

# Study of education in rural india



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In this report we study the scenario of education in rural India, how has it changed post independence and what has been the impact of different education schemes on education in rural India.

The early days in India allowed education only to the people of upper class societies. It was considered to be primitive form of education. But now, education has become modern everywhere. After industrialization, the concept of sending children to school came up. This concept was mainly prominently in west. Gradually this concept was adopted in India and now this is called as modern form of education. Unlike primitive education, this form of education is based solely on merit and not limited only to upper caste. It is rational and scientific. Education is influencing a lot of people and becoming one of the important ingredients of development. Along with urbanization and industrialization, it is also given equal importance.

The modern education in India derives its origin from west. This education system was divided as per the convenience of the Britishers. It has three main phases, the primary education, the secondary education and the college education. The main language of teaching was English. Less emphasis was given to the regional language of the common people. The primary education was given the least importance and the higher education the most. Initially this education was confined to only urban areas. Neglect to primary education started becoming biggest concern to the country.

Therefore, after independence, government made several efforts to make primary education a compulsory form of education and make it reach to several parts of the country, especially in the rural areas.

India has a total population of 1, 210, 193, 422 which is the second largest population in the world. Out of this 623, 724, 248 are males and 586, 469, 174 are females (as per 2011 census). The government of India has launched several schemes to increase the literacy level in the country. The literacy level was mere 18. 33% in 1951. It rose to 65. 38% in 2001 and to 74. 04% in 2011. The male literacy rate has increased from 27. 16% in 1951 to 75. 85% 2001 to 82. 14% in 2011. The female literacy rate has increased from 8. 86% in 1951 to 54. 16% in 2001 to 65. 46% in 2011. The government of India enacted the Right to Education Act (RTE) in 2009. According to this act elementary education is a fundamental right of every Indian child.

Realizing the importance of education for rural India government had opened several schools to educate the Rural India. But now, along with government institutions, several private institutions have also taken into shape and are making efforts to educate rural India. Statistics show that the percentages of students enrolling for private schools are increasing year on year. For e. g. The number of students enrolled in std. II in 2007 was around 19% and it increased to around 26% in 2011

Source: Enrollment and Learning Report Card, Annual Status of Education Report 2011

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## **Education System in India**

Education is a concurrent subject in India. It is with the help of the state and the central government that any new policy or any decision is taken.

Because of this reason the level of education varies from state to state.

Along with this, there are other reasons like cultural background, caste system political system, size of the state and the economy of the state that plays a major role in determining the education level of any state. It is the ministry of HRD, the state education department, NCERT, SCERT that implements the educational programs in the country. District Institutes of Education and Training (DIET), block resource centers help the above to implement the various programs.

## **The Parameters for accessing the quality of education in Rural India**

**Gross Enrolment Ratio:** GER means ratio of boys to girls enrolled for education. This ratio varies from region to region. The enrolment in primary education is far higher than the enrolment in secondary education. This ratio is only 47% in the secondary education. Kerala and West Bengal has the best enrolment ratio and minimum gender disparity. Bihar, Uttar Pradesh, and Rajasthan has the worst ratios. The present statistics show that eastern region has better enrolment ratio than in any part of the country.

**Attendance Rates:** On comparing the present survey with the national Family Health Surveys 1993-95, it was found that the attendance of rural girls and boys in primary schools increased by 20 % and 12 % respectively. But a study by UNESCO revealed that only 20 % of the students actually attended secondary schools in the period 1999-2000.

Achievements in Learning: A report of Global Poverty Research group indicates that until 2006, no official data was available on the standards of the Indian schooling system. However, ASER report in 2006 conducted in 2002 revealed low learning levels. The average marks for India as a whole is 50. 3% in science, 46. 5 % in maths, and 58. 6% in language according to NCERT data. According to this report and a report presented by ASER, nearly half of the children in class V did not have the reading or arithmetic capacity expected of a class II student. The latest report (2009) shows that only 38% of students in Rural India studying in class V can do division.

A latest survey can be seen in the page below.

Quality of schools: According to India infrastructure report 2007, 87.5% of schools in India are in villages. Most of these schools do not have the necessary amenities and infrastructure like a building of classrooms, a black board, toilet, drinking water facility. In some cases bathrooms are even closed during the school hours, and there are no separate toilets for girls. There is only one secondary school to every five primary schools. The teacher to student ratio is 1: 40 on an average. Several non teaching activity keeps happening during the school hours and many a times teachers are absent from the school.

