



**ORIGINAL RESEARCH PAPER**

**Pedagogical Sciences**

**RURAL TEACHERS AND STUDENTS FACING DIFFICULTY IN SCHOOL EDUCATION - TAMIL NADU**

**KEY WORDS:**

**Dr. A. Magalingam**

Assistant Professor, Department of Pedagogical Sciences, Tamil Nadu Teachers Education University, Chennai – 97

**ABSTRACT**

Now a days is very has been gradually decreasing its effect day-by-day. Rural means living in or characteristic of farming or country life. The literacy rate in Tamil Nadu is very decent compared to other states of India. The school is to be viewed as a morally based community of learners. All its members - students, teachers, school staff and parents - should possess a true commitment to the core values of the institution. Schools which are 'morally -based' learning communities will educate children and improve society itself. Schools are to be the leaders of the community. Teachers should not simply teach on the basis of what has been told to them nor do they merely imitate the ways of teaching they have listened to. They have to build up their own professional knowledge, skills and value perspectives

**INTRODUCTION**

Free and compulsory education of children in the age group of 6 to 14 years has now become a fundamental right. The failure of the State Governments to implement such constitutional provisions 'free and compulsory education' for over half a century since Independence has led to this much awaited constitutional amendment. The attainment of the goal of Universalisation of Elementary Education (UEE) up to class VIII has so far remained a dream only. The latest census data reveal that nearly 50 per cent of all the children of school going age and 66.3 per cent of girls in the 6 to 14 age group are out-of-school children or dropouts in early primary school years.

The 1986 National Policy on Education (NPE) stated as its goal that universal primary education, i.e., up to class V, shall be achieved by 1990 and Universalisation of Elementary Education by 1995. Neither the target of the year 1990 nor that of 1995 was realized. Almost 7 years later, the Ministry of Human Resource Development released a document in 1993 on the Education for All (EFA) which strikes a pessimistic note that EFA by 2000 AD seems to be a 'daunting task'. These varying declarations emanating from the Central Government's Ministry of HRD are most confusing! However, the Ministry's Annual Report (1993-1994) is quite clear as it admits that education is expanding but vast ground is yet to be covered for fulfilling the constitutional mandate of UEE.

The Report clearly brings out the unhappy situation of persistence of dropouts, low level of retention of children in schools and considerable wastage in school education. The indication is that education is not just an academic field which could be dealt with by the Government and its bureaucracy with the assistance of some experts in the field sitting in a five star hotel! Education is not a recreation club, a business concern or a gambling den.

It is a social institution which should train millions of our youth to face challenges, some of which are personal, some social and some related to growth and development, and all to achieve excellence in every field of human activity. Some fundamental questions arise. They are: What is education? What is the strategy on the quantitative side, to achieve cent per cent enrolment and retention and zero per cent dropout? What should be the measures to improve the quality of education? The whole issue is to be perceived in its broader, varied dimensions, which are social, cultural and economic. One of the biggest concerns of educators across the world, and especially in India, is making the present generation learners future-ready. India is relatively young as a nation with around 28 million youth population being added every year. More than 50 per cent of its population is below the age of 25 and more than 65 per cent are aged below 35. In 2020, the average age of an Indian is expected to be 29 years, while it

will be 37 for China and 48 for Japan. However, India's high youth population won't be of help to the economy if universal education is not achieved all over India.

The main problem India now faces is that all the pedagogical innovations are fit to improve the quality of urban education while the rural learners and their education remain largely neglected. With 65 per cent of the population residing in rural India, education there truly deserves much more attention, especially when it is plagued with so many problems - dearth of teachers, teacher absenteeism and poor quality of teachers.

**EDUCATION**

Education is not to stuff the child's mind with details and data but to free it from fear and prejudice. W.S. Yeats rightly says that "education is not the filling of a pail but the lighting of a fire". In centenary celebrations speech Mrs. Indira Gandhi, called education a liberating, democratizing force, cutting across the barriers of caste and class, smoothing out inequalities imposed by birth and other circumstances.

