



## PROBLEMS OF PRIMARY EDUCATION IN RURAL AREAS OF WEST BENGAL

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**ABSTRACT** This field research especially focuses on Classes I–VIII of rural primary education in West Bengal, India. School enrollment and dropout rates, student reading proficiency, primary school type and tutoring, school observations, RTE standards and norms, and school performance levels are a few examples of the indicators that control it. A key factor in determining development and a significant contributor to a nation's Human Development Index (HDI) is education. It is, of course, significant in assessing a person's level of social and economic empowerment in the modern world. We thus need a strong, egalitarian educational system that benefits the whole community. The objective of the education policies and framework of the Indian government is to achieve the Millennium Development Goal (MDG) of achieving universal primary education by 2015. Child labor, inadequate physical infrastructure, teacher accountability, management of midday meals, teaching and training, distribution of funds, irregular school inspections, and the proliferation of private tuition have all been noted as issues in West Bengal's rural schools. The RTE Act of 2009, which includes a schedule and road map, improved functional literacy, increased enrollment and retention in rural schools, the abolition of child labor, implementation of the mid-day meal program with an efficient monitoring mechanism, the promotion of girls' education for underprivileged communities through KGBV, the expedited opening of special schools under NCLP for working children in the 9–14 age range, and the establishment of additional schools in remote rural areas are some of the strategies developed to address all of these issues. enhancing the infrastructure for education, placing a strong emphasis on ICT-based infrastructure, etc. The effective administration and governance of West Bengal's rural development through school education will also be visualized as the key to India's rural development in the twenty-first century, along with the proper implementation of RTE indicators with quality assurance measures of school education.

**KEYWORDS :** Problems, Strategies, Elementary Education, Rural Education, MDG.

### INTRODUCTION:

According to the 2011 Census, West Bengal is ranked 17th (68.11%) out of 68.84 percent of India's rural population. The percentage of the people living in rural areas has been rising; it decreased from 72.19% in the 2001 Census to 68.84% in the 2011 Census. West Bengal has a higher literacy rate than the rest of India (74.04%), at 77.08 percent. In India, the literacy rate for the rural population is 68.91%, whereas in West Bengal, it is 72.97%. Encouraging education in rural areas throughout all U.T. states is crucial to India's inclusive growth. In general, school enrollment and dropout rates, student reading proficiency, elementary school types and tutoring, school observations, RTE norms and standards for performance levels, student-teacher ratios in classrooms, the availability of drinking water, the availability of restrooms and facilities that are useable by girls, the availability of library resources with books and computers, etc. are the educational indicators that govern rural elementary education (Class I–VIII) in West Bengal, India.

### West Bengal's Primary Education Situation:

This section examines West Bengal's current primary education situation as well as the overall pattern of education's growth. The bar diagram below shows that, while the female literacy rate increased from 36.07% in 1981 to 71.16% in 2011, with an average increase of 8.77% per decade, the male literacy rate increased from 59.93% in 1981 to 82.67% in 2011. This difference represents an increase of 5.69% per decade.

### Problems Identified:

#### Teachers' Accountability:

The issue of teachers' accountability affects elementary education in West Bengal's rural districts. According to the school's yearly calendar, instructors used to shirk their responsibilities by skipping classrooms and participating in extracurricular activities like sports and culture. They don't work with openness or accountability, take leaves of absence without documentation, and get out of school as soon as they can.

#### Insufficiency of TLMs:

Despite being prepared, Teaching-Learning Materials (TLMs) are not appropriately made accessible to students. The TLMs are not widely used and are not used well. The lack of utilization of creative and activity-based teaching approaches results in boring and uninteresting instruction.

#### Problem of Teacher Appointment and Transfer:

Many rural West Bengal schools are operating with one or two

instructors, despite the urgent need for additional teachers to accommodate the student body. There are no rules governing the idea of a sanctioned job at one moment and teacher transfers at another. Instead, temporary arrangements for paraprofessional or part-time instructors are extended annually to satisfy criteria.

#### Mid-Day Meal Administration:

Upper Primary Classes (VI– VIII) kids in 3,479 educationally disadvantaged blocks throughout the country, including West Bengal, were able to enroll in the Mid-Day Meal Scheme (MDMS) starting in October 2007. Commencing on April 1st, 2008, the 2008–09 curriculum is intended for all students enrolled in local body, and government schools. The EGS/AIE Centers, Madarsa and Maqtabas, as well as all areas of the Govt. aided elementary and upper primary schools, are sponsored under the SSA.

- I. Insufficient oversight of the plan due to low engagement and focus,
- II. Delay on the part of the school head in getting funds or MDMS supplies, even after submitting the request,
- III. There are variations in rice quality across schools in urban and rural areas.
- IV. incapacity of instructors, which is particularly severe in rural regions, to keep kids in class after the midday meal is provided.

#### Inadequate Physical Infrastructure:

West Bengal's rural schools continue to lack adequate physical infrastructure. The problematic components of the schools' physical infrastructure include the boundary wall, the availability of drinking water, the usability of the restrooms, the separate provision for the girls' restroom, etc.

