

A Study on Challenges of Rural Education

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ABSTRACT

Rural education is considered as the key factor contributing in rural development. Hence, several policies have been implementing by Indian Government to empower the rural population of India by imparting education and by implementing several schemes. Although still the rural education in different states of India lacking in several aspects due to some unavoidable challenges. This paper tries to emphasize over the major challenges of rural education specifically for the state of Uttarakhand. For this we conducted the qualitative research by interviewing the academicians and experts of rural education and solicit the significant insights related to the challenges of rural education.

Keywords: Rural education, Challenges, Uttarakhand

1. Introduction

Almost 65% of India population still lives in rural areas. A survey was conducted by Annual Status of Education Reports (ASER) states that number of students attending the school has been increased in the past few years but more than students of fifth grade cannot able to read and write, thus it is leading to the decline of Rural education. Thus, many efforts have been tried but, they failed to achieve right direction. The primary reason for the problem is the smaller number of classrooms in school. In some cases, the attendance of teachers and students are very low which are causing failure to educate rural India.

Quality education is the major issue in rural schools as there are few teachers who are dedicated teachers, lack of facilities like textbooks and other materials in the school. As we compare with private school's they are committed towards quality education. Though large number of people living in villages has understand the importance of education and it will help them to get rid of poverty. But due to lack of money they are not able to send their children to private schools and thus they are dependent upon the government schools. In fact, in some cases government schools have only one teacher who looks after the entire school.

Many villages don't have school's which means that students have to go to another village to get education. Many villagers don't send their daughter to school which ultimately leads to the failure in rural education in India.

Poverty is a major issue in rural areas. Government schools are not good and private schools are expensive.

Thus, many students don't take admission in college for further studies. So, dropout rates of students are high for secondary level in villages. If parents don't send their wards for higher education, then all their previous primary education gets wasted thus they are offered a low paying job.

Many sets of questions and answers are given to students to memorize for exams. So, it becomes easier for the students to clear the exams, hence importance of gaining knowledge is neglected. Neither the student nor the teachers are interested in studies which is declining the quality of education in rural areas.

There is wide gap between the city and the village student in terms of skills, knowledge, learning ability, infrastructure and various other facilities. Government should take some strict measures on the rural education and should have strong implementation of rules and regulations in rural school.

The importance of Education has been an important issue in rural areas. Rural areas have been witnessing a dramatic and explosive growth. It is apparent that transporting the urban mind set to the rural context will not work and customization are the strategies to be adopted for rural market.

Education empowers us to have a better life and enable us for a smarter approach and an acquisition of rural infrastructure is incomplete without an assessment of the extent to which we have been to open the door for rural India. Education is necessary not only for professional purpose but also for the mental growth. Without proper

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education, it is very difficult to survive in this era. It is the fact that large number of people still live in the rural areas. There is lot of schemes that government is providing for the development of rural people. The biggest question is that enrollment and attendance is the right parameter for evaluating the progress of rural education. The quality of education is mainly ignored in rural areas.

There is a wide difference between the level of education and educational opportunities in rural areas as compared to urban areas. It is not wrong to say that teachers in rural area are least concerned with the level of education. The level of education is a major problem in these areas which is neglected right from the time when the formal education came in India. The initial upbringing of rural kids is not as per the modern context. They basically lack in the skills and abilities. The education environment in rural areas varies a lot. Many rural schools have less robust building, problems in seasonal variations and less access to a range of knowledge centers. Most of the problem in the rural areas is well known. Everyone knows that basic problems like inadequate infrastructure. Most of the schools do not have toilet facilities and reliable electricity. Teaching equipment is limited to blackboard and chalk and textbooks are not provided to students. This is the main cause of low level of education in rural areas. Many a time when teacher is ill or absent then the school is closed.

The government has also come with various schemes for rural education. There is a need for serious reforms. Most of the staffs usually lack in teaching skills. Teachers are not regular in their job; they are also not serious for their teaching job. Friendships among teachers cause a negligence of many aspects of Education. In some schools, corruption is at peak, teachers charge high fee for promoting the student for the next class. Education Ministry should surprise inspects the schools. Also, should ask students for feedback of the teachers and keeping in regard the result of school. There should be regular meetings of principals of various schools in rural areas.

