

EDUCATION FOR RURAL DEVELOPMENT – ISSUES AND CONCERNS

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ABSTRACT

Education for the rural areas attracts a lot of significance as the development of the rural areas depends mainly on the literacy of the rural people and provides solutions for the economic and social issues being faced by our nation at large. Importance of education for rural areas is obviously recognized as one of the most essential factors for our national development. A literate villager is capable of using better methods of farming and getting good yields from his lands. Use of new technology and modern methods definitely requires education for the rural folk. Education not only improves the agricultural produce, but improves the awareness of hygiene and health, employment condition and social status of the villagers besides contributing for the development of our industries. However, a look at the progress our government has made in the education for rural areas, reveals the dismal fact that the literacy rate of the rural areas is still very low, which indicates that the required targets have not yet been achieved by us. Various surveys and studies show that the result are not encouraging.

Introduction

Education is a means to bring changes in our social, cultural, and economics fields; particularly rural education draws the attention of the public as it can help effectively in the rural growth and Environment. Sk Mishra (2000) says that the maladies that are found in the rural societies like poverty, unemployment, low-production from the agricultural land, superstition, and social inequality may be effectively cured by growth of literacy rate in the rural folk. As the rural development is invariably linked with education, rural education is the are on which a right focus may reveal several of its aspects.

Education and Rural Development

S.K.Misra and V.K.Puri (2000) said “Education can contribute significantly to rural Development in a variety of ways. By widening the horizons of knowledge of the rural people, it can enable them to overcome ignorance and superstitions. Adoption of new agricultural techniques And new methods of production is rendered easier if the farmers are educated. Education can be oriented as to impart skills and attitudes useful in improving the quality of family life (for example, through education on subjects such as health and nutrition, home repairs and improvements, family planning and child care, etc. In labour surplus economies like India education can help rural people in acquiring skills to set up cottage industries on their own so that the disguisedly unemployed people can be fruitfully employed in the villages themselves”

The Present situation

The present situation of education in rural areas can be observed through the rate of literacy. Men and women, more than 40 years of age, were taken for the study and rural areas were compared with the urban literacy. Through this study it could be found that the rate of literacy in rural areas is very dismal. In rural areas the rate of literacy is very low. In case of women, this is still lower. Between 1961-2001, in the rural areas the rate of literacy did not increase proportionately with the increase of rural areas. Between men and women, the rate of literacy among men was higher.

As Per 1991 Censuses

A.N. Agrawal, (1996) says “The literacy rate has been on the increase, with a sharp step-up in the latest 1981-91 decade. As per 1991 censuses the literacy rate at 52.1 percent, makes a 8.5 percentage point rise over the previous rate of 1981 at 43.6 percent”. Out of total population the literacy rate was 52.21 percent. In this the men literacy was 64.13 and the women literacy was 39.29. In rural areas in some of the families not even one member among the family was literate. In our state (A.P) the percentage of the rural families which had not even one literate member was 52.10. When compared to 1961 census, in 1981 the number-of illiterate people among rural areas increased by 64 millions. The survey conducted in 186 revealed that there were a large number of dropouts from V class. Only 40 percent of the children in the age groups of 6-9 were attending schools. More over the literacy rate of the scheduled castes in the rural areas was only 18.5 percent.

The following Table Explains the details of literacy over the decades:

The rate of literacy in Rural Areas (Economic Survey):(% of Population)

Year	Men	Women	The difference between men and women
1961	34.24	10.00	24.24
1971	39.75	15.49	24.26
1981	46.73	20.66	26.07
1991	57.90	30.60	27.30
2001	71.40	46.70	24.70

The rate of literacy in Urban Areas (Economic Survey):(% of Population)

Year	Men	Women	The difference between men and women
1961	66.01	39.74	26.27
1971	60.91	48.81	12.10
1981	73.92	54.40	19.52
1991	81.10	64.00	17.10
2001	86.70	73.20	13.50

