

Rural Education in Karnataka: Present Scenario**Sharanappa**

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Abstract:

The real India live in villages', this saying is as true today as it was when the country got independence 78 years back. As more than half of the population of the country lives in villages, rural development is an eminent factor for the development of our economy. The crucial motivating factor for the development of the economy in today's time is education. Like in the body of human being liver is responsible for the proper functioning of the body, in the same way education acts a backbone for the economy. To explore this significant role of education in Karnataka especially in rural Karnataka, this paper tries to explain the present condition of rural education, rural education v/s urban education failures and problems being faced by the rural education. It also focused the various initiatives been taken by the government and some of the suggestions for improving the education system in rural.

Keywords: Rural education

Introduction:

Half of the population lives in the villages. The contribution of rural Karnataka towards the economic development is not hidden from any of us. Earlier the people used to correlate rural development with agricultural development and thus focus was only on the increased agricultural production. But with the changing time, this misbelieve has also changed. Today the concept of rural development is fundamentally different that it was used to be 2 or 3 decades ago. Now rural development includes development improving the quality of life of rural people. It constitutes improvement in their health and nutrition, education, safe and healthy environment, fairness in income distribution and no discrimination in gender.

The continuous growth of the Karnataka economy forces the Karnataka government to accelerate the process of developing all the branches of the Karnataka education system. As more than half of the population in Karnataka lives in villages, therefore the education system in rural area also plays a significant contribution in the growth of the economy. Education has a desirable controlling influence over development of the rural individual, family, community and society that leads to reduced

poverty and controlled unemployment. Functions of education include imparting social change, making rural people aware about their rights, improving individual standard of living, providing employment and income opportunities to rural people and so on.

The present system of education in India was introduced by the British in the 20th century. The system so given has a western style and content, ignoring traditional structures and so has declined. After independence, the Central Government has taken the responsibility of technical and higher education. The central government through the Ministry of Human Resource Development's Department of Education and the governments at the states formulated the education policy and planning. Rural education in Karnataka faces significant challenges, impacting the quality of learning and opportunities for students. Despite progress, disparities persist between urban and rural areas.

Present scenario of rural education in Karnataka:

Right to Education is the primary right of every citizen of India, whether a child resides in a high profile society or in a far away not so developed secluded village. In Karnataka, condition of rural education is still improving, the conditions of these rural schools is still very poor. There are very few schools in the rural areas and children have to travel far away distances to avail these facilities and most

schools in these locations do not provide drinking water. The quality of education is also very poor. The teachers get very less income so, most of the time the teachers are either absent or they do not teach properly.

Schools in rural areas are promoted to raise the level of education and literacy in rural Karnataka. The main aim of running these types of schools in Karnataka is to increase the rates of literacy in rural areas. More than 30% of Karnataka's population is illiterate and cannot read or write. And schools in rural areas are inadequate and often equivalent to being non-existent. Thus, government's initiative to set up schools in rural areas came into picture. According to Just Karnataka Schools the conditions of rural education in India, is improving steadily and the government is also providing full support and providing with many initiatives. The fee structure in these schools is also very low so that every child can study and afford it. There are many initiatives taken by the government, but they are not implemented in the schools, so the present scenario remains the same.

Though there are very few schools in rural areas, children and their parents are showing interest and availing school facilities in these remote locations. Children have to walk miles to reach their school. Rural schools pay special attention to children in these locations so that each child gets an equal and important opportunity. They promote reading and writing and enhanced basic education. These schools also provide study material to every student apart from, meals during school hours, uniforms etc. Rural village schools also have implemented library system, which provide books, newspapers and magazine to children. They not only provide science kits and equipment for hands-on-learning, but also notebooks, textbooks and pencils to poor children. Apart from that they also give scholarships to deserving students regularly, who wish to study ahead. They create community awareness, about the need for education and world literacy. Many indirect benefits of a basic rural education include poverty reduction, disease control, enhanced employment opportunities and increasing rate of literacy. The curriculum includes English, Mathematics, General Knowledge and Drawing. Apart from that they also provide Value Education and Computer Education. With the help of rural education every family and child has excess to basic

primary education. Individual's special talents are recognized. The teaching methodology ensures that each and every student is exposed to educational experience in an active and dynamic learning environment, so that they can achieve excellence. Teachers also encourage every student to express their views, observations and experiences. The main objectives of rural school's is to ensure that every child in rural Karnataka receives quality education which prepares them to compete in the competitive global environment.

