

Status of Elementary Education after RTE-Act

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ABSTRACT

This paper analyses the status of elementary education in Rajasthan, which has been declared as a fundamental right by 86th amendment of Indian constitution in the form of Article 21-A. Which ensures eight years of free and compulsory elementary education for the age of 6 to 14 years. By various policy documents Indian government has put enormous emphasis on promotion of education for all by increasing social inclusion, reducing the gender gap and rural-urban gap in access, retention and transition. In that context international efforts such as Jomtien Meeting, Dakar Declaration and Millennium Development Goals also have had a significant impact for getting the aim of universalization of education. The main objective of the study is to identify the current status of elementary education and influence of RTE Act on achieve the goal of education for all. It presents comparative analysis of the available data on equity issues related to rural-urban education and the overall impact of RTE on enrolment indicators such as number of the schools, enrolments, GER, Retention rate and Dropout rate in the rural urban areas of state by the using raw data of U-DISE for 2010-11 to 2015-16. The result indicates that there is some important improvement during study period but still state is far behind to achieve the goal of universalization of elementary education.

Key Words : Elementary education, Article 21-A, Universalization of education, Dakar declaration

INTRODUCTION

Education is the strongest tool for attaining sustainable development in any country. While primary education acts as the basic enabling factor for participation, freedom and overcoming of basic deprivation, secondary education facilitates economic development and establishment of social justice. As part of the virtuous circle of growth and development, not only serves as an important transition from primary to higher education but provides key generic competencies to individuals, which prove important across all domains of knowledge. It provides skills for early employment and the foundation for further education. Education is a powerful instrument for preparing our citizen in the knowledge society. Ministry of Human Resource Development report (2016) stated that education is an important tool to mix globalisation with localisation, making our youth ones to become world citizen while their roots

deeply embedded in Indian culture and tradition. Education is considered important for personal development and nation-building at large. It imparts knowledge, skills and character to an individual. Brahmandam and Babu (2016) noted that Post-Independence, the Government of India emphasised more on education for reading, writing and arithmetic to get the expectations of Directive Principles of State Policy.

Further, education in the present-day context is perhaps one of the most important means for individual improve their enlarge their available set of opportunities, personal endowment, build up their capacity levels and choices for a sustained improvement of life. Education has the power to transform lives. It broadens people's freedom of choice and act empowering them to participate in the social and political lives of their societies and equips the skills they need to develop their livelihoods. In this process education enhances human capacity, productivity and empowers for facilitating the process of

assimilation, acquisition and communication information and knowledge. The role of education to meet basic learning needs of every person, youth and adult in shaping human development have been emphasized through several studies. Development economists have shown that more educated and literate educated parents time, have healthier lives, reduced fertility and less disease prone children. There has been significant positive impact of the quantity and quality of primary and secondary education on aggregate economic growth (Chabbott and Ramirez, 2000).

Providing universal education has been one of the main objectives of successive Indian governments since Independence. This has resulted in various policy and financial interventions over the last several decades. Nearly 60 years ago, India made a constitutional commitment to provide free and compulsory education, while it has failed to fulfil the commitment to the education of children that was made in Article 45 of the Constitution promulgated in 1950. The Article appears among the Directive Principles of Part IV of the Constitution, which are in effect statements of good intention and are not justiciable. Article 45 mandated the state to endeavour to provide free and compulsory education to all children up to the age of 14. The goal, which it expected to achieve by 1960, but successive governments failed to allocate sufficient resources or attention for the achievement of this goal. Over the last twenty-five years, however, there has come about a significant shift in policy and practice in regard to elementary education, most strikingly with the establishment of the Right to Education in an act passed in 2009. This has made basic education a justiciable right, for the first time.

By various policy documents Indian government has put enormous emphasis on promotion of education for all by reducing the gender gap, increasing social inclusion and reducing rural-urban gap in access, retention and transition. In that context international efforts such as Jomtien meeting, Dakar Declaration and Millennium Development Goals also have had a significant impact for getting the aim of universalization of education. India has come a long way since the Jomtien meeting which pledged to focus on basic education. The steady progress toward universal elementary education over two decades saw the momentum further strengthened with enactment of the Right of Children to Free and Compulsory Education (RTE) Act 2009 which makes it the right of

every Indian between 6-14 years of age to gain admission for education to complete 8 years elementary schooling.