He treats it as the art of drawing out full manhood of the children under training - drawing out the best from the boys and the girls. To set the children's mind free, to kindle their spirit of enquiry, to develop in them the capacity for absorbing the good while rejecting the bad, to draw out wholesome personalities in them are the fundamental positive goals of education.

**Reconstruction of the Educational System**

A radical re-construction of the educational system has been too often emphasised. Accordingly, the NPE (1986) viewed policy formulation in the wider socio-political context. The Committee for Review of NPE - 1986 elaborated this and viewed education in the overall context of social, economic, regional and gender-based disparities. Similar views were expressed by the Yashpal Committee (1993), which felt education could not be altered without altering a lot of things in our social set-up.

**Quantity and Quality in Education**

The Education policy of Tamil Nadu is committed to its quantitative expansion as much as it is to the quantitative improvement. While quantity as much of anything is easily comprehensible, quality is not that easy to grasp as it depends upon value judgments and varying subjective considerations of persons concerned with education. Besides a lot of difficulties may creep in while attempts are made to quantify it. Quantitative, statistical analysis based on different approaches may lead to several interpretations affecting the policy formulation and its implementation. Comparing the quantitative and qualitative sides of the question, the conclusion invariably arrived at is that the quantitative

expansion is likely to be at the expense of the qualitative aim.

**Missing Children**

The period of 15 years between 1957-58 and 1971-72 coincides with the Second and Third Five Year Plans, Annual Plans and first three years of the Fourth Five Year Plan. Again the first four years of this period form part of the 10-year period, namely, 1951-52 to 1960-61 which was fixed by Article 45 of the constitution for achieving free and compulsory education for all children of 6-14 years.

**Teachers' Role**

The tilling up of vacancies of teachers' posts, provision of at least two teachers in each school and appointment of B.Ed., qualified teachers to teach the raised syllabus in mathematics and science in middle schools and replacing Secondary Grade Teachers in Tamil Nadu are, of course, necessary conditions but not sufficient conditions for achieving qualitative education. If qualitative education is to be imparted to our children and if schools should "pull in" boys and girls in large numbers and if an ideal atmosphere for learning is to be created in schools, more than anything else it is the teacher who is to play a leading role in schools. He has to eminently use the classroom not merely to teach subjects, explain subject matter and go on stuffing the little minds with lot of information but also essentially to "sensitize" the young minds

**1. Non-permanence of teachers is demotivating**

Most of the schools in rural areas are run by the government. They appoint ad hoc teachers, instead of permanent ones, who are poorly paid as compared to the huge remuneration of a full-time Trained Graduate Teacher (TGT).

Moreover, promising career prospects, which is quite a motivation booster, is almost nil for the non-permanent teachers. This leads to dissatisfaction, eventually resulting in a dearth of teachers because they move away to more permanent jobs.

**2. Late or blatantly absent**

Lack of accountability of teachers and school authorities has raised the rate of absenteeism. School Development and Management Committees (SDMCs), comprising parents and members of the local community, have been entrusted with the responsibility of overseeing teachers and their duties. However, research suggests that the committee has hardly seen success.

**3. Non-Teaching duties**

Moreover, non-teaching duties like election invigilation often keep teachers away from schools. Furthermore, teachers often have to report for duty far away from their home. With an inadequate transport system in rural India, the distance only adds to their woes and often results in absenteeism.

**4. Exemption from TET**

Several states have exempted candidates from Teachers' Eligibility Test (TET) as only 20 per cent of the aspirants clear it. This wrong move, in an attempt to quickly fix the issue of dearth of teachers, has deteriorated the quality of education in the states even further. However, quality of teachers is a major concern not only in these states, but across the entire country.

**5. Lack of quality teacher training**

There are many private teacher-training institutes in India, but the quality of the training they provide is unsatisfactory. Continuous professional development is a motivator for teachers, and enough attention is needed in this regard.