Gender inequality: According to the Indian Human Development report 2011, 19 % of the children in rural India drop out in the age group of 6 -17 age group. According to the 52nd round of National Sample Survey the primary level dropout rate for rural girl child is 6. 9%. It was observed that the percentage of dropouts in Rural India has declined from 2006 till 2011. The

dropout has declined from 5% in boys , 10% in girls to 2. 5% in boys and 5 % in girls, respectively till 2011 A majority of the families are involved in unorganized sector for employment. These parents are not very educated. This effects the enrolment and the retention of the girl child adversely. 37 of the girl child said that they dropped out from school as they lost interest in studies.

## **The Challenge Faced in Educating Rural India**

Educating is one of the most important factors in economic growth and development of a nation. Major attention has been given to education post independence, but educating rural India still remains a challenging task for the India government. A major portion of the budget, nearly 24% increase, was allocated for education in 2011-2012. The existing operational norms of the Sarva Shiksha Abhiyaan was also revised to implement the right of children to free and compulsory education. Allocations to achieve the objective for the Right to Education (RTE) were increased from 15, 000 crore to 21, 000 crore. Government has also taken certain initiatives to vocationalise the secondary education so as to enable students to pursue job oriented courses at +2 level. The human resource development (HRD) ministry's allocations have gone up to Rs 52, 057 crore from the previous year's Rs 43, 836 crore.

In spite of taking several initiatives for education, educating the rural India still remains a great challenge. As seen above, quality and access still remains a concern in rural India. There is still a lack of competent and committed teachers, lack of textbook, teaching-learning materials. Teachers refuse to teach in rural areas and those who agree to, are under qualified.

The physical infrastructure of rural schools is far behind the satisfactory level. 82 % of the schools is in need of renovation. The mid day meal scheme meant to reduce drop-out rates in schools also did not turn out to be very successful due to misappropriation of funds, mismanagement, lack of seriousness among the implementation authorities, lack of awareness amongst the parents of poor children, etc.

## **The Economic Challenges:**

### **Income Percapita**

It was found that enrolment in schools is directly related to the income group of the households. A low income household has lesser enrollments than high income households. In fact, in some high income household, boys and girls both were sent to schools for education. Based on the NFHS I data, Filmer and Pritchett showed that there is a strong wealth effect on the probability of enrolment. A child from a household from the highest quintile is 31 percentage points more likely to be in school than a child from a poor quintile (Filmer & Pritchett 1999).

Dreze and Kingdon (2001) as well as Sipahimalani (1996) showed that household wealth significantly enhances school enrolment and participation of girls in particular. They also suggest that poorer households allocate limited finances for the education of boys. Other studies also confirm this finding (Jha and Jhingran 2002; Filmer & Pritchett 1999; Duraiswamy 1998; Visaria and Visaria 1993; Reddy. Shiva et al 1992; Tilak 2002).

## **Enrolment and Land Owning Patterns**

In rural areas, the ownership of land determines the economic status of the people. This has a direct impact on the number of enrolments in the school. A household having larger area of land holdings tend to send all their children to school compared to households small and marginal land holdings. This happens mainly because the children of these households are made to work on land for their living. Jeemol Unni points out that as the size of cultivated land increases, the proportion of girls attending school increases (Unni 1996). Similar findings are reported in other studies also (Visaria and Viasria 1993; Jha and Jhingran 2002; Dreze and Saran 1993; Kanbargi and Kulkarni 1984; Bashir quoted in Bhattu 1998; Ramachandran Vimala 2002; Reddy Shiva et al 1992).

## **Nature of Occupation:**

The studies have showed that the occupation of the households have direct impact on the enrolments in the school. It was found that the households not involved in agriculture were more likely to send their children to school compared to households involved in agriculture. In agriculture also, it was found that the labor class was least likely to send their children to school compared to other households. A higher level of illiteracy was also found amongst them. . Shiva Reddy's study of Andhra Pradesh showed that, a village where the majority of population depends on non-agriculture for their livelihood was one of the best enrolled villages at all levels of education (Reddy Shiva et al 1992). The study conducted by Pandey and Talwar on educational attainment of children in Uttar Pradesh, showed that the occupation of the father is closely associated with child's literacy status. It



was found that fathers working as agricultural labourers have the largest percentage of illiterate children while fathers in service had the lowest. Also, children of agricultural labourers often had to discontinue schooling to engage in some job for improving the economic status of the family (Pandey and Talwar 1980). Similar findings are reported from Nayan Tara (1985), Seetharamu and Usha Devi (1985), Ramachandran Vimala (2002), Jha and Jhingran (2002) and Vaidyanathan and Nair (2001).

