



The Challenge of Educating Rural India

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ABSTRACT

India has the largest education system in the world after china. However, issues of quality education and access remain challenges in some parts of the country. The Right to Education (RTE) is now a fundamental right for all children in the age group of 6 to 14 years. In simple words, It mean that the Government will be responsible for providing education to every child up to the eighth standard. Free of cost, irrespective of class and gender. However, it will take at least five more years before the target is reached. This is because the infrastructure has to be built, and lakhs of teachers recruited. he RTE is the first legislation in the world that puts the responsibility of enrollment, attendance and completion of education on the government, though the National education policy of 1968 talked of a free and compulsory education, the Right to Education came into effect only in April 2010. To fulfill the promise the imparting education as a right, the government has enhanced funds to the education sector. In the current budget (2012-13), an increase of 24 per cent has been made in allocation for the education sector. Here this article describes the Right to Education, and the challenges to enforce free and compulsory education. There is heartening news in the latest census. India's effective literacy rate has recorded a 9.2 per cent rise to reach 74.04 per cent, according to provisional data of the 2011 census. Effective literacy rate in the 2001 census was 64.83, which has improved to 74.04. Despite the constraints, more and more children are getting enrolled in schools and aspiring to share the gains of the economic growth.

Keywords : Education system – RTE – Legislation – National education policy – Free and Compulsory ducation

Introduction

The role of education in facilitating social and economic progress is well accepted. Access to education is critical to access emerging opportunities that accompany economic growth. Keeping in view of this accepted fact there has been a major thrust on education since independence; but as far as ensuring quality education in rural India is concerned it has always been one of the biggest challenges for the government. India viewed education as the best way of bringing social change. Soon after gaining independence in 1947, making education available to all had become a priority for the government.

The Education sector has received considerable attention in the Budget (for the year 2012-2013) too- Which has announced a significant increase of 24 per cent in the total allocation for education sector. The existing operational norms of the sarva shiksha Abhiyan have also been revised to implement the right of children to free and compulsory education, which has come into effect from 1 April 2010. Allocations to achieve the objectives of the Right to Education (RTE), which has been aligned with the Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan, were hiked from Rs 15,000 crore to Rs 21,000 crore. While this is targeted at strengthening elementary education, the Centre is now focusing on "vocationalisation" of secondary education, which will enable students to pursue job-oriented courses at the plus two-level. Initiatives have also been taken to increase retention of Scheduled Caste and Scheduled Tribe student in Class IX and X by introducing a pre-matriculation scholarship.

The human resource development (HRD) ministry's allocations have gone up to Rs 52,057 crore from last year's Rs 43,836 crore. Thought the recent budget seems to be providing a major impetus towards the country's overall education growth but due to various socio-economic factors, India's

education program continues to be denigrated. Of the biggest victims of the educational system are those living in rural areas. Though for encouraging the growth of rural education, from making policies to introducing laws – our government has lined up the education system up to the mark but implementing the process into an effective way has been the lacunae of the entire system.

Objective of the study

To study the impacts on the challenge of Educating Rural India

Recent scenario of India's Education Sector:

- 96.5% of children in the 6 to 14 age group in rural India are enrolled in school.
- 71.1% of these children are enrolled in government schools, 24.3% are enrolled in private schools.
- The proportion of girls (age 11-14) who are still out of school has declined from 6.8% in 2009 to 5.9 in 2010; in states like Rajasthan (12.1%) and Uttar Pradesh (9.7%), this percentage remains high and shows little changes since 2009.
- Enrollment in private schools in rural India increased from 21.8% in 2009 to 24.3% in 2010
- Nationally, the percentage of five year olds enrolled schools increased from 54.6% in 2009 to 62.8% in 2010. The biggest increase was visible in Karnataka where the proportion of five year olds enrolled in school increased from 17.1% in 2009 to 67.6 in 2010.
- Nationally there is now much change in reading levels as compared to last year. Only 53.4% children in Standard V can read a standard II level text. This suggests that even after five years in school, close to half of all children are not even at the level expected of them after two years in school.
- On average, there has been a decrease in children's abil-

ity to do simple mathematics. The proportion of Standard I children who could recognize numbers from 1-9 declined from 69.3% in 2009 to 65.8% in 2010. Similarly, the proportion of children in Standard III who could solve two digit subtraction problems decreased from 39% in the same period. Children in Standard V who could do simple division problems also dropped from 38% in 2009 to 35.9% in 2010.