The Convention on the Rights of the Child in 1990 and the World Declaration on Education for All (EFA) adopted in 1990 at Jomtien, which was renewed in 2000 through the Dakar Declaration, marked the beginning of a new era of action in favour of education for all. The Education for All movement brought education on centre stage to ensure the welfare of children by declaring it as a basic need on par with other human and social needs. Education has therefore been declared a human right of every individual and a basic obligation of whole humankind. The 'Dakar Framework of action' on education has six goals including universal primary education, adult literacy, gender parity, quality and lifelong learning. India is one of the signatories to both these global commitments. To translate the Dakar Framework of Action into reality, India started a flagship plan called the Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan (SSA), India's most ambitious education programme, established in 2001 and prepared a National Plan of Education (2002) for universalization of basic education. The aim of SSA is to achieve the Education for All (EFA) goals in a time bound frame in a mission mode. The SSA fixed targets to achieve the EFA goals much earlier than the stipulated dates agreed in the Dakar EFA goals but various studies point out significant variations in achieving the SSA goals, 'specially widening gap in Gross Enrolment rates and Net Enrolment rates among gender, sectoral and social 'groups.

Right of Children to Free and Compulsory Education Act (RTE), 2009 has given further impetus to the national efforts for ensuring quality education for all in a time-bound manner. RTE Act provides the legislative framework for Universalization of Elementary Education. India has shown significant policy change in elementary education reforms in recent years especially after the adoption of Right to Elementary Education as an enforceable fundamental right. Both the government and other research data on elementary education have pointed out that by these various efforts, elementary level school enrolment rates and retention rates increased sharply. But still there is a long way to touch the targets set by Education for ALL goals.

From 1950 to 2017, at national as well as state level education sector witnessed enormous progress in terms of an increase in the number of institutions, rise in enrolments for elementary education, increase in the enrolment of girls and students belonging to the weaker

sections of the society. But 2011 census data indicates that even in 2011 only 76% of the all population were literates. A significant variation in the literacy rate was also observed among gender, caste and regional segments. However, a satisfying feature was diminishing disparities across these segments during last decade. Rana, Suman and Devi, Wairopam Premi (2017) analyse in own article and attempt that the literacy rate among disadvantage group (ST) population in Rajasthan has increased significantly during 2001–11 but it still lags behind the average literacy rate of ST population in India. Again, Mohamed, Ibraheim Eldai and Singh, Vinita (2014) attempt to study the status of school education covering elementary and secondary school education focusing on the gender differentials those exists. They make an attempt to identify the socio-cultural and economic factors those are significantly affecting the school education. They discuss existing gender differentials in school education in the framework of exclusion and tries to suggest inclusive measures. The vision of girls' education, poverty and the practice of child marriage are the major cause of low girl enrolment in education. There has been a quantum jump in the female literacy rate over the last two decades as estimated in the census data of 2001 and 2011, while the census data depict that gender variations in literacy rates still persist, in spite of several positive initiatives undertaken by central and state governments. According to 2011 census, gender-based literacy rate gape was 21.6%, which was very high. In that context, during the Census of 2011, Rajasthan reported the poorest female literacy rate (52.1 percent) among all Indian states. Rena, Ravinder (2007) analyse accessibility of primary education at the grass roots level based on the Primary Survey and Focused Group discussion in Karimnager district. The survey refers to the academic year 2004-2005. The major findings are that parents stated that due to their inability to afford education on account of their inadequate income, they have not enrolled their wards at primary school. Again, the parents admitted that they discriminated against their girls. A majority of girls, stated that to meet family expenditure they have to earn and thus dropped out from school.