The Rate of literacy in every decade in India: (1901 to 2011) (Census of India) (% of Population)

Year	Population (Millions)	Total	Men	Women
1901	238	5.35	9.83	0.60
1911	252	5.92	10.56	1.05
1921	251	7.16	12.21	1.81
1931	279	9.50	15.59	2.93
1941	319	16.10	24.90	7.30
1951	361	16.67	24.95	9.45
1961	439	24.02	34.44	12.95
1971	548	29.45	39.45	18.69
1981	684	36.23	46.89	24.82
1991	843	42.84	52.74	32.17
2001	1027	64.83	75.26	53.67
2011	1210	74.04	82.14	65.46

Steps taken to Promote Literacy

Our Government took steps to improve literacy in the rural areas. It gave importance to Primary Education and Adult Education.

Education Policy In India

Sk. Mishra (2000) says that, “for 20 years after independence no change was made by the nationalist government in the colonial policy of the British rules. In 1964 the government realized that a change was needed in the education system. Thus an Education Commission under the chairmanship of Dr. D.S.Kothari was constituted, which submitted its report to the government in 1966. The government, on the basis of the recommendation made by the Education Commission announced its National Education Policy in 1968”.

The Programmes for Rural School

Operation Black Board

This scheme was introduced from 1987-88. The Grant-in-aid Schools and the schools under the authority of panchayats and local bodies were working to spread primary education under this scheme. The aims of this schemes were: 1) To provide two large class rooms in every schools so as they can be used in all seasons 2) To appoint two teachers in every school 3) To Prepare all charts, maps, play things and boards to help teaching, Free Education, free midday meals and free books and uniforms were given to the children to encourage them to attend the school. Parents were also convinced to send their children to schools. In case of girl students, there were cash awards for them.

Navodaya Schools

Indian Government established the Navodaya Schools with the aim of providing standard, Higher education to the students. In these schools 75 percent seats were allotted to the rural students. In every district one Navodaya Schools was established. These schools were run in the pattern of residential schools. Admissions are made in VI class basing on the merit, where up to 10+2 level education is provided. Efforts are being made to see the number of girl students to be at least 1/3 of the total strength. Reservations are provided to the scheduled castes and tribes.

Non-Formal Education (NFE)

Non-Formal Education was introduced in the states that were recognized as educationally backward. A.P was one among nine such states. Non-Formal Education was different from the usual and regular formal education.

National policy on Education was to make primary education spread all through the country. Non-Formal Education covers the children who left schools in the middle, who live in the areas where there were no schools, who cannot come to school at day time, and who work to support their families. In comparison with Formal Education in grading, timings, teaching and in system, the NFE is easy and simple.

Free Education, free books and other facilities free-of cost are provided to the students in this scheme. NFE is meant particularly for the students from slum areas, tribal areas, hilly areas, drought prone areas and for those who are in some employment. Most of these NFE centres were located in rural areas, where the students who leave schools for several reasons could utilize the facilities provided under NFEs.

Our Constitution directed that compulsory education should be given to the children under 14 years of age and by 1960 all children under 14 should be educated. But even today the aim is not fulfilled.

There are three major problems faced by our education system to day. They are: 1) The non-availability of educational infra-structure 2) Retention of the students 3) The quality of teaching although there is a good increase in the number of primary schools, the upper primary schools are still scarce. Most of the rural areas

with less population are not convenient to start an upper primary. Hence the students of those villages have to walk more than 2 km to reach their schools. For those who move from place to place and who live in hilly areas, schools facilities cannot reach them. Particularly the girls are not allowed to go to other place for education, so the illiteracy rate among the girls in rural areas is still very high.

In some of the schools, minimum facilities are absent. Permanent buildings were provided to only 59 percent of the primary schools. The other schools are run in thatched houses or open places or in tents. Drinking water, library, black board, furniture and play ground facility are not up to the expected level. In some schools all classes are conducted in one class room and the number of teachers is also not sufficient.

