



# **JHARKHAND GOVERNMENT'S INITIATIVE FOR CHANGING QUALITY EDUCATION DURING COVID-19 IN HIGH SCHOOL OF RANCHI**

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**ABSTRACT**

*"Education is the most powerful weapon which you can use to change the World" Nelson Mandela.*

Education is a dynamic force in the life of an individual and influences his physical, mental, social, emotional, ethical, creative and spiritual development. It helps the individual in undergoing appropriate needed experiences and in organizing these experiences into meaning for his life activities. This paper examines how Jharkhand Government's has taken initiative for enhancing quality education during covid-19 in high school. What are the resources that had been used especially during pandemic period when there was lockdown in the country where every things became unaccessible to the peoples along with the students education and how digital gadget helped in organizing the classes for students by school teachers.

**Introduction-** Education is the first step for people to gain the knowledge, critical thinking empowerment and skills they need to make this world a better place. This education system was Horace Mann (May 4, 1796-August 2, 1859) was an American educational reformer and politician known for his commitment of promoting public education. He is often called the 'Father of the Common School Movement', which was a movement devoted to creating a more equitable public school system character a more equitable public teachers and a non-sectarian approach. Apart from this Mann believed in promoting 'Women' as common school teacher because of their in born material instincts. He further advocated for more female common school teachers because he believed that women were morally superior to men.

The state of Jharkhand was formed on 15<sup>th</sup> November 2000. According to the 2011 census, the population of the state was 3.29 crores and the literacy rate was 67.63%. There are 44,835 schools in the state-40,343 are government schools. The state adopted the Right of Children to Free and Compulsory Education (RTE) Act in 2011 by specifying its own rules and regulations extracted from the original version of the act passed by the parliament.

The Government of India has implemented several schemes to improve education in the country. Government of Jharkhand is very much committed to the cause of quality education for children. The Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan (SSA) was launched in November 2000 in partnership with states to universalise elementary education. SSA was conceived as a centrally sponsored scheme at the end of the Ninth Five Year plan to improve the educational states in the country through interventions designed to improve accessibility, reduce gender and social gaps, and improve the quality of learning.

The RTE Act, 2009 mandates free and compulsory education for all children between Six to Fourteen years of age until they complete elementary education in a neighbourhood school. The act was implemented in most implemented in most states and union territories on 1 April 2010. The major areas for improvement listed in the RTE Act are-

- Availability of teaching – learning material and aids.
- Availability of required number of trained teachers and their continuous and comprehensive evaluation,
- Formation of school management committee,
- Pupil-teacher ratio (PTR),
- Teacher-classroom ratio (TCR),
- Student Classroom ratio (SCR)

Library, mid-day meals, and incentives for children. The act provides for special training for children who are above six years of age and have not yet been admitted to any school or those who could not completed elementary education due to any reasons. These children are to be admitted in a class appropriate to their age. In addition to this, unaided private schools have to compulsorily enrol 25% student form economically and socially weaker sections of society. Some of the other indicators of RTE are concerned with building playground boundary wall, safe drinking water, and toilets.

**Main Thrust-** If we see the current status of Ranchi district's Govt. High Schools then is has improved a much in its teaching and non-teaching departments. Now the traditional teaching has been replaced by the digitalisation educational system. Now the state government has provided the ICT labs in each school for better teaching learning and for the IQ enhancement of the students and making the teaching more interesting understandable. But from 20<sup>th</sup> March 2020, suddenly everything was caused due to the pandemic i.e. covid-19 as the Central Government at once announced Lockdown in the Country. This pandemic has not only affected the students but also the Low-budget institutions and schools, resulting in lockdown the same. Technology paves the way for education, this helping the students and teachers to connect virtually through online classrooms, webinars, digital exams and soon.

Everything is happening for the well being of the students so that they can stay safe at home without getting affected by the life-threat. School closures due to Covid-19 have brought significant disruptions to education not only in India but whole world.

Despite announcements and claims by state governments of continuing to deliver education during the lockdown, through different medians including TV and online classes (Day 2020; Santoshini 2020), But due to lack of awareness amongst parents and children about modes through which education was being delivered and also poor financial condition was one of the reason for unaccessive of education. In Ranchi district the

education was being delivered by the WhatsApp (75%) followed by phone calls between the teacher and the student (38%).

In addition to the pedagogical issues with the use of WhatsApp, access continues to be an issue-over 75% parents reported a host of challenges in supporting children to access education digitally including

- Not having an internet connection
- Being unable to afford data
- Internet speed/signal is not conducive.

While these challenges were common across states, in Jharkhand specifically, over 40% parents reported that they did not have the right device to access digital education. Interestingly, these findings are similar to those of private schools where parents reported internet speed and signal as the main hindrances in accessing online learning. Despite challenges in accessing education digitally not a single instance of education through non-digital mediums was reported. Due to the continued reliance on digital modes and interrupted access to education, it is estimated that children from disadvantage back grounds will lose almost 40% of their previous year's learning (Quinn & Polikoff,2017).

Before the nationwide lockdown to control the spread of the novel Corona virus, Hemant Soren's Government in Jharkhand had announced a review of the earlier government's school merger project. In line with the promises of both the congress before the state elections in 2019, the school education and literacy minister Jagarnath Mahto, had said that the process of reopening schools that had been closed as part of the school re-organisation plan would begin after the review.

When the lockdown was being relaxed the State Government took the decision on reopening schools in July. But only the school administrative office and the teacher arrival were made confirmed. Following the protocol of covid-19 the roaster duty came into its being where there must be one teacher, along with principal and two non teaching staffs.

Each subject's teaching will come alternatively in order to avoid the spread of covid-19. In case if students had any academic problem and wishing to consult with teacher for learning doubts that wards has to submit the consent letter written by their parents or local guardians. Therefore the state education and literary department planned to reopen government schools from September 21<sup>st</sup> 2020 for the students of classes 9 to 12.

**Conclusion-** Therefore, it is imperative that we should not only recover from the pandemic but this bitter experience helps us to become more prepared for future crises. In order to support this aim, countries need to build their capacity to provided blended models of education in the future. All the schools must be prepared better to switch easily between face-to-face and remote learning as needed. This strategie may protect the children's education during future pandemics but also during other natural disaster or adverse weather or situation. This will also create opportunities for more individualized approaches to teaching- learning process. While keeping this view in mind, it is necessary to develop flexible curriculum which can be implemented in both Offline and Online.

Jharkhand Council of Education must arrange workshop for the teachers to be better equipped to manage a wide range of IT devices in the event of future school closures. Therefore, short training courses to helps them improve their digital skills. So, utilizing the post-pandemic period to regenerate education system and resilienting from pandemic is the first priority and secondly re-modelling the Central to State Education system with proper infrastructure and technology.