**Digital aids to the rescue**

Many remedies such as surprise school inspections, teacher-training courses etc. have been attempted to salvage the rural education scenario. Without being dismissive of any of these, I

would like to point out the effectiveness of digital aids in battling the challenges plaguing our education system. This front has benefited, and gained visibility, thanks to some potential ventures by both government and non-government initiatives alike.

**Government initiatives**

Attuned to the Modi government's Digital India initiative, a couple of projects have been introduced in the school education segment.

- For instance, E-basta aims to make digital education via tablets and computers accessible to learners in rural areas. Digital learning can help develop critical thinking skills. The project aims not only to benefit learners in learning concepts, but also to make them comfortable with technology.
- Steps are already being taken to introduce digital aids in preschools. Though digital aids can never really replace teachers, initiatives of these kinds can make quality content available to them.
- Again, Rashtriya Madhyamik Shiksha Abhiyan (RMSA), in partnership with state governments, is dedicated to enhance the capacity of all teachers in Information and Communications Technology (ICT)

Many teachers are not tech-savvy, and the teacher-training courses never really prepare them to handle digital aids in classrooms. Such schemes can go a long way in keeping them motivated besides improving their competence.

**Non-government initiatives**

Vidyaloka, a non-profit organisation, connects rural learners and teaching volunteers through digital classrooms. The passionate teachers are a varied bunch, consisting of housewives, IT professionals and retired defense personnel. The Vidyaloka team organises Skype classes according to the availability of volunteers and batch sizes.

Although there is a shortage of teachers in our country, a huge number of college pass-outs remain unemployed. The organisation tries to properly channelise the supply in the sector where there is a demand. However, frequent power cuts and poor internet connectivity in rural areas affect the productivity of the classrooms.

**Why do urban learners usually secure better grades?**

Performance trends reveal that urban learners always secure better grades than their rural counterparts. It is not calibre that affects their performance, but the resources and opportunities available to them. Again, we cannot say that teaching is not a motivating profession. There are truly passionate teachers out there to make a difference. However, poor remuneration and inadequate training are discouraging. Technology, on its part, has the potential to positively affect the quality of education, and also to break the digital divide plaguing our system.

**CONCLUSION**

We have to envision a new image of school. The alternative to conventionally understood school is a learning community school. This vision has four dimensions, each of which looks differently at four traditional components of schooling - the school as an organization, student learning, teaching and teacher education. The school is to be viewed as a morally based community of learners. All its members - students, teachers, school staff and parents - should possess a true commitment to the core values of the institution. Schools which are 'morally-based' learning communities will educate children and improve society itself. Schools are to be the leaders of the community. Teachers should not simply teach on the basis of what has been told to them nor do they merely imitate the ways of teaching they have listened to. They have to build up their own professional knowledge, skills and value perspectives.

**REFERENCES**

1. Indira Gandhi. March 1981. Quality and Equality - Challenge to Higher Education, Ministry of Information and Broadcasting, Government of India, New Delhi.
2. 3. Dr. Madhuri R. Shah. November 1985. Challenges to Higher Education in a Changing India, Forum of Free Enterprise, Mumbai, p.2.
3. Department of Education, University of Delhi. December 18, 1997. Convention on Education as a Fundamental Right, New Delhi, Pp. 7-8.
4. The Hindu Sub-editorial. August 5, 1999. Spend more on Education.
5. School Education Department. 2002. Policy Note, Government of Tamil Nadu, p.21.
6. Rekha, Kaul. 13.1.2001. "Accessing Primary Education - Going Beyond the Classroom" Economic and Political Weekly.
7. Prof. Shanta Sinha. February 1999. "Child Labour and Education", Seminar, p. 474.
8. Vasanthi Devi. August 2000. Vasanthi Devi in Conversation with Sundara Ramaswamy, Education in Tamil Nadu (in Tamil), Kalachuvadu Publishers, Nagercoil, p.19.