The enrolment and retention is another problem for the school in rural areas. In some cases although there is good enrolment, but the number of dropouts is very large. Stagnation due to failure is also a discouraging fact. Most of the students admitted in the schools are not able to complete their X class. There are several reasons for this situation. Poverty in rural areas, child labour, lack of interest in education, lack of books and other material, lack of sufficient number of teachers, absence of motivation are some of them.

The quality of education is badly effected by the insufficient number of teachers, their poor knowledge of subject and teaching skills and lack of commitment to their profession. Our rural areas can develop only when rural education is made free from all these deficiencies and shortcomings.

Adult Education

As per the survey conducted by the Human Development Report (2000), India occupied 28th rank in HDI. India has 55.57 adult Education. 2/3 of the rural population, who are more than 14 years of age, are illiterate. They are grown up people without education and they are not prone to wish education for their children. To make them realize the importance of education is a necessary element to make it easy for the spread of Primary education.

Rural Functional Literacy Project (RFLP)

National Adult Education programme was started in 1978 and in 1989-90 Rural Functional literacy Project (RFLP) was started with the purpose of making the adult at least to read and write and do simple arithmetic; to make them understand their rights and responsibilities and to create social awareness.

National Literacy Mission (NLM) which was started in month of May 1988 aimed at completely eradicating illiteracy, and it mainly focused on rural areas. At least 80 million illiterates in the age group of 15-35 were to be made to have functional literacy by 1995.

Important Features of NLM

- 1) To conduct time bound programmes to remove illiteracy by area wise approach.
- 2) Through people's training centre to teach further education to those who have already had the minimum education. To set up reading rooms and offer facilities. To start one training centre for 3 or 4 villages formed as a group.
- 3) To teach the occupational skills, the Non-Formal programmes are to be taken up. For this purpose, voluntary organization, college, polytechnics, Nehru Youth Centers, Universities and the "Gramina Vidya Peeths" are to be utilized.
- 4) The social service organizations and voluntary bodies are to be made to participate in NLM. 75 percent of the administrative expenditure is met from the Government grants.
- 5) Now, this NLM is taken up on a large scale as a massive programme. Panchayats, Community Centers, Nehru Youth Centers, voluntary organization, students, teachers, housewives, employees, Labour unions, social service organizations and women clubs are involved in working for Adult education.

Education of Rural children

According to Article 45 in our Constitution, it is stated that compulsory education must be given to the children below the ages of 14 and it is to be achieved in a period of 10 years. But even 45 year that is by 1995, the proposed aim was not reached. When the number of students joining schools, and continuing their studies is observed, it is clear that in education, the expected results are not produced. As per the censuses of HDF 2000 Primary, and Secondary Education India has 54 percent, Adult Education is 55.7 percent (from HDR).

Government aspired to make elementary education universal. In 1985 it announced National Education Policy and wanted to achieve 100 percent results in Primary Education by 1990 and 100 percent results in elementary education by 1995. But these expectations were not fulfilled. According to 1981 censuses, the rural literacy rate was only 34 percent. Even among the states there were great disparities in their individual literacy rates. In the rural families nearly 39 percent of them remained totally illiterate. Only 40 percent of the age group of 6-10 years and 44 percent of the age group of 10-14 years joined the schools. After 14 years of age most of the rural children leave their schools. The dropout rate was very high in case of girl students. Only 90 percent of Primary School; 81 percent of upper primary schools. And 93 percent of non-formal education centers were established in the rural areas.

There are several causes for the school drop outs in rural areas. 1) They are not willing to go for higher studies 2) They have to take part in work to support their families 3) they have to involve in domestic work 4) They fail in examination 5) and other reasons. Most of the girl students in rural areas involve in household work which takes a lot of their time and makes them not to show interest to attend schools. These trends are to be taken care of and encouragement should be given to those who stop their studies at primary level to continue to go for upper primary and higher levels of education.

The other aspects that the rural education is suffering from, can be obviously seen: 1) The insufficient funds 2) Insufficient infrastructures 3) Education not relevant for their employment or occupation 4) The Negligence of teachers who lack commitment for vocation 5) and also the political interference.

