

RIGHT TO EDUCATION: ISSUES AND CHALLENGES IN ITS IMPLEMENTATION IN THE RURAL AREAS

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ABSTRACT

For a fast growing and developing country like India, with a population over 138 Cores, education has acted as a strong stimulus in giving it a direction, a sense of purpose in its social, economic and political development through the process of democratized republic dispensation. Its richness in the field of education, over a period of time having suffered innumerable jolts and insinuations in historical terms subjected it to deterioration and decline to lowest ebb. To restart, regain and shore up the lost ground, a great deal of efforts and initiatives were undertaken in a concerted manner since pre-independence era, not only to make India literate but also knowledgeable in all the fields with special emphasis to make the education a matter of fundamental Right, at least for the elementary education. With a view to accomplish the Fundamental Right provided under Article 21-A, for free and compulsory education to all children of the age six to fourteen years in such a manner as the state may, by law, determine, the Right of Children to Free and Compulsory Education (RTE) Act, 2009, a consequential legislation was enacted. The RTE Act was seen as a landmark step by the Government to provide, every child in that age group including from the disadvantaged group or the weaker sections or differently abled, the right to quality and equitable elementary education in a formal school, which would be of a certain acceptable standard as laid down by the Act. The Act made it legally binding for the state and local governments to follow the norms laid down under the Act, while clearly providing for the responsibilities of the schools, teachers, parents, teacher's qualifications, pupil-teacher ratio, curriculum and the evaluation etc. However, it appears from the available information that even after decade of its implementation, though the data looks boasting, the progress made at ground level, leaves much to be desired in terms of its objectives. With current emphasis majorly targeted towards accomplishing enrolment numbers and improving infrastructure of schools, focus on quality education seems to have misplaced. The target to reach the unreachable segments of the society with quality education so as to provide an equal educational opportunity to all still looks a distant dream. More particularly, in the context that most of the India's population (68.84%) live in rural areas, which have a wide spread and at certain places, even a remote and difficult terrain, with its unique socio-economic-cultural-linguistic problems, limitations, constraints and difficulties, implementing RTE Act, gives rise to a set of challenges. An effort has therefore, been made to examine in this study the status, issues and challenges in the implementation of RTE, Act in rural areas.

Key words: Status of Rural education, Right to education in rural area, Rural RTE implementation, challenges in Elementary education in remote areas, Rural School education.

INTRODUCTION

Most of the India, literally, continues to live in villages more or less as community, closely associated with the nature, having agriculture or matter related therewith as their major occupation. It is comprised of a huge spread with low density population all over India. It is largely homogenous with similarity in characteristics, belief system and the language though it keeps varying from state to state and even from district to district. It is governed by social mobility out of occupation and holds social control through values and the traditions of the society. Rural life is generally stable, having low standard of living with strong sense of belonging.

Though things have changed a lot, rural community is generally seen to be suffering from poverty, illiteracy, unawareness, malnutrition, disease and social crimes. Therefore, a strong need was felt for the rural development, that too, in inclusive manner for the overall growth and development of the country. It was aimed towards improving the quality of life of rural people in respect of all the three interrelated aspects, the social, which focused on ensuring gender equality, women empowerment and the social safety of disadvantaged group etc., the economic, which worked on the capacity build up and providing the opportunities for employment/ vocation etc. and the political, which envisaged improving opportunities for participating in the political process at village level in equal and effective manner. Literacy and Education was cutting across all these three aspects and was considered not only essential but a priority.

Various initiatives and programs, covering improvement in the land reforms, minimizing urban rural divide, improving the standard of living by working on availability of drinking water, proper sanitation, road construction, electrification, adequate supply of food

and generation of employment opportunities etc. were started by the central government for the rural development. Simultaneously, several projects and programs were also initiated for the increasing the enrolment, attendance, retention for elementary education at village level itself. Right to Education (RTE, Act) came as a big support to all these initiatives being complimentary and supplementary to each other for the rural development and eventually to strengthen the growth and development of the country. The primary purpose of introducing the Right of Children to Free and compulsory Education Act, (RTE) was to give a thrust not only to improve the literacy as a matter of right but also to strengthen the quality of elementary education for all without any consideration of caste, religion, social status and the economic condition, in a systematic and gradual manner. It was also aimed and directed as an effective measure for the social development including alleviation of poverty with the passage of time. All these bunch of programs, have spawned encouraging results. But after more than eleven years of the implementation of RTE Act, it is still a matter of feeling that on elementary education, particularly in rural area things have not made progress in the manner expected. There are continued problems relating to minimum basic infrastructure and the facilities, availability of qualified and trained teachers, transportation, schools inspections, motivation and/ or distraction of the children to go to school etc. Parents hold a strong impression that quality of education in government schools is rather substandard. All these aspects, therefore, arouse an inquisitiveness to conduct a quick review to examine the issues and the challenges in the implementation of RTE Act in the rural area.