Rural education initiative has the following objectives:

- To provide free standard education to rural children
- Supporting children for higher education.
- Guiding and Supporting Research scholars in Educational Development.
- Implementing new teaching methodologies and Assessment system.
- Promoting all schools to stress free environment.

Distinction between Urban education & rural education:

- There are many schools in cities and towns whereas; there are very few schools in villages and the rural areas.
- There are transportation facilities like bus pick and in urban schools where as children in rural areas have to walk miles to reach their schools.
- Basic amenities like no drinking water is provided in some of the schools in villages.
- Level of education in urban schools is far advanced as compared to the basic level taught in rural schools.
- Computer education is given high importance in urban areas where as very few schools in villages give computer training.
- Group classes are taken by using video conferencing and audio conferencing in urban schools where as no such facilities are provided for students in rural schools.
- The teachers are given tools like laptops, printers to provide notes and other important notices to the children in urban schools while there are no such facilities in the rural schools.

- School infrastructure in case of cities and urban areas is much more advanced as compared to that in schools in rural areas where some times children are even made to sit on the floor due to non-availability of furniture.
- School education in urban areas is more advanced especially since there is a lot of computer aided teaching.
- Apart from the course curriculum rural schools are not able to involve children in other activities like sports, co-curricular activities and competitions. Such events and activities tend help in the overall development of the children.

Problems faced in rural education in Karnataka:

Karnataka is developing rapidly and many initiatives had been taken for the development of rural Karnataka, still much more have to be done. There are several problems being faced by the schools running in rural Karnataka. Some of these problems are stated below:

- ❖ Inadequate Infrastructure: Many schools in villages lack proper infrastructure facilities. There are no proper facilities for sitting as sometimes children are even made to sit on the floor due to non-availability of furniture. The school building lacks doors and windows, and so the wind and animals enter unimpeded.
- ❖ Low income: Teachers in the villages also get very less income in comparison to the teachers that teach in urban schools. As teachers are not satisfied with their income, they generally do not give proper attention to the students.
- ❖ Lack of transportation facilities: This is one of the biggest problems being faced by the children going to village schools. As there are no proper transport facilities available children don't like to travel miles to come to school.
- ❖ Less in number: In comparison to the number of schools present in urban area i.e., cities or towns, there are very few schools in villages or rural areas.
- ❖ Lack of basic amenities: Even the basic amenities like drinking water, clean toilets

etc are also not available in many of the schools at villages.

- ❖ Lack of extra-curricular activities: Apart from the course curriculum rural schools are not able to involve children in other activities like sports, co-curricular activities and competitions. Such events and activities tend help in the overall development of the children.
 - There is no excess to supplemental education.
- ❖ Deficiency of funds: One of the severe hurdles in the education system in rural India is the unavailability of funds. Some schools do not have funds even for purchasing benches, blackboards etc.
- ❖ Teacher Shortages: Difficulty attracting and retaining qualified teachers leads to high student-teacher ratios.
- ❖ Socio-Economic Barriers: Poverty, gender bias, and limited parental involvement affect attendance and performance.
- ❖ Digital Divide: Limited internet access (only 18.47% of schools) hinders online learning.
- ❖ Poor Learning Outcomes: ASER2024 Reportshow low reading and math skills among rural students.

Reasons for the failure of rural education:

- The teachers do not get any support from the parents in villages on the part of curriculum. Parents in villages want that their children should be provided with education related to agriculture so that they can help them. This thinking act as an obstacle in bringing the children to schools.
- In several schools of villages, the premise of school is also not sufficient to accompany all the students.
- Lack of illiteracy on the part of the parents also acts as an obstacle in attracting the students in rural areas.
- As teachers in rural areas get very less salary in comparison to the teachers teaching in schools located in towns or cities, they do not give their 100%.
- Students in the rural areas are also not interested in education because it is not

appealing as any computers, laptops, internet facility made available for them.

