

A Study on Rural Education in Darjeeling

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Abstract: Education is considered as basis for development of society. Education has become a necessity of today's changing world. Literally and from the social, economic and political perspectives, the statement is valid even today. Around 65% of the State's population is living in rural areas. People in rural areas should have the same quality of life as is enjoyed by people living in sub urban and urban areas. However, this is not the reality. The paper discusses how the Indian educational system, especially sectors of Darjeeling that cater to the rural poor, continues to be plagued with a host of enormous problems. Most of the rural areas were visited for collection of information.

Keywords: Development, Society, Education System, Rural area, Education Objective

1. Introduction

Education is considered as basis for development of society. Education has become a necessity of today's changing world. The level of education has tremendously gone high mostly in urban areas whereas rural areas are still facing the problem of uneducation. Education in Darjeeling district of West Bengal, has a strong foundation since ages. It has a high literacy rate of 71.08% (2001 census), but still it has been seen that the rural education is quite low. In rural villages where literacy rates are low and most residents have not progressed beyond primary school, there is widespread recognition that education represents the only means for their children to access this brighter future. Access to education is legally guaranteed and government primary schools are present in all the remotest regions of Darjeeling. However, the public education sector is struggling to provide an adequate level of service to its students. Teacher absenteeism is rampant, textbooks and learning materials in scant supply, and basic infrastructure lacking. The belief that the public education system is failing their children has compelled communities to create their own solutions. Poor families are increasingly willing to spend a significant portion of their monthly income on their children's education. There is a budding hope that their children may be able to break the cycle of poverty that has consumed families for generations. These forces are combining to spark a quiet revolution in which community-run private schools are being created to meet the demands and desires of these families. The earliest Primary School to be opened in the rural areas of the district was that at Sukhia- Pokhri in 1900 by the Missionaries of the Church of Scotland Mission and in 1953 the school was Affiliated to the Board of the Secondary Education and was renamed the Sukhia Pokhri High School. One example of a typical rural private school in the Darjeeling Hills is Divya Jyoti Academy. Divya Jyoti is an English medium school established about ten years ago after parents became frustrated by the dysfunction of their local government school. If we observe the changing pattern of education before independence and after independence then it can be traced out that the level of education has

increased by 50% by 2001 which is a great achievement though mostly in urban areas but rural areas can't be ignored

2. Objective

The objective of the study is:

- to find out the position of rural education of Darjeeling,
- to find out the facilities provided for better education,
- to know the importance of education among rural people
- to examine the role of Government in promoting education.
- to determine the status of education in rural areas in Darjeeling.
- to know the problems of education in rural areas.
- to find out best possible remedies to cope out those problems.

Rural education should have the following initiative objective:

- 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.

3. Methodology

In this paper the research is based on primary as well as secondary data. Primary data is taken from the field i.e. rural areas of Darjeeling. The secondary data is taken from different research reports, journals, websites and research papers.

A case study of rural education at some places of Darjeeling

1. Leborg, Darjeeling

Leborg is a larger rural area of Darjeeling comprising 25 villages. The education system is well developed in this area

. The private and Govt schools both has played a great role in the development of education in this area. Siksha Sangh High School located in Ging and Nimna Madhyamik Vidyalaya are the two Govt schools providing education to 450 students. Besides these Sunrise School located in Harsing, Bhadra Sheela Memorial Institute (B.S.M.I) and Saraswati Vidya Daan Academy are the three private schools possessing 300, 180 and 120 students respectively. Except Saraswati Vidya Daan Academy all the schools are of secondary level.

Access to transport has attracted larger number of students from a distant and near by areas. Mostly games, sports and music are the part of their educational subject and are given much emphasis by the schools. Most interesting part of education is the availability of libraries in almost all schools of lebong area . Apart from this , the cheap fee structure, Mid –day meal, drinking water facilities ,availability of free books and uniform has served the most weak and backward classes students to achieve education and develop themselves.

The Govt schools namely: Siksha Sangh High School and Nimna Madhyamik Vidhyalaya imparts education in local language i.e Nepali where as the rest three private schools imparts education in English language which is a mark of developing education system in Lebong area. Besides, teacher’s efficiency and their hard work has helped a lot in promoting education in this area.