#### Instruction and Training:

In order to provide primary school kids with engaging and activity-based learning, teachers are required to take part in orientation programs. Seven5,000 (seventy-five thousand) of West Bengal's 1,50,000 (one lakh five thousand) in-service teachers teach in grades I through V, while 30,000 (thirty thousand) teach in classes VI through VIII. These teachers don't have official training and are employed by different elementary and upper primary schools. To assist minimize the backlog of untrained teachers, the West Bengal Board of Primary Education is giving in-service training to teachers who have not undergone training in partnership with the NCTE, New Delhi. This training is scheduled to be completed by March 31, 2015, and can be extended again through April 2019 through the Open and Distance Learning (ODL) mode in accordance with the RTE, 2009.

Even though the most significant SSA solution is teacher training, given the availability of;

- a) All instructors get ten days of in-service training annually,
- b) A 30-day program for recently hired educators, and
- c) Untrained instructors must complete 60 days of on-the-job training for their professional growth and pedagogical enrichment; this makes it difficult for teachers to provide effective instruction in the classroom.

Cause:

- I. inadequately thought out teacher training programs,
- ii. There are several organizations offering inconsistent training programs.
- III. Many educators lack the drive and motivation to apply the methodology they learned throughout their training to their classroom instruction.
- IV. Many educators believe that their training is not always beneficial, which makes them less inclined to put the learning skills they have acquired into practice.

Additionally, the NCTE has made training a necessary requirement for teacher appointment, with the appointment of instructors contingent solely upon meeting the academic requirements and professional training degree requirements. According to the RTE, 2009 regulations, there is a serious issue that is being discussed and will likely be resolved in the near future in West Bengal's rural primary schools.

#### **Fund Diversion:**

The government's Centrally Sponsored Scheme (SSA). of India offers financial assistance for;

- a) Building more classrooms, restrooms and drinking water systems, boundary walls, cooking sheds, etc.
- b) Building residential hostels and KGBV,
- d) Building repairs for educational institutions,
- e) The correct and timely use of teacher training, etc.

Under the SSA, money designated for various reasons is being misappropriated. It poses a significant obstacle to West Bengal's basic education system's timely advancement and growth.

The inspection of schools is not conducted on a regular basis. More than "80" schools would have been assigned to each SIS for oversight and inspection. The fact that they are attending summer meetings, filling out various evaluation forms, maintaining elementary school teachers' service books, disbursing their salaries and pensions, and handling salary and pension-related inquiries, among other things, is extremely concerning. Consequently, they are unable to carry out their primary duties, which include monitoring teacher performance, school inspections, and classroom transactions. The current S.I. of Schools do not have enough time to visit the majority of the schools, not even once a year, since there are several openings that have been posted for a long period.

#### **Spread of Private Tuition:**

The Annual Status of Education Report (RURAL) for 2010–2013 shows that private tuition is becoming increasingly common in the government. primary and upper primary schools in West Bengal's rural districts in comparison to private schools. The primary cause of this is that parents in cities and other metropolitan regions are copying each other and have taken to sending their kids to private tutors in order to get better supervision and outcomes. Empirical research indicates that there is no relationship between the inclination to send kids to private tutoring and the caliber of instruction provided in schools, as the primary cause of sending kids to private tutoring is subpar instruction.

#### **Lack of Transparent Governance:**

Despite the fact that School Management Committees are primarily responsible for efficient and transparent governance under the RTE, 2009, their performance is inadequate and a failure in West Bengal's rural districts. Village Education Committees (VECs), which had historically reigned, have provided evidence of this. This committee focuses most of its time, if at all feasible, on financial and physical infrastructure issues rather than academics or high-quality education. even if the headmaster, who serves as the school's academic leader, is ignorant of the most recent Govt. rules and regulations, which are clearly visible in West Bengal's rural schools.

In addition, problems have been reported in West Bengal's rural schools with Pukka Road, power, newspapers. Child work, parental

ignorance of the plight of their children, and a lack of cooperation between DPSC and DPO are further problems.

#### **Techniques for Resolving:**

Following the RTE Act of 2009, West Bengal has established the following road map:

- I. The process of creating State RTE Rules in accordance with RTE, 2009 is underway.
- ii. The neighborhood's boundaries for the primary and upper primary schools must be fixed.
- III. It becomes vital to hire teachers in order to adhere to the PTR guidelines. 10% of sanctioned strength should be vacant, and the sanctioned strength should correspond to enrollment.
- IV. The NCTE announcements should be followed for minimal requirements for instructors.
- v. Teachers must participate in extracurricular activities (except from managing disasters, elections, and censuses); they must also refrain from giving individual lessons.
- vi. EGS facilities will soon disappear, and formal education will only be offered via accredited institutions.
- vii. Every elementary school must have a library, play materials and gaming equipment,
- viii. Every unassisted school has to register with the DI Office.
- ix. All unaided schools should be directed to set aside 25% of their seats for local youngsters from underprivileged sections or groups.