Thus, recent developments have had a significant impact on the situation, raising the hope that universal basic education can become a reality within a reasonable period of time. But the problem of the demand and supply constraints such as poverty of parents, low awareness, irregularity of teachers, the tough curriculum offered and

the teaching methods which influenced enrolments, student's withdrawal from school. Due to sickness of parents, children are forced to give up their education and shoulder the household responsibilities. The Indian society is characterized by high degree of structural inequalities in reference to caste, ethnicity, gender, religion, class and various other forms of social exclusion. The inherent networks operate to a great extent and results in deprivation and discrimination. (Mohamed, Ibraheim Eldai, Singh, Vinita, 2014). In that context Kurosaki, Takashi. Ito, Seiro. Fuwa, Nobuhiko and Sawada, Yasuyuki (2006) also stated that a high incidence of child labour and a very low school enrolment of children continue to pose serious problems for India.

Objectives:

The main objective of this paper is to find out the status of elementary education after implementation of RTE Act and to analyse the change that has taken place in RTE period. Apart from that, the paper will discuss the equity issues related to rural- urban education and the overall impact of RTE on enrolment indicators such as Number of schools, Enrolments, GER, Retention rate, Dropout rate and indicators of basic infrastructure in elementary level schools of Rajasthan.

METHODOLOGY

For analysing and examine the status of elementary education of Rajasthan state, the data of last six years from 2010-11 to 2015-16 is used, but in some cases the latest data was not available.

1. DISE (District Information System for Education) raw data for academic year 2010-11, to 2015-16 on elementary education for states have been used for total schools, enrolments, GER, dropout and retention rate.
2. Census of India, 2011 have been used for literacy rate.

According to the objectives of the study, tabulation plan was prepared and its representation was done based on the requirement. Further, data was analysed by using percentage to get suitable results.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Number and growth of elementary Schools in Rajasthan:

As shown in Table 1, Rajasthan has 107931 private

and government schools which provide elementary education. The number of schools in the state has increased 4183 from 2010-11 to 2015-2016. There was a significant variation in the number of schools among study period. In initial period of rte implementation, up to 2013-14, the number of schools increased sharply but in last two years its number decreased.

Table 1 : Elementary School		
Growth Rate of Elementary Schools		
Year		
2010-11	103748	
2011-12	107599	3.71
2012-13	110818	2.99
2013-14	117222	5.78
2014-15	106254	-9.36
2015-16	107931	-7.93

Source: compiled from U-DISE raw data for respective years.

Share of elementary school:

Table 2 data indicates that even after RTE implementation, the majority of enrolment is still in government owned schools. In 2010-11 all government schools had 74.73% of the total elementary enrolment. But after six years of RTE-act, this share declined and in 2015-16 it was only 65.47%. Thus, per cent share of private schools has been increased sharply in post-RTE period and in study period, the share of private sector schools reached up to 34.53%.

Table 2 : Share of schools by management		
Share of various types of school (in %)		
Year	Government	Private
2010-11	74.73	25.27
2011-12	72.34	27.66
2012-13	71.17	28.83
2013-14	71.29	28.71
2014-15	65.83	34.17
2015-16	65.47	34.53

Source: compiled from U-DISE raw data for respective years.

Table 3 shows the distribution of government and private schools in rural and urban area. Data represents that there is highly uneven distribution of elementary schools. A major share of primary and upper primary schools is in rural areas than urban areas. In 2010-11 this ratio in rural area was 86.86%, while it declined but still in 2015-16 it was 82.50%. In urban area its share increased and reached up to 17.50% in 2015-16.

Table 3 : Sector wise share of elementary school

Schools in Rural and Urban Areas (in %)		
Year	Rural	Urban
2010-11	86.86	13.14
2011-12	86.31	13.69
2012-13	85.18	14.82
2013-14	85.44	14.56
2014-15	82.55	17.45
2015-16	82.50	17.50

Source: compiled from U-DISE raw data for respective years.

Physical distribution of elementary school:

According to data the availability of elementary school was 0.32 at per square kilometre in 2016-17 and 0.30 school in 2010-11, which shows that there is minor improvement of geographical availability of school after implementation of RTE-Act. Further, the availability of private schools increased due to the increasing their ratio in total schools, while government school's availability has been decreased from 0.23 school to 0.21 school at per square kilometre in study period.