Objective of this study: Examine the status of the RTE Implementation in the rural areas in India as also the issues and the challenges thereof.

Methodology: The study is based on relevant data of a survey of 128 mix of schools of NCR covering rural areas as well, conducted for an Academic research by the Author on the subject of “Implementation of RTE Act: An appraisal” and the Secondary data of NSO 2021, ASER 2021, UDISE plus 2019-20, ASER -2019-20, ASER 2018, Census 2011 Reports and some Government data.

II. PRESENT STATUS OF RTE IMPLEMENTATION IN RURAL AREA

In order to examine this aspect, some of the basic facts and figures relating to elementary education in rural area, would help determining it better.

Rural Elementary Education Cover: 85% of the total schools are located in rural areas. 71% of the total enrolment is concentrated in the rural areas. 75% of all the teachers are in the rural schools.

Rural Literacy: The rate of literacy of 68.91% reported in 2011 (Census Report), has improved to 73.5% in 2021 (National Statistical Office).

Gross Enrolment Rate (GER): From 2018-19, it has increased from 96.1% to 97.8% for the Elementary education (UDISE +2019-20). But 5.3% rural children in the age group of 6-10 years were not enrolled as compared to 1.8% in 2018. Besides, there was a steady decline in the enrolment rate at Primary level from 2013 to 2018. Out of all the children enrolled in Standard I, 35.6% were in private and 64.4% in government schools (ASER 2020).

Age differential in enrolment: Private schools enrolled 20.5% underage children (5 years of age or below), and 22.5% overage (8 years or more), as against 28.5% and 10% respectively in government schools. As per the Right to Education Act, children should be admitted in Standard I at the age of six years, whereas many states have permitted admission in Standard I at the age of five plus years. This created a scenario, wherein four out of every ten children in Standard I, were less than five years of age or more than six years of age. Standard I children of the government schools were younger than the private schools (ASER 2018).

School readiness: 42.7% of Standard I, children could not recognize alphabet of their medium and 35.7% numbers from one to nine. It clearly reflects that they were just not ready for schooling, while more than 90% of them had been subjected to some kind of pre- schooling. Children coming from poor or disadvantaged backgrounds were found rather more adversely affected in this regard (ASER 2018).

Gender Gap: There were more girls enrolled in government, and more boys in private schools clearly reflecting Gender gaps in the schools (ASER 2018).

Overall enrollment- The Overall enrollment of the children in the age group from 6 to 14 years, was reported to be more than 95%. The proportion of children of this age group, not enrolled in school had fallen to 2.8%. The proportion of girls, in the age group from 11 to 14 years, who are out of school had also fallen to 4.1% from 10.3% in 2006. The segment of girls, in the age group of 15 to 16 years, not enrolled has also declined to 13.5% from 20% ten years back (ASER 2018).

Private school enrollment: Private schools reflected enrolment of children in the age group of 6 to 14 years at 30.9%, almost a marginal increase from 2016, though it slightly varies from state to state.

Learning levels: *The Foundational learning level- Reading (Number of children could read letters, words, a simple paragraph of Standard I, or a 'story' of Standard II with difficulty) - Standard III-* The percentage of all children, who could read Standard II material, had shown an increase in last few years from 21.6% (2013) to 27.2% (2018). **Standard V-** 50.3% of all children could read Standard II text as against 47.9% (2016). In Standard VIII, while the children were expected to not only have picked up the foundational skills adequately, but have also moved further in learning beyond the basic stage. But for **Standard VIII**, no change was reflected in 2016 status - 73% of all children could only read at least a Standard II level text.

The Foundational learning level - Numbers (Number of children could recognize numbers from 1 to 9, from 10 to 99, could do a two digit subtraction, a three digit division by one digit) - Standard III- 28.1% were able to do at least subtraction (27.6% in 2016)

while in government schools 20.9% (20.3% in 2016). **Standard V**- 27.8% were able to do division (26% in 2016). **Standard VIII**- 44% was able to work out a three digit by one digit division.

Beyond basics level - (Number of children in the age group from 14 to 16 years, could calculate time, could calculate the number of tablets required to purify water, could figure out from the two different price lists where to buy books from, and could calculate the discount).— **For Beyond basics**- Only half could compute the time accurately, 52% could calculate number of tablets needed to purify a given water volume, 37% were able to work out right option for purchase of books, and less than 30% could work out the discount figures rightly (ASER 2018).

Schools: All India figures indicate that there are less than 60 students in 4 out of 10 Government primary schools. *Teacher and student attendance* – Both in Primary and Upper primary schools, on an average teachers' attendance was at 85% while students' attendance at 72%. *School facilities* - there was substantial improvement observed in last eight years in the availability of many facilities in the schools as required under RTE. - Usable girls' toilets increased to 66.4% - Boundary walls to 64.4% - kitchen shed for Mid-day meal to 91%, and Distribution of books other than textbooks to 74.2%. Serving of the Mid-day meal was also observed in 80% of schools on the day of the visit. *Sports and the Physical education* - Although, 8 out of 10 schools, had a ground either within the school premises or nearby for sports or the physical education, some kind of Sports equipment were found only in 55.8% of Primary, and 71.5% of Upper primary schools (ASER 2018).

