



*Journal of Advances and  
Scholarly Researches in  
Allied Education*

*Vol. VI, Issue No. XI, July-  
2013, ISSN 2230-7540*

## REVIEW ARTICLE

# PROBLEMS OF ELEMENTARY EDUCATION IN RURAL AREAS OF WEST BENGAL

AN  
INTERNATIONALLY  
INDEXED PEER  
REVIEWED &  
REFEREED JOURNAL

# Problems of Elementary Education in Rural Areas of West Bengal

Mr. Santanu Biswas

Research Scholar, Department of Education, A.M. School of Educational Sciences, Assam, University, Silchar, Assam

-----X-----

Education is the doorway to the wider world & an exposition on rural infrastructure is incomplete without an assessment of the extent to which we have been able to open this door for the children of rural India. Rural education plays a pivotal role in the development of the country as a whole because majority of the population live in rural areas. But it's a matter of regret that in majority of the states it has been found that rural education suffers more because though the Government has taken initiatives for the development of education as a whole but these issues are mainly found implemented in urban areas keeping rural areas neglected. India's educational development is a mixed bag of remarkable successes and glaring gaps. In the post-independence period, the pace of educational development was unprecedented by any standards. At the same time, perhaps, the policy focus and public intervention in the provisioning of educational services was not adequately focused or, even misplaced, to the extent that even after over five decades of planned effort in the sector, nearly one-third of the population or close to 300 million persons in age-group 7 years and above are illiterate. There are critical gaps in the availability of infrastructural facilities and qualitative aspects of education including, teachers training, educational curricula, equipments and training materials, particularly, in the publicly funded schooling system of the country. The attainments and the failures have not been uniform across all regions. Though the regional differences are indeed striking, there has been a significant reduction in inequalities in educational attainments across gender and population segments by income levels and the rural-urban divide.

If we look at the Elementary Education, the scenario depicts that among the other stages of education Elementary Education suffers more. But reality this stage is the 'root' or base of the so called building 'education' and if the base is weak, then how can we expect to build a powerful and strong building. But in Europe we find the a different scenario which is better than ours. For the development of If we take West Bengal as our study then it is found that for the development of Elementary Education the Constitution of India has made the provision of Universalization of

Elementary Education. In- spite of the significant improvements in the enrolment ratios and dropout rates, it is estimated that almost 10 lakh children in West Bengal are out of school. An article on a study conducted all over India revealed that West Bengal tops the list of school drop outs. The article specified that, of the 19 districts in West Bengal, 9 have a dropout rate of over 50,000 children in the age group of 6-14 years. It means that the level of Elementary Education is packed with lots of problems. Hence, the present paper intends to study the problems of rural education at the Elementary level.

The article also highlights the glaring 9.61 lakh out of school children (in the same age group) in comparison to Bihars 6.98 lakhs children It means Universal Access, Universal Enrollment and Universal Retention.

In the rural areas of WEST BANGAL, the elementary suffers foe the major's problems like:

1. **Teacher's Accountability:** Accountability to any profession is a must. Teaching is one of the most challenging jobs where teacher's accountability matter a lot. Hence, it is essential to ensure that a teacher regularly spends five hours in the school in every working day. A teacher should also take classes as per schedule. Unit tests are not always conducted as per annual calendar. Class schedule compulsorily includes games period every week. But it is not followed in majority of the schools. Sometimes teachers take leave for long time without leave petition. Many teachers come from other areas and hence are in a hurry to leave the school as early as possible.
2. **Teacher's Appointment and Transfer:** Teacher never excuses while they get appointment in backward areas but as soon as they join they start to hanker after transfer. They forget the commitment of the teaching profession as a serving the society. There

are many schools with one/two teacher where the student enrolment demands appointment of more teachers. Concept of sanctioned post per school does not exist for the primary schools. The present practice of teacher-transfer, which does not follow the rule, is to be curbed. Another instance of irregularity is the service/drafting transfer (which is purely a temporary arrangement). Such temporary arrangement is renewed year-after-year to bypass the existing rules and thereby making it quasi-permanent.