Table 4 : Physical distribution of elementary school

Elementary Schools at per sq. km.		
Schools	2010-11	2015-16
Government	0.23	0.21
Private	0.08	0.11
Total	0.30	0.32

Source: compiled from U-DISE raw data for respective years.

Enrolment's growth rate and share:

Data indicates that, there is a greater number of students who enrolled in elementary schools are under government management schools. The increase in number of enrolments in primary and upper primary schools every year from 2010 to 2015-16 is found to be more in private management as compared to government management. In 2015-16 the total number of enrolments in elementary level was 12340135, in which 6266075 enrolled in government schools and 6074060 in private schools. In 2010-11 all government schools had 59.79% of the total elementary enrolment. But after RTE-act this share declined and in 2015-16 it was only 50.78%. On the other hand, its share in private schools increased and reached 49.22%. In study period the growth rate of total enrolment was 3.85%.

District-wise availability of schools and enrolments:

District wise distribution of number of schools in

Table 5 : Enrolment's growth rate and share

Growth rate and share of enrolment (in %)					
Schools	Total Enrolment		Share		Growth rate
	2010-11	2015-16	2010-11	2015-16	
Government	7104179	6266075	59.79	50.78	-11.80
Private	4778560	6074060	40.21	49.22	27.11
Total	11882739	12340135	100.00	100.00	3.85

Source: compiled from U-DISE raw data for respective years.

2015-16 shows that their number is the highest in Jaipur, followed by Barmer, Jodhpur and Udaipur districts. On the other hand, its lowest number in Sirohi, followed by Jaisalmer, Dhaulpur and Pratapgarh. The highest number

of private schools was again in Jaipur and lowest in Pratapgarh, while the Highest number of government schools was in Barmer and lowest in Sirohi. Thus, the wide regional variations exist in the availability of schools

Table 6 : District-wise availability of elementary schools and enrolments

Elementary schools and enrolments 2015-16						
	Number of Schools			Enrolments		
	Government	Private	Total	Government	Private	Total
Sirohi	941	385	1326	112076	66000	178076
Jaisalmer	1338	376	1714	93069	47056	140125
Dhaulpur	1161	650	1811	144034	138628	282662
Pratapgarh	1582	300	1882	134175	35831	170006
Bundi	1350	624	1974	104858	76540	181398
Sawai Madhopur	1105	927	2032	102316	137613	239929
Hanumangarh	1159	996	2155	127082	161008	288090
Karauli	1460	782	2242	130840	150116	280956
Rajsamand	1781	489	2270	151984	60753	212737
Baran	1621	649	2270	126256	95847	222103
Jhalawar	1770	521	2291	155692	86837	242529
Kota	1167	1247	2414	107626	198891	306517
Tonk	1559	1013	2572	111596	125146	236742
Dausa	1617	1007	2624	142484	168643	311127
Chittaurgarh	1912	726	2638	152456	83097	235553
Churu	1505	1162	2667	161276	211496	372772
Jalor	2004	858	2862	212954	142619	355573
Pali	1886	1029	2915	195984	154930	350914
Dungarpur	2509	471	2980	218326	58804	277130
Jhunjhunun	1716	1296	3012	107306	239982	347288
Ganganagar	2079	1158	3237	153800	158492	312292
Bharatpur	1824	1443	3267	199382	258159	457541
Ajmer	1934	1366	3300	221433	219096	440529
Bikaner	2107	1279	3386	192745	236856	429601
Banswara	3018	620	3638	282917	75689	358606
Sikar	2099	1654	3753	167832	287267	455099
Bhilwara	3006	1208	4214	261185	144636	405821
Nagaur	3277	1749	5026	271889	335195	607084
Alwar	2986	2283	5269	300623	370425	671048
Udaipur	4273	1012	5285	380159	144272	524431
Jodhpur	3725	2047	5772	295170	395175	690345
Barmer	5141	879	6020	408651	145262	553913
Jaipur	4052	5061	9113	337899	863699	1201598
Rajasthan	70664	37267	107931	6266075	6074060	12340135

Source: compiled from U-DISE raw data for 2015-16.