Quality in Schooling

While the schools in rural areas are facing the problems like admission, retention and dropouts, the quality of teaching in those schools is not also up to the required level. The percentage of five year olds enrolled in schools increased from 54.6 percent in 2009 to 62.8 percent in 2010. Even after five years in schools, close to half of all children are not even at the level expected of them after two years at school. Only 53.4 percent fifth class children could read second class text. The proportion of std I children who could recognize numbers from 1-9 declined from 69.3 percent in 2009 to 65.8 percent in 2010. Only 35 percent of children could do simple division problems. Most of the middle school children are weak in every day calculation. Most of these issues are to be tackled by the Govt. with appropriate steps to improve the quality in teaching and the quality in the performance of the students.

Initiatives taken by Government

Several initiatives have been taken by the Government in the field of elementary and secondary education in recent years. Some of the important schemes are SSA (Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan) being implemented in partnership with the states to address the needs of children in the age group of 6-14. The goals of SSA include enrolment of all children in schools Education Guarantee Centers (EGCs), Alternate schools, back to school camp, retention of all children till the upper primary stage by 2010. The Kasturba Gandhi Balika Vidyalayas (KGBVs) is a scheme for setting up residential school at upper primary level for girls belonging predominantly to the SC/St, OBC and minority communities. The scheme is being implemented in

the EBBs (Educational Backward Blocks) where rural female literacy is below 30 percent and in select urban areas where female literacy is below the national average.

1. National Programme for Education of Girls at Elementary Level (NPEGEL)

The NPEGEL, is a focused intervention of Government of India to reach the “Hardest to Reach” girls. It is an important component of the SSA, which provides additional support for enhancing girl’s education over and above the normal SSA interventions. The programme provides for setting up of a ‘model school’ in every cluster with more intense community mobilization and supervision of girl’s enrolment in schools.

2. National Programme of Midday Meal in Schools

Under the National Programme of Midday Meals in schools, cooked mid-day meal is provided to all the children attending classes I-VIII in government, local body, government aided and National Child Labour Project Schools.

3. Rashtriya Madhyamik Siksha Abhiyan (RMSA)

The RMSA was launched in March 2009 with the objective of enhancing access to Secondary Education and improving its quality. The implementation of the scheme started from 2009-10.

4. Inclusive Education for the disabled at Secondary Stage (IEDSS)

The IEDSS scheme was launched in 2009-10 replacing the earlier scheme of Integrated Education for the Disabled Children (IEDC).

5. The National Literacy Mission has been recast “Saakshar Bharat” With prime focus on female literacy. This flagship programme of the government will cover all adult in the age group of 15 and above though its primary focus will be on women.

As the rural youth are not having favorable environment for education they stop their studies. Sometimes the poverty among the rural communities is posing a major obstacle for the education.

Dr Karnati Lingaiah says that “today the right type of education is not being imparted to the young learners, particularly those in rural areas. Education which is provided both through the formal schools as well as non-formal education centers run by government and non-governmental organizations have to be radically changed. Changes are required in the Process or approaches to educate people. Today the educational institutions in the rural and urban areas are not very helpful to provide value education.

Our Education Commission headed by eminent educationists like. Dr. D.S.Kothari and others have reported vividly that the present system of education in practice is not aimed at the total transformation of our villages. It is high time that we allocated more funds to improve our village schools. Our university education must be made useful for the all-round development of our villages. Honest attempts should be made to promote the right type of social political, economic, cultural and spiritual life’ in the rural areas and the Nation in general.

As the Economic Survey 2010-2011 Observes

In the year 2001,11 percent of the population of the country was in age group 18-24 years and this is expected to rise to 12 percent by the end of Eleventh Five year plan. This young population should be considered as a valuable asset, which, if well equipped with education and skills, can contribute effectively to the development of the national as well as global economy (Economic Survey 2010-11).

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