3. **Teaching and Training:** Classroom teaching gets hampered due to- (i) teachers involvement in census during working hours, (ii) teachers involvement in preparing payroll and other papers for other teachers to help the district office which often face staff-crunch; (iii) the present practice of compulsory 20-day-a-year training for every teacher. Teachers training programmes are not well planned (e.g., same subject/topic is repeated in successive training programmes for a long time. There are several agencies providing training. Many teachers do not attempt to implement the new pedagogy learnt in training in the class room teaching. On the other hand, many teachers feel that training is not always effective or relevant. Hence, teachers do not feel motivated to implement the training in their day to day class room situation.

4. **School Inspection:** Major functions of the SIs are supposed to include inspection of schools, monitoring of classroom transaction and teaching effectiveness. Each SIs, on an average, has more than 80 schools to supervise. Many SI positions remain vacant for long time. For example, in Murshidabad there are 100 schools per circle. Out of 41 circles in Murshidabad, 19 SIs posts are vacant. SIS office is equally understaffed. For example, in Murshidabad, 14 group C and 12 Group D positions are vacant. SIs spend a lot of their time in attending various meetings, often in short notice (e.g., on health awareness programmes, disaster management etc.). These meetings are not organized during summers- these are organized throughout the year. This creates lot of problem in discharging day-to-day responsibilities. SIs need to fill-up a variety of evaluation forms, some of which are very cumbersome. SIs are also responsible for maintenance of service books of primary school teachers and disbursement of their salary and pension. A considerable time of theirs goes in managing the salary/pension and related queries. As a result, SISs fail to discharge their main function- inspection of schools. There are instances where an SIS fails to visit most of the schools even once a year. SIS/AISs do not have any power to take disciplinary actions on errant teachers. SISs

are not even given feedback on the action taken on their written complaints. As a result the authority of the SISs is very seriously eroded and the delivery system in the schools suffers almost beyond repair. Moreover, before the inspection the school gets the information and the school starts working in a better way. But it only for a 'day' and it also hides the defects of the system which in turn deteriorates the standards of education.

5. **Mid-day Meal Administration:** There has been a general consensus that mid-day meal scheme has achieved, to a very large extent, two major objectives- (i) improved attendance in the schools; (ii) removal of the caste/religion barrier amongst students and the community. Block Development Officer (BDO) is the executive head of mid-day meal scheme in a CD Block. However, SISs are required to monitor the scheme. There is lack of coordination between office of the BDO and SISs. SISs are not invited to any meeting concerning mid-day meal convened, if at all, by the BDO. Although, if any irregularity is observed, SISs are supposed to file an FIR against relevant agencies. Many head teachers of schools complained that mid-day meal money/materials are not received regularly by school even after submission of regulation. The quality of rice varies between urban and rural schools. Another problem is that teachers are unable to retain students in the school after mid-day meal is served.

6. **Para-teachers and Sikshabandhus:** While the role and importance of para teachers is well accepted, the duties and responsibilities of Sikshabandhus are not very clear. Many sikshabandhus are not aware about their job description. Many SISs feel that Sikshabandhus' job is mainly to liaise between school and CLRC/DI office. However, Sikshabandhus believe that they can contribute more effectively in improving the learning environment in the school. Sikshabandhus claim that introduction of this cadre has improved teachers attendance in the school- mainly due to moral suasion. Since Sikshabandhus are drawn from immediate locality, they understand local sensitivity and hence can help solve problems involving local community. However, Sikshabandhus face many infrastructural bottlenecks. Sikshabandhus have no separate room/ place to sit in the CLRC/CRC office. Wherever they have sitting place, they do not have adequate furniture (e.g., table, almirah). No formal training is imparted when a Sikshabandhu joins duty. The only training they get is about filling up of DISE data. Sometimes Sikshabandhus are asked to perform functions of group D staff. It is expected that Sikshabandhus would pay regular visits to

schools. However, they are not given any transport facilities/ allowance. Even SISs, do not get any/adequate transport support.