- Inadequate implementation of schemes like RTE and SSA.
- Lack of community involvement and participation.
- Limited access to secondary education and vocational training.

Suggestions for improving rural education:

- The curriculum of rural education can be updated and should accompany education related to farming, gardening etc.
- To attract more number of students and creating enthusiasm in them for learning, visual aids like projectors, television etc. can be used to show some educational movies.
- To motivate the teachers they should be made to feel proud that by teaching in the rural or remote area they are acting as a helping hand in the development of economy.
- Some special sessions or classes can be conducted for the parents to make them realize the significance of education for their children.
- To appreciate the efforts of students, some type of scholarships either in the form of gifts or books can be given to them who perform well in the class.
- Build more schools, provide basic amenities like toilets, clean water, and electricity.
- Engage local communities, parents, and NGO's to support schools and students.
- Focus on girls education provide scholarships, and address socio-economic barriers.

Initiatives taken by the Karnataka Government:

For promoting the importance of education in India, Ministry of Law and Justice had introduced 'The Right of Children to Free and Compulsory Education Act, 2009'. It is an Act introduced to provide free and compulsory education to all children between the ages of six to fourteen years. Several central and state level initiatives have been in operation from the early 1980s. The main objectives of all these initiatives include increasing girls enrolment, improving educational outcomes, strengthening community involvement, improving teaching and learning materials, and providing in-

service teacher training in villages. Some of these initiatives are:

- **Operation blackboard:** This scheme was launched in 1987 with a motto of improving the school environment. For the sake of retaining and enhancing the learning skills of children this has been started. This scheme has brought a remarkable improvement in primary education.
- **National programme of nutritional support to primary education:** This programme was launched on 15th August 1995 with a view to increase enrolment, retention and attendance in primary schools by augmenting nutritional meal to children. Under this scheme children attending the school are given free cooked meal of 100gms every day and positive results have gained with this scheme.
- **District primary education program:** This programme was launched in 1994 with the objective of universalization of primary education. Its main features are Universal Access, Universal Retention and Universal Achievement. It aims that the primary education should be accessible to each and every child of school going age, once a child is enrolled in school he/ she should be retained there. The final step is achievement of the goal of education.
- **SarvaSikshaAbhiyan (SSA):** The main goal of this program is that all children of 6-11 years of age should complete primary education by the year 2007 and all children of 6-14 years of age should complete eight years of schooling by 2010. This plan covers the whole country with special emphasis on girl education and education of Schedule Caste (SC) and Schedule Tribe (ST) children and children with special needs. The SSA centers are mainly opened in those areas, which do not have any school or where schools are very far off.
- **Nali Kali Programme:** Although the Nali Kali programme is being dropped in 15 districts, the government is focusing on improving foundational literacy and numeracy skills.

- **Vocational Training:** The government is implementing vocational guidance programmes in 150 government schools, benefiting 35,000 students, with plans to expand to 2.3 lakh students.
- **Mid-Day Meal Scheme:** The government provides nutritious food, including ragi malt, milk, eggs, or bananas, to 53 lakh children.
- **Teacher Training:** The government is prioritizing teacher recruitment and increasing honoraria for guest teachers.
- **Digital Initiatives:** The government is introducing computer training from Class 1 and integrating digital literacy and coding skills.
- **Residential Schools:** The government is setting up residential schools for children of construction workers in 31 districts.
- **Karnataka Public Schools (KPS):** The government plans to upgrade 800 government schools into KPS, with an estimated investment of ₹3,000 crore. These schools will offer bilingual instruction, modern infrastructure, and digital tools.

Conclusion:

The development of any country depends fully on the education of its people. Basic education is viewed worldwide as human right. For this reason 'The Right of Children to Free and Compulsory Education Act, 2009 came into picture. All educational innovations require strong community support and participation. 'People's acceptance and participation' can be used as an indicator for measuring the progress of the various programmes. Therefore to spread awareness among the rural people about the need and significance of education more efforts have to be taken by the government, educated youth of urban towns and cities, teachers, youngscholars etc.

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