#### **Implementing the updated SSA framework:**

By the end of 2010, all children in the age range of 6 to 14 must get a meaningful and useful primary education as part of the Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan (SSA). Consequently, the following principles are included in the National Level Committee's report on the "Implementation of RTE Act and Resultant Revamp of SSA -2010":

- a) The NCF-2005's holistic approach of education,
- c) Fairness,
- c) Obtain,
- d) Issues Related to Gender,
- e) Teacher Centrality,
- g) Need for Morality,
- g) The updated SSA framework is centered on the convergence and integration of the system of education management, with the aim of implementing it in compliance with the RTE, 2009.

The goal is to improve adult literacy with a focus on functional literacy, even if West Bengal's literacy rate is rising—it stands at 77.10% according to the 2011 Census, higher than the 68.64 percent recorded in the 2001 Census. Development may benefit greatly from the improvement of functional literacy with an emphasis on adult literacy. In order to promote adult education in a mission-style, the National Literacy Mission (NLM) was founded in 1988 and began operations in West Bengal in 1990. The goal of this movement was to increase functional literacy among adults between the ages of 15 and 35. This initiative was implemented initially and progressively across all of the districts of West Bengal, improving adult literacy levels across a range of attainment levels. This initiative went well in igniting parents' passion and interest in educating their children in rural West Bengal, as demanded by the state's many socioeconomic groups, particularly those residing in rural regions of the state who were previously denied of access to educational facilities. Unfortunately, the absence of supervision and involvement from the Self Help Group movement in West Bengal's rural districts contributed to the program's failure in its post-literacy campaign and ongoing education arrangements. The government's officially supported Sakshar Bharat Mission aims to bridge the literacy gap between rural and urban areas. of India was established in 2009 with the goal of eradicating disparities in adult literacy between populations living in urban and rural areas, as well as those based on gender and geography. Therefore, in order to increase adult functional literacy, this program targets women and impoverished groups in rural areas. It is now in operation. It will continue until the 12th Five-Year Plan Period (2012–17), focusing on youth (ages 15–19), with the aim of achieving 80% literacy and a reduction in the gender gap to less than 10%.

In rural schools, the government seeks to increase student enrollment and retention. Through specialized monitoring in the rural districts of West Bengal, Child Census, VEC/MTA, and Gram Sansads collaborated to achieve this.

#### **Enhancing School Infrastructure with a Focus on ICT-Based Infrastructure:**

The RTE harmonized SSA is actively working to ensure that all schools, including those in rural West Bengal, have access to clean and safe restrooms and drinking water, barrier-free access, libraries with ICT access, playgrounds, boundary walls, and other amenities.

#### **Special Measures for basic Education in the Educationally Backward Blocks:**

There are '85' Educationally Backward Blocks (EBBs) in West Bengal. Particular attention must be paid to basic education students in these EBBs, particularly those who reside in rural regions. These are the

- I Conversion of 5% or more of the Govt. primary schools in all EBBs that have Residential School Complexes (RSCs) with a tribal population of at least 50%
- II. Special assistance to guarantee children from SC communities that are discriminated against and socially, economically, and educationally poor, as well as better learning and retention
- III. To grant rural talents pre-matriculation scholarships and incentives provided by the Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment, and
- IV. Collaboration with organizations from the civil society to help Dalit children.

These specific campaigns for rural children are being carried out in West Bengal in accordance with the national goals promoted by the 12th Five-Year Plan (2012–17).

#### **Proper execution of the Mid-Day Meal Scheme:**

Since the MDMS was declared universal in 2008, several adjustments have been made to ensure that it is implemented correctly via an efficient monitoring system. These are the

- i. Revision of dietary standards to guarantee children have a healthy, balanced diet,
- ii. Reduction of the cost of cooking to enable the provision of large, high-quality meals, and
- iii. Customary compensation for chefs and attendants, etc.

The government created the Kasturba Gandhi Balika Vidyalay (KGBV) Scheme to promote girls' education in underprivileged communities. during August 2004 in India. The goal was to establish residential schools for females, mostly from SC, ST, OBC, and Minorities, at the Upper Primary School Level throughout various regions. Though it applies to the EBBs encompassing the Educationally Backward Districts of West Bengal Bankura, North 24 Praganas, Purulia, and West Midnapore, it concentrates on rural regions.

#### **Establishing primary schools in rural regions where people live in isolation:**

In West Bengal has 20 districts, some of which are rural regions without SSK or elementary schools within a mile of a resident's home. The prediction for 2010–11 states that 14,165 upper primary schools and 1,557 extra elementary schools would need to be created for residents of West Bengal's rural districts in order to ensure suitable access with the availability of schools within 1 km.

#### **CONCLUSION:**

Strategies like meeting teacher requirements, stepping up inspections, developing teachers' capacity through training programs, having an efficient monitoring system, and practicing good governance, among others, will guarantee that elementary education develops and that West Bengal's rural education grows along with it. Therefore, using the rural areas of West Bengal as an example, rural education will be a key factor in the country's growth.

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