provide solutions to their problems, but group classes do not take place.

Organization of Picnics – In urban schools, picnics are organized with the main purpose of stimulating the mind-sets of the students and motivating them towards learning. There are number of places, which are taken into consideration when picnics are organized, these include, religious places, historical places, museums, parks, and so forth. Students normally enjoy and take pleasure in picnics. On the other hand, in rural schools, there are not any organization of picnics. The students are mostly provided knowledge within the classroom environment. In other words, classroom teaching is encouraged. In some cases, students are motivated towards studies, whereas in others, they lose interest and even drop out of schools.

Challenges of rural students in India



Poor foundation skills / Learning outcomes - Rural children go to school but the learning quality they receive is not enough. Their foundation skills in reading and arithmetic are poor. As per ASER 2016 data shows, only 73% of std VIII students can read an std II level text. And only 44% of children in std VIII can solve a basic arithmetic problem. Whereas children are expected to be master in foundation skills in std VIII.

Access to advanced learning tools - Students from rural schools either has no access or lack of access to advanced learning tools such as digital learning, computer education, non-academic books. As per the ASER 2013 report, 55.5% of students have never used computers.

Financial constraint - As per the right to education act children are provided free education till the age of 14, post that they are out of RTE. Families from rural areas are always in financial burden due to various reasons. For them education for their children becomes the second priority, that's why they are forced for income generation activity for their survival. This is one of the reasons for low enrollment in secondary and higher education. As per education statistics at glance 2012 by MHRD report only 43.1% of students enrollment in senior secondary and 14.2% in higher education in India

Sports training and equipment's - As we know sports can directly impact fitness which then impacts learning. Unfortunately, in rural school's proper sports coaching and equipment's are not available. This leads to the lack of opportunities for students to play games and be physically active.

After school activities - Engaging students in activities that can improve their learning and quality of life is very important. In urban areas, post school time, students are engaged in music, dance, foreign language classes, whereas in rural students just roam in the village and engage themselves in unproductive activities. Nonavailability of post-school activity centers in rural areas is a key challenge.

English Communication - Day by day importance of the English language is increasing, whereas in rural areas the majority of schools are in vernacular language. Hence, speaking and writing in English are given less importance. This leads to poor English communication and then low interest in the science field in higher education. Most of the rural students prefer to choose arts or commerce instead of science just to avoid the English language.



Digital Literacy - Having poor or no access to the digital device, especially computer learning is a challenge to improve digital literacy in rural students.

Long Distance schools - If we compare rural students' population and secondary schools, it's still behind the expectations. Only 1.39 lakh secondary and 1.1 lakh senior secondary recognized schools in India. Most of them are located in a larger population of the village or at taluka place. Hence students are required to travel long distances to attend school.

Sanitation - Toilets in rural schools are always in discussion, especially for girls. Overall sanitation in schools is a major problem, which impacts student's health. Especially for girl students' useable clean toilets are important. As per the report from ASER 2013, only 66.4% of schools are with usable toilets for girls.

Personal attention - The majority of schools are not having enough number of classrooms for students; hence classes are conducted in the same classroom for more than one std. Student-pupil ratio is low. This causes low attention to students who are lacking behind in learning.

Having said all these challenges, rural India can overcome these problems. The government of India has already started working on new national education policy, in which more weightage is given to learning outcomes, school infrastructure, digital learning to prepare rural India for 21st- century education. Together all stakeholders can play an important role to fill these gaps.

The government of India also directed to gram panchayat under 14 Vitt Aayog Gram Panchayat Nidhi to use funds to improve school education in the village. In many states, CSR funds are used widely to improve school infrastructure, especially in Maharashtra and Delhi. Each state government is working hard to improve school education in rural areas through many initiatives. We positively hope to overcome these challenges in the coming years. Source for the breakdown of rural education. 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.–In several schools of villages, the premise of school is also 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 made available for them.



The Government of India has launched Samagra Shiksha - an Integrated Scheme for school education, w.e.f. 2012-13, which is an overarching programme for the school education sector extending from pre-school to class XII and aims to ensure inclusive and equitable quality education at all levels of school education. It envisages the 'school' as a continuum from pre-school, primary, upper primary, secondary to senior secondary levels and subsumes the three erstwhile centrally sponsored schemes i.e. Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan (SSA), Rashtriya Madhyamik Shiksha Abhiyan (RMSA) and Teacher Education (TE).

Bridging gender and social category gaps at all levels of school education is one of the major objectives of the scheme. The scheme reaches out to girls and children belonging to Scheduled Caste (SC), Scheduled Tribe (ST), minority communities and transgender. The scheme also gives attention to urban deprived children, children affected by periodic migration and children living in remote and scattered habitations. Under the scheme, provision has been made for giving preference to Special Focus Districts (SFDs), Educationally Backward Blocks (EEBs), LWE affected districts, and inspirational districts while planning interventions like setting up of primary schools, upper primary schools, construction of additional classrooms, toilets, Kasturba Gandhi Balika Vidyalayas (KGBVs).

The Samagra Shiksha scheme supports States for strengthening of school infrastructure including in rural areas. The scheme provides for infrastructural strengthening of existing government schools based on the gaps determined by Unified District Information System for Education (UDISE) and proposals received from respective States/UTs. The scheme also provides for annual maintenance and repair of existing school buildings, toilets and other facilities to upkeep the infrastructure in good condition.

The major steps taken to improve infrastructure and the quality of primary education:-

- i. Since the inception of the erstwhile Centrally Sponsored Scheme, Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan, in 2001 till 31.03.2010, construction of 3.12 lakh school buildings, 18.87 lakh additional classrooms, provision of 2.42 lakh drinking water facility, construction of 3.95 lakh Boys' toilets, 5.18 lakh separate girls' toilets and 1.41 lakh CWSN toilets have been sanctioned to States and UTs, out of which States and UTs have reported construction of 2.94 lakh school buildings, 18.03 lakh additional classrooms, provision of 2.35 lakh drinking water facility, construction of 3.76 lakh Boys' toilets, 5.07 lakh separate girls' toilets and 1.21 lakh CWSN toilets.



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- ii. The Central rules to the RTE Act, 2009 have been amended on 20th February, 2015 to include reference on class-wise and subject-wise learning outcomes, which have accordingly been finalised for all subjects upto the elementary stage and shared with the states and UTs.
 - iii. National Achievement Survey for classes 3, 5 & 8 based on Learning Outcomes was conducted on 13th November, 2012 to enable States & UTs to identify gaps in learning outcomes at district level and design strategies to address these gaps.
 - iv. Section 23(2) of the RTE Act has been amended to extend the period of training of untrained in-service elementary teachers to 31st March, 2014.
 - v. The National Institute of Open Schooling (NIOS) has been entrusted to conduct this training through Open and Distance Learning (ODL) mode. The online D.Ed course has been started from 3rd October, 2017. More than 13 lakh teachers have joined these courses

Conclusion:

This evaluation identifies the need for schools to be more innovative to meet the needs of all their students. It signals that the future success for secondary school students is dependent on schools identifying and responding to the aspirations, strengths, culture and needs of their students. The most responsive schools put considerable effort into ensuring teachers understood the goals for each student and designed programmes that encouraged students to increase their own self awareness and self management to monitor progress towards achieving their goals. The question that remains is – how can such leadership and self managing skills be developed in all schools, to help students find out about their future opportunities and what they need to do to achieve them.



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