



An overview of rural education in India

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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 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 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 present condition of rural education, rural education v/s urban education failures and problems being faced by the rural education. It also focused the various initiatives been taken by the government and some of the suggestions for improving the education system in rural or remote areas.

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."

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 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 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 far away 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



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 per cent of India's population is illiterate and cannot read or write. And schools in rural areas are inadequate and often equivalent to being non-existent. Thus, government's initiative to set up schools in rural areas came into picture. According to Just Indian Schools the conditions of rural education in India, is improving steadily and the government is also providing full support and providing 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 their parents are showing interest and availing school facilities in these remote locations. Children have to walk miles to reach their school. 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 material to every student apart from, meals during school hours, uniforms etc. Rural village schools also have implemented library system, which provide books, newspapers and magazine 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 indirect benefits of a basic rural education include poverty reduction, disease control, enhanced employment opportunities and increasing rate of literacy. The curriculum includes English, Mathematics, General Knowledge and Drawing. Apart from that they also provide Value 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 each and every student is exposed to educational experience in an active and dynamic learning environment, so that they can achieve excellence. Teachers also encourage every student to express their views, observations and experiences. The main objectives of rural school's 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 for higher education.
- Guiding and Supporting Research scholars in Educational Development.
- Implementing new teaching methodologies and Assessment system.
- Promoting all schools to 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 the rural areas.
- There are transportation facilities like bus pick and in urban schools where as children in rural areas have to walk miles to reach their schools.
- Basic amenities like no drinking water in provided in some of the schools in villages.
- 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 where as very few schools in villages give computer training.
- Group classes are taken by using video conferencing and audio conferencing in urban schools where as 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 the children in urban schools while there are no such facilities in the rural schools.
- School infrastructure in case of cities and urban areas is much more advanced as compared to that in schools in rural areas where some times children are even made to sit on the floor due to 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 help in the over all development of the children.

Problems faced in rural education in India:

India is developing rapidly and many initiatives had been

- Participatory learning.
- Integration with the mainstream education system.
- 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 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.

Sarva Siksha Abhiyan (SSA):

The main goal of this program 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 Schedule Caste (SC) and Schedule Tribe (ST) children and children with special needs. The SSA centers are mainly opened in those areas, which do not have any school or where schools are very far off. Special girl oriented programs include: Girl education at elementary level, National Program for Education of Girls at Elementary Level (NPEGEL), Kasturba Gandhi Balika Vidyalyaya (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 each and every child of school going age, once a child is enrolled in school he/ she should be retained there. The final step is 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 the 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 into the schools.

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 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.

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:

The development 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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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:

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.

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 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.

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.

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.

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.

- 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 the failure 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.

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 number of students and creating enthusiasm in them for 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 economy.
- Some special sessions or classes can be conducted for the parents to make them realize the significance of education for their children.
- 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:

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 process rather than a product approach.
- Partnerships.
- Decentralized functioning.

What are the challenges of education in rural India and how technology can help overcome them

For the large majority of the population living in rural areas, education is highly dependent on government-run or aided schools and non-governmental organisations. But rural areas still face various barriers that directly impact the country's literacy rate. The National Education Policy 2020 emphasises digital learning as an alternative to the conventional classroom model but implementing this in rural India will face some challenges.

Financial issues: To start with, meagre incomes leads to education taking a backseat. Parents tend to see education as an expense rather than an investment. They would rather have the children work and earn. When it comes to higher education, lack of good institutes close by means students have to look at shifting to cities, which adds to their expenses. This leads to low rates of enrollment and higher dropout rates.

Lack of guidance: Students in smaller regions have great potential and are motivated to study but lack right mentoring. This is required not just for the children but also for their parents.

Lack of infrastructure and faculty: Children have limited or no access to basic learning tools such as well-equipped classrooms, computers, labs, playgrounds, among other things. Often, the teachers are often not qualified or do not turn up, leading to a poor quality of education. This also leads to low morale among students to attend school.

Gender inequality: In some places, girls are not allowed to go to school. Or if allowed, it is only upto a certain age. They are not allowed to move out of their hometown for higher education or better jobs.

While most of these areas need transformative changes, which will take time, technology can help drive it faster. With the increased use of smartphones in rural areas, e-learning platforms can be accessed easily. Many are also affordable. This new way of learning can be made attractive to children. Courses from the best educators e-libraries for research material and teachers will all be available in an instant. Vulnerabilities

such as lack of availability of quality content and training mechanisms can be addressed. In these unprecedented times, the integration of technology with education holds great promise.

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<https://www.thehindu.com/education/what-are-the-challenges-of-education-in-rural-india-and-how-technology-can-help-overcome-them/article35316970.ece#:~:text=For%20the%20large%20majority%20of,impact%20the%20country's%20literacy%20rate.>