Table 7 : Gross enrolment ratio

Gross Enrolment Ratio				
At elementary level				
Sex	2012-13	2013-14	2014-15	2015-16
Boys	97.64	96.74	95.36	97.77
Girls	94.6	94.01	92.62	96.64
Total	96.21	95.46	94.09	97.24
SC		99.66	97.61	102.51
ST		95.71	94.21	99.06

Source: compiled from U-DISE raw data for respective years.

across districts.

Although there is constant increase in the student's enrolment at the primary and upper primary levels in the state but regional level variations have been observed during study period. The district wise distribution of enrolments shows that their number is highest in Jaipur, followed by Jodhpur and Alwar districts. On the other hand, its lowest number in Jaisalmer followed by Pratnagarh and Sirohi. The highest number of enrolments in private schools was in Jaipur and lowest in Pratnagarh, while the Highest number of enrolments in government schools was in Barmer and lowest in Jaisalmer.

Enrolment ratio:

At elementary level, data shows that the gross enrolment ratio (GER) in 2015-16 increased to 97.24% as compare to 96.21 % in 2012-13. In 2015-16 GER for girls was 96.64% and for boys it was 97.77% in 2015-16. Data shows that after the implementation of RTE-Act GER increased for both girls and boys, while the girls GER was lower than boys, although the increasing rate was higher for girls. It shows that in previous years a large number of children was not enrolled in schools, but due to the government's efforts they enrolled in various primary classes, so the GER reached near to hundred.

The GER for SC category was 102.51% in 2015-16, which 99.66% in 2013-14 and 97.61% in 2014-15. For ST category children at elementary level was 95.71% in 2013-14, which increased in 2015-16 and reached near to universalization rate.

Retention rate:

Peeyush, Kamal (2015) noted that the most important component of universalization of elementary education is the Quality of Education and the retention rate is an important indicator for it. If the retention rate is

low which means the quality of education is very poor.

The retention rate at elementary classes for enrolled children was 55.11% in 2015-16. Data shows that in last three years this rate increased continuously. Retention rate in elementary level was 53.05% for girls and 56.9% for boys in 2015-16. In last three years girl's retention rate was increased sharply but even now it was lower than boys. Table indicates that it is still too low to achieve the goal of universal retention at the elementary level.

Table 8 : Retention rate

Retention Rate at Elementary Level			
Sex	2013-14	2014-15	2015-16
Boys	50.91	54.78	56.9
Girls	45.52	48.86	53.05
Total	48.38	51.99	55.11

Source: compiled from U-DISE raw data for respective years

Dropout rate:

Dropout Rate is measured as the ratio of pupils who leave school during the year or those who complete the grade level but fail to enrol in the next grade level to the total number of children enrolled during the previous year (Ministry of Tribal Affairs, 2013).

Data shows that dropout rate at state level has decreased during the study period, but the average dropout rate is still too high to attain the status of universal retention at the elementary level of education. The dropout rate in 2015-16 was 5.02% in primary grades and 7.9% in 2013-14. Gender wise data also shows that this rate in primary classes has decreased and reached 5.02% for boys and girls in 2015-16, while in 2013-14 it was 7.2% and 8.8% for boys and girls respectively. At upper primary level an average drop-out rate was 3% in 2015-16 as against 4.4% during the 2013-14. It indicates that in 2015-16 the children who enrolled in upper primary classes dropped out 3 out of 100 from the classes before completing the upper primary grades. Further, gender

Table 9 : Dropouts				
Sex	Dropout Rate			
	Primary Level		Upper Primary	
	2013-14	2015-16	2013-14	2015-16
Boys	7.2	5.02	2.8	2.5
Girls	8.8	5.02	6.3	3.7
Total	7.9	5.02	4.4	3

Source: compiled from U-DISE raw data for respective years.

wise a small deviation observed in children drop-out. For boys drop-out rate was 2.5% and for girls it was 3.7% in the same year. In the comparison of 2013-14, for girls it shows significant change.