2. Rangeet Mazuwa, Maneybhanjyang, Darjeeling

Rangeet Mazuwa posses four schools namely Rangeet Mazuwa Primary School, Dr. Radhakrishna High Shool, Saint Charles School and Wonderland School. The presence of four schools in Rangeet Mazuwa shows that the level of education is quite high. Rangeet Mazuwa Primary school and Dr. Radhakrishna High school are government schools having 35 and 130 students respectively. Saint Charles school and Wonderland school are private schools having 48 and 55 students respectively. Govt. schools have attracted large no. of students compared to the private schools. The presence of 130 students in secondary level at Dr. Radhakrishna High school shows that the poor and needy students are given better education not only in primary level but also at secondary level. The provision of stipend facilities to poor students too have attracted number of students.

The education system in this area ha improved a lot not only by the efficient activities of teachers but also by the provision of facilities such as games and sports both indoor and out- door, drinking water facilities and mostly the library facilities. Large number of books and magazines in the library has encouraged the students to utilise their precious time and gain some extra knowledge. Mid-day meal is provided at both the govt. schools. Fee structure is quite low at govt. schools whereas in private schools it is affordable as well. In Rangeet Mazuwa Primary school it is free of cost, in Dr. Radhakrishna High school its Rs 800 per annum. In private school its quite high, St. Charles school its Rs 1500 per annum and in Wonderland school its Rs 1200 per annum.

The well equipped infrastructure system mostly cemented buildings with larger classrooms, playgrounds have attracted most number of students.

3 out of 4 schools are English Medium school namely Dr. Radhakrishna High school, St. Charles school and Wonderland shool whereas only one school i.e. Rangeet Mazuwa Primary school is Nepali Medium. It can be traced out that the English language is given due emphasis which is a symbol of development.

3. Aloo bari, Darjeeling

Aloo bare is a small area of Darjeeling where only two schools are located where both the schools are primary schools. Jungle Busty Primary school and Gumbagoan Aloo bare Primary School are the two primary schools of aloo bare. Both the schools are Govt schools comprising only 15 students in Jungle busty primary school and 13 in gumbagaon Aloo bare primary school. Besides this ,I.C.D.S is also available in Aloo bare. No private schools were found in this area. The presence of Govt school shows that the poor and the needy students are getting better education free of cost.

The availability of basic facilities have encouraged the growth of education in Aloo bare such as the provision of games and sports, provision of mid –day meal and drinking water facilities.

The infrastructural facilities are yet to be developed in order to support education. Schools are yet of kutch type which does not support larger number of students. This is why education level has not gone up as expected. Besides this ,transport facilities are not available in this area which does not allow the students of surrounding areas to join the schools.

Though the number of students are low but still the role of teachers in imparting knowledge in English language has lifted the level of education. Their regular attending and well performance has encouraged the students to get better education which is a mark of growth.

4. Liza Hill, Pushparani Gaon

Liza Hill, Pushpa rani Gaon is well aquanted with four schools namely; Liza Hill Prathmik Pathsala , Upper Liza Hill Primary school, Madhyamik Siksha Kendra and Saint Ignatius school. Liza hill Prathmik Pathsala and Upper Liza Hill Primary schools are primary schools whereas the others are secondary schools promoting better education in this area. Except Saint Ignatius school all the three schools are government schools supporting larger number of students. The primary schools Liza Hill Prathmik Pathsala and Upper Liza Hill Primary School posses 15 and 40 students respectively. Compared to primary schools, secondary schools posses larger number of students where Madhyamik Siksha Kendra has 85 and Saint Ignatius school has 90 students respectively which shows that the secondary education has developed a lot.

Moreover the availability of basic facilities has enhanced the education of Liza Hill a lot. Games and sports are given due emphasis and is a part of education as well. Besides this Govt schools also provides Mid –day meal along with

drinking water facilities. Fee is free in Govt schools where as Madhyamik Siksha Kendra charge Rs 700 p.a and Saint Ignatius school charge Rs 1500 p.a which is quite affordable for students.

As the medium of instruction is English in all the schools the level of education has gone high enough developing students skill of speaking English as well.

The well developed infrastructure too has enhanced education in this area. Availability of better class rooms, better play grounds, canteen, along with better transport facilities has facilitated the development of education in this area.