Uttarakhand is the northern state of India comprises of 13 districts. Most of the area of Uttarakhand comes under the

rural area and that is why rural education is a crucial issue over here. As per the School Education Govt. of Uttarakhand and DISE (2015-16), the total numbers of schools in Uttarakhand are 24056 including 17752 Government schools (elementary to higher secondary grade). Yet the school dropout rate in Uttarakhand is quite high. As per DISE (2015-16) report the dropout rate of boys and girls from secondary education are 12.42% and 9.26% respectively. Along with that rural education in Uttarakhand is struggling with poverty, low income level, poor infrastructure, under skilled teachers, teacher's scarcity etc. Uttarakhand Government is providing different benefits like mid-day meal, books and other requisite material yet to fetch the attention of parents and students for the rural education is a difficult task.

The above discussed points demand for an extensive study to explore the challenges of rural education in Uttarakhand. It is quite essential to identify these challenges and to make proper strategies to overcome these challenges so that rural upliftment can be possible. This paper attempts to explore the challenges of rural education and also tries to solicit some effective suggestions and implications for the better development of education system in rural education.

2. Literature Review

The review focuses on the rural planning of the developing countries various training programs are provided to rural people in agriculture sectors for the enhancement of rural skills. The rural conditions are different from rural areas. Many a times rural areas are neglected in policy making. Working environment and work experience of young life in the rural areas. Economic and demographic factors which are leading to the decline of rural economy. Students in rural areas are not interested in the taking part in the courses. The experience of rural life limit students' education in aspirations between rural and non-rural children is in terms of education. The trends in expenditure on education as a whole, and elementary education in particular, by the government play a major role in rural development.

Table 1: Literature Review

S. No.	Title	Author	Year	Findings
1	Attacking Rural Poverty: How Nonformal Education Can Help. A Research Report for the World Bank Prepared by the International Council for Educational Development.	Philip H Coombs, Manzoor Ahmed	1974	It focuses on the rural planners of the developing countries. Various training programs are provided to rural people in agriculture sectors. Enhancement of Rural skills

3	The Condition of Education in Rural Schools.	Joyce D Stern		1994 This report focuses on how rural conditions are different from the urban point of view. The policies are only made for the urban areas and rural areas are neglected. Working environment in rural areas and work experience of youth living in the rural area.
3	Home, family, and community: Ingredients in the rural education equation.	Mary Jean Ronan Herzog, Robert B Pittman	1995	It is necessary to understand the problems of Rural areas and to analyze the political, economic and demographic which are leading to the decline of rural economy.
4	Culture, Community, and the Promise of Rural Education	Paul Theobald, Paul Nachtigal	1995	It focuses on how culture is important in building in the rural education. Maintain the sustainability between both urban and rural communities
6	The effect of primary school mergers on academic performance of students in rural China	Chengfang Liu, Linxiu Zhang, Renfu Luo, Scott Rozelle, Prashant Loyalka	2010	It is a survey designed to examine what changes have been made by students on their academic performance before and after the school was merged.
6	Distance education use in rural schools	Wallace H Hannum, Matthew J Irvin, Jonathan B Banks, Thomas W Farmer	2009	The report tells problems associated with less teacher availability, practicality in rural faces a difficulty. Students in rural areas are not interested in the taking part in the courses.
7	Schools participation in	Jean Dreze, Geeta	2001	This report presents the research on the rural India Gandhi Kingdons c h o o l participation in rural India. Especially girls which contribute to various motivation, parental education and village development.
8	Government spending, growth and poverty in rural India	Shenggen Fan, Peter Hazell, Sukhadeo Thorat	2000	The report shows that government has given immense contributions to the rural development, rural roads and agriculture. Agriculture contribution is more in Indian economy.
9	Vidya, Veda, and Varna: The influence of religion and caste on education in rural India	Vani K Borooah, Sriyalyer	2005	It projects the light on enrollment of children at school as per the community he/she belongs. As India has many religions so it is influenced by various communities.
10	Government Expenditure on Elementary Education in the Nineties	Sajitha Bashir	2000	This study examines the trends in expenditure on education as a whole, and elementary education in particular, by the Central government and 15 state governments during the period 1990/91-1999/2000.
11	Black students' participation in higher education.	Marvalene S Hughes	1987	Reviews the demographic and sociopolitical factors related to Black