7. **DPSC and DPO:** In most of the districts, DPO (District Project Officer) positions are managed by part-time DPOs. DPO offices are most often not co-located in DPSC office. The coordination between DPSC and DPO is poor.
8. **School Management Committees:** Managing Committees do not spend time on academic matters. It may be due to the fact that the President of SMC has not been selected on the basis of educational qualification, rather on political ground. So, obviously he/she shows less interest in educational matter. And most of the Committees spend most of the time on matters concerning physical infrastructure. VEC-level monitoring has been a failure. There are instances where parent teachers meeting/ Academic Council meeting is not conducted even once a year. However, MTA meetings are more effective and it is observed that where MTAs are active, the teaching quality in that school improves.
9. **Governance and Legal Matters:** The head-teacher or head-master in a school is not aware of latest government notifications. On many occasions these notifications/orders do not reach schools. The District offices are heavily burdened with court case dealings. The officers in the district office are not competent to handle legal matters.
10. **Private Tuitions:** The trend is more evident in city/town areas. Availability of private tutors is an issue in village and may be one reason for low private tuition in village. It is observed that poor teaching in the school is not the main reason for sending one's ward to private tuition. Parents send their children to private tuition for better results and guidance. It is empirically found that the tendency to send children to private tuition has low correlation with the quality of teaching in the school. The reasons for private tuition, particularly at the primary/upper primary levels, are not related to quality of education imparted in the schools, but remain in the broader socio-economic domain.

To conclude, it can be said that to develop the standard of education as a whole at first we have to first of all develop the Elementary Education. And it can be done if we eradicate the aforesaid problems.

## REFERENCES:

- [http://s3.amazonaws.com/zanran\\_storage/www.esocialsciences.com/ContentPages/1186579742.pdf](http://s3.amazonaws.com/zanran_storage/www.esocialsciences.com/ContentPages/1186579742.pdf)
- [https://www.researchgate.net/publication/23778564\\_Secondary\\_Education\\_in\\_India\\_Determinants\\_of\\_Development\\_and\\_Performance](https://www.researchgate.net/publication/23778564_Secondary_Education_in_India_Determinants_of_Development_and_Performance)
- [http://ccs.in/internship\\_papers/2005/23.%20School%20in%20Transition%20-%20Debotri.pdf](http://ccs.in/internship_papers/2005/23.%20School%20in%20Transition%20-%20Debotri.pdf)
- [https://www.thecho.in/files/Mriganka-Narayan-Das\\_481r7a34.pdf](https://www.thecho.in/files/Mriganka-Narayan-Das_481r7a34.pdf)
- <http://www.wbsed.gov.in/wbsed/readwrite/55.pdf>
- [http://atiwb.gov.in/index\\_htm\\_files/education.pdf](http://atiwb.gov.in/index_htm_files/education.pdf)
- <http://www.tatatrusts.org/>
- <http://www.slideshare.net/manukumarkm/historical-method-in-research>
- [http://www.teindia.nic.in/files/reports/ccr/KC/KC\\_V4.pdf](http://www.teindia.nic.in/files/reports/ccr/KC/KC_V4.pdf)
- <http://www.educationforallindia.com/management-of-elementary-education-in-india.pdf>
- [http://webservices.itcs.umich.edu/drupal/recd/sites/webservices.itcs.umich.edu/drupal/recd/files/Introduction%20and%20Methodology\\_0.pdf](http://webservices.itcs.umich.edu/drupal/recd/sites/webservices.itcs.umich.edu/drupal/recd/files/Introduction%20and%20Methodology_0.pdf)
- [http://pratichi.org/sites/default/files/Pratichi\\_Education-Report\\_II.pdf](http://pratichi.org/sites/default/files/Pratichi_Education-Report_II.pdf)
- [http://www.cpimwb.org.in/upload\\_all\\_docs/pdf/lf\\_govt/L.F.\\_Govt.\\_and\\_Economic\\_Development\\_of\\_W.B..pdf](http://www.cpimwb.org.in/upload_all_docs/pdf/lf_govt/L.F._Govt._and_Economic_Development_of_W.B..pdf)
- <http://www.vkmaheshwari.com/WP/?p=538>
- <http://www.iienet2.org/Details.aspx?id=3290>
- <http://iainews.iai.tv/articles/what-is-progress-auid-314>
- <http://www.uncp.edu/home/acurtis/Courses/ResourcesForCourses/LitReview.html>
- <http://www.gifted.uconn.edu/.../research/Historical/HistoricalResearchCriticisms.pdf>
- <http://www.teindia.nic.in/mhrd/50yrsedu/gT/HJ/0THJ050C.htm>
- <http://www.uncp.edu/home/acurtis/Courses/ResourcesForCourses/LitReview.html>