5. Mungpoo , Darjeeling

Mungpoo is one of the larger rural areas of Darjeeling possessing mostly 6 schools and promoting better education. 4 primary schools namely: St Joseph School, Green Mount School, Siddhartha Memorial and St Mangal School has been imparting better education to mostly 250, 100,150 and 200 students respectively which means around 600 students are getting well education in primary level. Saraswati Higher Secondary School and Sarada Junior School are the two secondary schools imparting education to 500 and 300 students respectively. The number of 800 students in secondary school signifies the growth of higher education in Mungpoo area. Besides these, other institution promoting education in this area are I.C.D.S and S.S.K.

The provision of facilities like games and sports, drinking water facilities, Mid –day meal , libraries, hostels and moreover the provision of books and uniform in Govt schools had helped a lot in maintaining the education system in Mungpoo area.

The availability of transport facilities is a great advantage for the transfer of students from far and surrounding areas towards the schools of Mungpoo. Besides this , the well furnished cemented buildings and class rooms along with the play grounds and halls has played a keen role in attracting larger number of students in 6 schools of Mungpoo .

6. Sin Kuna, 3rd mile, Darjeeling

After a brief survey two schools were found out of which one is primary and other secondary namely orchid Nursery School and Sai Junior H.S School. Other institutions found were computer centre imparting basic computer knowledge. Sai junior H.S School is a govt school possessing 500 students which means that the education system has improved a lot. Not only this, the students are given all the facilities, such as – Mid –day meal, drinking water facilities, games and sports, etc. Library is not available which means something is yet to be achieved. The no. of students in private school is around 50 which means that the fee structure is quite high and the students are forced to study at Govt. school where fee structure is quite low and affordable.

The role of teachers in both the schools has played quite a major role in imparting better knowledge and education to the poor and needy students. As both the schools are English medium, English language has improved a lot among the students. The presence of Sai Junior H.S. School upto class

12 has made the students to stay at their native places and gain a better education within their surroundings.

The infrastructure system too have attracted lots of students to join the school with great enthusiasm. Both the schools are cemented with better availability of classrooms, playgrounds, halls and indoor game rooms.

4. Problems Seen

1) Absence of Libraries

Libraries, the basic source of books and information, are lacking in almost all the rural areas of Darjeeling. Except few private schools, the government schools are totally lagging in providing library facilities to the students. Students of Darjeeling's rural areas are thus finding problems in obtaining much of the informations and books to enhance education.

2) Poor Infrastructure

Infrastructure is a base of education as well as development. But it has been seen that most of the schools in rural areas are having poor infrastructure. The absence of better classrooms, transport facilities, etc. has caused some of the schools to operate inefficiently.

3) Poor accessibility to roads

Most of the rural schools of Darjeeling are located far away from the main roads and thus students from distant places are finding it difficult to reach their schools by foot and mostly larger number of students are not willing to join such schools which are located far from the roads.

4) Absence of Hostels

The unavailability of hostels in rural schools of Darjeeling had failed to attract students from distant places which means most of the students still remains uneducated.

Other Problems faced in rural education in Darjeeling:

- Teachers of rural schools in villages and small towns receive low income so there is a possibility that teachers give less attention to children.
- Most of the schools do not have proper infrastructure. Therefore, they do not get most of the facilities such as computer education, sports education and extra-curricular activities.
- There are no proper transport facilities so children do not like to travel miles to come to school.
- There is no excess to supplemental education.
- Problems of Rural Schools Teacher Compensation
- School Employees
- School Buildings
- Technology Funding
- Promoting Technology Private endowments from private and public businesses
- Creative fund raising by the school district
- Solving the Problems of Funding Centralize school finance so that the state, rather than local districts, has the primary responsibility for funding schools
- Base school funding on a explicit assessment of the actual costs of educating a child.

5. Conclusion

After a long evaluation it can be traced out that the education in rural areas of Darjeeling is growing slowly. The facilities provided by the government have attracted larger number of students. Besides this the government policy of providing free and compulsory education to the children of 14 years has proved effective. Both male and female children are given good education, which is a great achievement in itself. Teachers' skills and efficiency too has worked a lot in promoting education. But still government should open more schools in rural areas and provide library and hostel facilities to the students along with schools buses and cabs. Not only students' interest, but the parents should encourage their children for better education. It can be expected that parent's concern about their children's education and government policies to enhance education will surely take rural education to a great level.

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