School infrastructure:

Information collected through the District Information System for Education (DISE) suggests that there are some infrastructural indicators improved gradually. According to DISE data, 99.4% elementary schools have any building in 2015-16. It shows marginal improvement in study period. Zutshi, Bhupinder and Rai, Rama Kant (2013) noted that boundary wall is an important requirement for school environment was missing in 17% elementary schools in 2015-16, although this indicator shows an important improvement in study period. Nearly 52.3% of the schools have playground. This ratio is very less because for children, game and allied activities are play an important role in their physically and mentally development. In same year more than 3% schools of elementary level were without drinking water facility which is a basic requirement for any educational institution to attract students. 71.4% of the schools have library.

99.1% of the elementary schools have a separate boys toilet and separate girls toilet was available in 99.6%

schools. The student – classroom ratio has slightly improved from 22 in 2011-12 to 21 in 2015-16. This indicator is as per RTE norms. Nearly 2.7% schools have only single classroom in 2015-16, which showed a slight decrease from 2.2% in 2011-12.

Teachers resources:

Table shows that in Rajasthan 11.8% schools of elementary level having only one teacher in 2015-16. Data indicates that there is some improvement in post RTE period. In 2011-12 this ratio was 15%. It is a big problem for providing quality education, mainly in government management schools. Again, this problem is a big obstacle in rural area where 13.5 out of hundred school are in this category, while in urban area under this category only 3.3% schools.

Table also shows the ratio between pupils and teachers. It indicates per teacher enrolled students. The average number of students per teacher in all elementary level schools was 19. This ratio was 26 in 2011-12. It was 19 and 17 for rural and urban area schools respectively. Thus, in urban schools it was lower than rural school.

About 62.1% schools in 2015-16 have at least one female teacher. This situation was worst in rural schools. 41.7% rural schools and 8.2% urban schools in same

Table 10 : Status of basic infrastructure in elementary schools		
Indicators	Status of Basic Infrastructure in Elementary Schools	
	2011-12	2015-16
Building	98.7	99.4
Schools with boundary wall	75.5	83
Play ground	46.2	52.3
Drinking water facility	95.07	96.83
Library	57.5	71.4
Boy's toilet	77.2	99.1
Girl's toilet	95.5	99.6
Student classroom ratio (SCR)	22	21
Schools with single classroom	2.2	2.7

Source: compiled from U-DISE raw data for respective years.

Table 11 : Teachers resources in elementary schools

Indicator	Teachers Resources (in %)					
	2011-12			2015-16		
	Rural	Urban	Total	Rural	Urban	Total
Single teacher schools	16.7	5	15	13.5	3.3	11.8
Pupil-teacher ratio (PTR)	27	25	26	19	17	19
Schools without female teacher	53.6	14.2	48.1	41.7	8.2	37.9

Source: compiled from U-DISE raw data for respective years

year did not have female staff for teaching purpose. This data indicates that in 2011-12, 48.1% schools was without female teacher. Thus, there is a small increase in percentage of female teachers from 2011-12 to 2015-16.

Conclusion:

From the above analysis on different components of education for all one gets the impression that the state progressed consensually but still it has certain areas of concern, which are primarily responsible for unfulfillment of the goals of education for all. Results of the various indicators which discuss in this article for find out the status of elementary education across the state, educational facilities are now available to a huge segment of population and areas but after the six years of implementation of RTE Act, 2015-16 data indicates that still there are existence of regional and gender variation in various forms. Over a period of time, number of primary and upper primary schools and number of enrolments improved significantly. Data shows that GER of girls reached near to universal. But the state failed to universal retention and zero dropouts. Again, female teachers are the single most important element of the school system for reducing gender gap, although state is already facing a severe shortage of qualified female teachers at elementary level. Despite the progress and improvement in the statistics in the various broad areas as mentioned above, which can be termed as some of the success that the RTE Act has achieved, elementary education in the state is still far from the goal of universalization.

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