- ASER 2010 found that over 60% of the 13,000 schools surveyed satisfied the infrastructure norms specified by the RTE. However, more than half of these schools will need more teachers. A third will need more classrooms.
- For rural India as a whole, children's attendance shows no change over the period 2007-2010. Attendance remained at around 73% during this period.

Source: Annual status of Education Report (ASER) 2011 RIGHT TO EDUCATION

The Right to Education Act (RTE Act) came into force in the entire country from April 1, 2010. It is now legally enforceable for every child between the age of six and fourteen years to demand free and elementary education. The RAE Act is the first legislation in the world that puts the responsibility of ensuring enrollment, attendance and completion on the Government.

The Act makes education a fundamental right of every child between the ages of 6 and 4 and specifies minimum norms in elementary schools. It requires all private schools to reserve 25% of seats to children from poor families (to be reimbursed by the state as part of the public-private partnership plan).

According to government estimates, there are nearly 220 million children in there are nearly 220 million children in the relevant age group, of which 4.6%, or nearly 9.2 million, are out of school. It is estimated that 1.71 lakh crore rupees will be needed in the next five years for implementation of the RTE Act. Shikshya Abhiyan registering an increase of 40%.

Features of the Act

The Act makes it mandatory for every child between the ages of 6-14 to be provided for education by the State. This means that such child does not have to pay a single penny as regards books, uniforms etc... too.

- Any time of the academic year, a child can go to a school and demand that this right be respected.
- Private education institutions have to reserve 25% of their seats starting from class I in 2011 to disadvantaged students.
- Strict criteria for the qualification of teachers. There is a requirement of a teacher student ration of 1:30 at each of these schools that ought to be met within a given time frame.
- The schools need to have certain minimum facilities like adequate teachers, playground and infrastructure. The government will evolve some mechanism to help marginalized schools comply with the provisions of the Act.
- There is a new concept of 'neighbourhood schools' that has been devised. This is similar to the model in the United States. This would imply that the state government and local authorities will establish primary schools within walking distance of one km of the neighbourhood. In case of children for Class VI to VIII, the school should be within

a walking distance of three km of the neighborhood.

- Unaided and private schools shall ensure that children from weaker sections and disadvantaged groups shall not be segregated from the other children in the classrooms nor shall their classes be held at places and timings different from the classes held for the other children.

Universalization of Education

Education is a dynamic process that starts from birth. A child surrounded by parents and other siblings experience her surroundings and responds. The surrounding environment, the physical and social, "imparts" some information and the child tries to find a pattern in that information and responds. From those responses we assess whether his/her development is normal, abnormal or extraordinary. Different children at the same biological age responds to the same environmental situation differently depending on the development of their perceptive and cognitive skills such as seeing, hearing, smelling, touching, and mentally processing that information to discover the patterns. The behavioral response of the students with identical perceptive the cognitive skill differ due to the differences in the family environment and the extent of self study and effort. So we need for a better education policy for all round development of a child.

Challenges Ahead

- First generation learners lose interest in study due to various factors. Studying demands a different type of concentration/attention then they are used to pay while watching movies or doing household work. it also demands a suitable environment, motivator and encouragement. When these children cannot keep pace with classmates in the class, they lose interest.
- Financial assistance provided by these children to their family makes it difficult for the authorities to get them admitted in school.
- As per the provision of the act, children possessing lesser financial ability admitted in private schools may be exposed to different life style and living standard. While the intermixing may result in better coordination and cooperation among children of different financial strata, a coping – problem for the poorer kids cannot be overruled either.
- It is agreed that the act provides us with a weapon to deal with out poor human capital inventory.

Conclusion

India has the second largest education system in the world after China. The scale of operation involved to ensure quality of Education for All in the country is unique and challenging. At the same time, the nature of problems affecting the education system are so diverse and often deep rooted that the solution cannot lie in the alteration of any single factor-it is not about just shortage of money of just shortage of trained teachers or lack of political will; all these undeniably contribute to the problems, affecting the country's existing education system. However, there is a need to look at the entire set of problems and deal with the issue holistically taking into consideration the specific context of different sections of the society. It will also require a constant and strong central support for policy, strategy, technical assistance, and monitoring and evaluation combined with increased decentralization within government, stronger public-private partnerships, and improved accountability relationship between the service providers, policy makers, and the target population.