### **The Challenge of educating Women in Rural India**

It is found that the women who receive education in India, mostly belong to urban regions. Several factors can be responsible for it. Narrow mindedness still prevails in rural regions. Parents are hesitant to send their girl child to male teachers. There is lack of awareness amongst parents about the importance of education. Parents believe that a girl's aim in life is to get a good life partner and therefore parents are more inclined in marrying their girl child early. They are least interested in educating the girl. In some regions of the country there is no security provided to the female which also adds to not educating the child. Besides this, girls tend to get involved in household work and therefore do not develop interest in reading. Being a girl, she is made to get involved in household activities. She has to look after her siblings. She has to prepare food for the whole household and eventually she loses interest in books. There are several legal and cultural barriers in employing a woman in non agricultural work. Eventually she ends up making a very small economic contribution to the family and therefore, she is demotivated for education.

Because of these reasons the rural women do not have an active participation in higher education as well. In spite of having large number of universities, out of 1, 43, 23, 566 enrolments, only 54, 91, 818 enrolments were from females as per 2008 statistics.

Tough the literacy rate in rural India for women is far less than that of men, yet the pace with which literacy rate for women is growing in rural India is far better than the pace of men. The gender gap in literacy rate has narrowed down considerably but continues to be high. i. e 19. 81%.

### **The government initiatives**

Right from the time India attained independence; several efforts had been made by the government to improve the quality of education of the India citizen, especially the citizens of the rural India. Some of these initiatives are Operation Blackboard (1987), Restructuring and reorganization of Teacher Education (1987), National Programme for Nutritional Support to Primary Education (1995), district Primary Education Programme (DPEP)(1993), The Rashtriya Madhyamik Shiksha Abhijan (RMSA), and the most important of all, Sarve Shiksha Abhijan(SSA) (2001), aimed at universalizing elementary education of satisfactory quality in the country. The other important reform in the Indian elementary education system was 86th Amendment to the Constitution that made Right to Education (RTE) Constitutional Provision for Education.

### **Right to Education Act**

With the Right to Education Act coming into force, India has joined the league of over 130 countries which have legal guarantees to provide free

and compulsory education to children. This act came into force on 1st April 2010. There are almost 20 other countries which has this provision to provide free and compulsory education to its children. The main features of the right to education act are:

1. Free and compulsory education to all children of India in 6 to 14 age group.
2. No child shall be held back, expelled or required to pass a board examination until completion of elementary education.
3. School teachers will need adequate professional degree within five years or else will lose job.
4. School infrastructure to be improved in three years, else recognition cancelled.
5. Financial burden will be shared between state and central government.

Schedule outlining Norms and standards for a school in Rural Area

## **Sarva Siksha Abhiyaan**

This program was initiated by the government of India during the ninth five year plan. Its aim was to universalize the elementary education across the nation. This mission adopted a time bound approach for ensuring “ total education” across the country. The idea of social justice is promoted through this program. It involves various stake holders which brings together the panchayati Raj Institutions, school committees, teachers and parents associations, tribal council and many more.

## Objectives of SSA

Construction of new building and upgrading the existing building with the aim of strengthening the present infrastructure

Providing teachers and also building their capacities through training.

Seek to provide quality education including life skills

Promoting community participation in primary education by formulating village

Education Committees. And involving them in planning and raising community

contribution for primary education

It aims at bridging social, regional and gender gaps in literacy and primary education

It focuses on girl education and children with special needs

It seek to provide computer education to bridge the digital divide

## **Impact of Sarva Shiksha Abhiyaan**

The impact of Sarva Shiksha Abhiyaan has been positive. It has been able to generate large scale awareness about the importance of elementary education in rural India. The enrolment has gone up as a result of it, attendance has improved, number of schools have increased, improved the quality of teachers and management of program is more effective.

Impact in terms of figures

## **Conclusion**

A lot of effort is being made in educating the Rural India. But a lot more still needs to be achieved to ensure high literacy rate in rural India and to abolish gender disparity which still persists in a large part of remote areas. A thorough study of the impact of the government schemes is very important. Free uniform, free bicycles, mid day meal schemes, provision of food and lodging will help retain the enrolments in the schools, especially of the girl child. Parents should be sensitized to educate not only their male child but also their female child. Introduction of vocational and bridge courses will help retain girls in the school. There is a need to abolish the practice of son preference. Building only infrastructure will not help but there is also a need to address the root cause for discrimination in the rural India. Only by assessing the situation of the disadvantages that children face based on economic situation, caste, gender, etc. a speedy remedial action can be taken and eventually every child can be included in the orbit of his fundamental right to learn and grow.