				students in higher education, focusing on causes for declining enrollment of Black students and their adjustment to the college environment on predominantly Black campuses (PBCs) and predominantly White campuses (PWCs). 50 Black female and 29 Black male undergraduates.
12	The rural education dilemma as part of the rural dilemma: Rural education and economics	Craig Howley	1991	Educators and economists, with few exceptions (eg, Carnoy and Levin, 1985; DeYoung, 1989), do not understand each other's work very well. After all, supply and demand (for economics) and teaching and learning (for education) are very different phenomena. Most educators are concerns that do exist between, say, learning and investment.
13	Remote possibilities: Rural children's educational	Caitlin W Howley aspirations	2006	To better understand the influence of rural context on youth's life chances, this study takes up the question of rural children's educational aspirations. The experience of rural life may, as some claim, limit students' education in aspirations between rural and non rural children is in terms of postgraduate education
14	Challenges and changes faced by rural superintendents.	Marcia L Lamkin	2006	This research study was designed to build grounded theory about the challenges faced by rural superintendents. Participating rural superintendents identified five areas that presented a challenge but that also applied to superintendents in other settings: school law, finance, personnel, government mandates, and district or board policies.
15	Rural elementary school teachers' technology integration.	Aimee Howley, Lawrence Wood, Brian Hough	2011	Comparisons between teachers in rural and non-rural schools ¹ precede comparisons between rural teachers in more and less remote locales and rural teachers in the Appalachian and non-Appalachian portions of the state. The final research question posits a model for predicting the sophistication of student technology use—a measure that functions as a proxy for the extensiveness of technology integration.
16	Teaching in rural and remote schools	Allan Yarrow, Roy Ballantyne, Brian Hansford, Paul Herschell, Jan Millwater	1999	In this paper the authors examine a wide range of recent research into the preparation and support for teachers working in rural and remote schools. The paper reviews many preservice and inservice initiatives which highlight issues affecting teaching and learning in schools.

17	Elementary Education in Rural India: A Grassroots View. Strategies for Human Development in India, Volume 2.	Vaidyanathan, A., Ed.; Nair, P.R. Gopinathan, Ed.	2001	There are wide variations in educational attainment and literacy rates across the regions and social classes of India. A national project examined participation in and the quality of elementary education in nine states of India, focusing on rural areas and the situation of disadvantaged persons, especially girls and the scheduled castes and tribes.
18	Education and Training for Rural Teachers and Professionals.	Colin Boylan, Helen Bandy	1994	This paper examines seven variables or issues regarded as central improving the recruitment, training, and retention of rural teachers, doctors, and other professionals, as well as efforts to overcome related problems in rural Australia and Canada. First, selection practices should identify professionals from rural backgrounds and those with personal characteristics or educational experiences that would predispose them to remain in rural areas.
19	Creating Better Educational and Employment Opportunities for Rural Young People.	Peter Kenyon, Howard Sercombe, Alan Black, Dominica Lhuede	2001	This study explores current education, training, and employment issues and opportunities for rural youth in Australia, and suggests ways in which relevant education, training, and employment options and prospects can be generated for rural youth. Specifically, this study documents the ways that economic and social changes in rural communities have impacted young people; identifies service gaps for training options for rural youth; and explores current and proposed use of information technologies that support education, training, and employment outcomes.
20	The Promise and the Power of Distance Learning in Rural Education. Policy Brief.	Vicki Hobbs	2004	The Rural School and Community Trust (Rural Trust) is the premier national nonprofit organization addressing the crucial relationship between good schools and thriving rural communities. Working in some of the poorest, most challenging rural places, the Rural Trust involves young people in learning linked to their communities, improves the quality of teaching and school leadership, advocates for appropriate state educational policies, and addresses the critical issue of funding for rural schools.

From the extensive review of literature, it is quite evident that education system in rural areas is facing lots of challenges in spite of providing several Government incentives. Infrastructure, skills, funds, ICT, culture, Government policies and regulations are the major concerns of rural education and it calls for an in-depth study of the roadblocks in a specific region.

The major objective of this study is to explore the challenges of rural education in Uttarakhand. To develop effective strategies for the better development of education system in the rural areas.

3. Methodology

To accomplish the research objectives this paper adopts the qualitative research methodology. A qualitative research has been conducted by collecting qualitative data from the 12 academicians and experts from the rural area by interviewing method specifically from some Government funded schools in Uttarakhand. These interviews have been conducted basically through references and recommendations of the academicians. As per the convenience of the respondents interviews were scheduled and conducted at their places. The qualitative data has been recorded in the form hand notes which are further used to transcribe the data. Later on, content analysis has been applied on the qualitative data gathered from the 12 interviews which is further analyzed by using step by step process of content analysis i.e. coding, categorization and themes identification.

4. Result and Discussion

Challenges of rural education:

1. Infrastructure: lack of infrastructure is a major problem. Most of the village doesn't have proper connectivity. "There is no table we usually study in mats" which demotivate the children from attending the school on regular basis. "There is a serious problem with the reliability of power supply in the school."
2. Remuneration of teachers: Teacher in rural areas is paid very less, thus they provide a lack of attention to the children, and thus many children suffer from it. "When I do not get enough money, I do not even feel like teaching"
3. Poverty: Poverty is a major obstacle in rural education. Students living in villages have limited food, water and electricity. So many students do not take part in extracurricular activities. "If my son will go to school then who will look after my agriculture"
4. The problem of Social Values: the social beliefs and Ideology of Rural areas is different than from urban areas. Their tradition and practices are some like religious fanaticism and caste discrimination causes a problem in education system of rural areas. "I am Rajput, I don't want my son to go to school and make friends with dalits".
5. Shortage of funds: government is unable to provide the funds to the school in rural areas. Poor financial aid is given by government which affects the scenario in rural development. Government does not give funds for the maintenance of school.
6. Political factors: As a result of exploitation, India's condition at the time of Independence was very pathetic. Government rules and regulations are not implemented strictly which are responsible for poor rural education.
7. Corruption: Government officials take majority part of the money which is contributed for the rural development. Books are to be distributed in rural areas are sold off in the market. Many teachers are also not regular to the school.
8. Lack of teaching staff: shortage of teachers is a factor for the slow growth of Education in rural areas. The reason for shortage of teachers is due to the poor salaries, no highly qualified person wants to join school in rural areas. "There are only 3 teachers in the entire school."
9. Unsatisfactory teaching standards: Teaching method in rural areas is obsolete. The equipment and reading materials are insufficient due to the shortage of funds. Consequently, the standard of the education is very low. "Every classroom does not have blackboards."
10. Engagement in household work: Many students are engaged in the household work due to which causes absenteeism in their schooling
11. Proximity of school- the distance between the school and the houses with in which the student live also matters in the rural area the rural areas have poor transportation facility which causes lack of rural education.
12. Lack of skill of teaching staff: the teachers in the rural School are lacking in their teaching skills which causes a problem in important education in the rural areas. "Math teacher does not know the basic calculation"
13. Issue related to parents: parents' attitude towards education is very rustic which causes a problem in rural areas they don't want their children to study in school.
14. Gender Biasness: there is a problem of gender biasness in rural areas. There is a lot of discrimination

which student face in their rural areas. "What a girl can do in the school, she is only have to take care of the house"

15. Health issue - Many rural areas have less hospital facilities. thus, there are many children who suffer from various diseases. So, they cannot able to join school on regular basis "My son got injured during the game, the school does not provide the first aid treatment."
16. Midday meal related issue - Midday meal in many schools are not provided by the government so many children don't go to school" poor quality of food is given to students"

5. Implications, Limitations and Scope for the Future Study

This paper tries to highlight the various challenges of rural education in Uttarakhand. Due to these challenges it is very difficult to develop the rural economy and to empower the rural population with educational skills. The key to comprehensive rural development is to develop a robust educational system for rural population by overcoming all the challenges hindering rural education. This paper may be utilized by the academicians and researchers to fill the academic gap in understanding the rural education system. Policy makers and strategists of rural education may also get some important inferences from this research to develop sustainable strategies and to eradicate the different challenges. This paper merely focused over the small sample for collecting the qualitative data that may be further diversified and extended to get more inferences. Qualitative research conducted in this paper is able to develop a basic foundation for understanding challenges of rural education that may be further used to get some quantitative inferences by using other methods of research.

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