Post COVID Scenario: Enrollment of the children in the age group from 6 to 14 years indicated a clear shift moving from private to government schools, resulting into a decline in enrollment from 32.5% to 24.4% in private schools. As many schools have not yet opened and many entry level children or those who migrated have not sought admission, 'Not enrolled' numbers are showing an increase. It is also rather difficult at this stage to ascertain the exact number of 'Out of school' or 'Drop out' children. Although, the smartphone ownership has increased at homes - Children of Government school at 63.7% and Private school at 79% (2021), access by these children for educational purposes remained a problem – only about a quarter of them could have access for their studies. In 2020, distribution of books etc. was done to all by 86.8% and in 2021 by 90.1% schools (ASER 2021).

III. FROM ACADEMIC RESEARCH OF THE AUTHOR

A study of 128 schools comprising of 32% Government, 6.3% Government aided, 55.4% Private unaided and 6.3% Minority in the National Capital Region (NCR) covering some part of Delhi, Uttar Pradesh and Haryana with urban (58.6%) and rural (41.4%) spread, having 54% Boys and 46% Girls. The total population of 2,08,549 children/students was spread 28% in Government (out of which 46.75% in rural), 5% in Private aided (out of which 71.4% in rural), 59% in Private unaided (out of which 23.42% in rural) and 8% in Minority schools. Total teachers population of 7574 teachers, has 18% Male and 82% Female. The total teachers' population was spread 23% in Government (out of which 42.79% in rural), 3% in Private aided (out of which 68.71% in rural), 67% in Private unaided (out of which 19.38% in rural) and 8% in Minority schools.

IV. THE RURAL REFLECTIONS OF THE STUDY

- *PTR:* Government schools: 37:1; Private aided: 54:1; Private unaided: 23:1
- *Teachers on contract:* Government Schools: 43%; Private aided: 82%; Private unaided: 16%
- *Status of Non-availability of basic education related facilities:* Office – 2%; Library – 25%; Computer / IT – 25%; Sports/Equipment – 32%; Class rooms for Primary – 28%; Class rooms for Upper Primary – 2%.
- *Condition of Available Basic education related facilities requiring 'Improvement':*
Office – 2%; Library – 42%; Computer/ IT – 49%; sports/Equipment – 47%; Class rooms for Primary – 38%; Classrooms for Upper Primary – 15%.
- *Student Class rooms Ratio:* Government: 55; Private aided: 46; Private unaided: 33
- *Status of Non-availability of necessary general facilities:* Play ground: 11%; Boundary wall: 11%; Separate male/female toilets: 31%; Drinking water facility: 42%; Furniture in class rooms: 9%; Fans in class rooms: 8%; Single entry/exit: 11%; Ramp: 47%
- *Condition of the available necessary general facilities requiring 'Improvement':*
Playground: 9%; Boundary wall: 33.4%; Separate male/female toilets: 31%; Drinking water facility: 21%; Furniture in class rooms: 32%; Fans in class rooms: 26%; single entry/exit: 15%; Ramp: 45%.
- *Cleanliness in the school:* 8%
- *Boys students ratio per toilet:* Government: 92:1; Private aided: 256:1; Private unaided: 69:1
- *Girls students ratio per toilet:* Government: 76:1; Private aided: 103:1; Private unaided: 45:1
- *Safety condition for various Key aspects, 'Needs Improvement':*
Building structure: 15%; Electrical aspects: 23%; Fire aspects: 23%; Toilet aspects: 51%; Entry/ exit for strangers: 19%; Adequate display of instructions: 57%
- *Parent Teacher Meetings:* Government: 27%; Private aided: 63%; Private unaided: 34%
- *School Inspection by DOE:* Government: 49%; Private aided: 63%; Private unaided: 32%
- *School follow 'No Detention Policy':* Government: 44%; Private aided: 13%; Private unaided: 6%
- *Teachers deployed on duties other than teaching:* Government: 61%; Private aided: 63%; Private unaided: 45%
- *Extent School management and the teachers understand the RTE thoroughly:*

More than 80% : Government: 4.1%; Private aided: NIL; Private unaided: 20.83%
 Between 71-80% : Government: 58.33%; Private aided: 100%; Private unaided: 66.67%
 Between 61-70% : Government: 37.5%; Private aided: NIL; Private unaided: 12.50%

- *Extent of RTE implemented in the schools in percentage terms:*

More than 85% : Government: 4.2%; Private aided: NIL; Private unaided: 16.7%
 Between 71-85% : Government: 25%; Private aided: 60%; Private unaided: 70.8%
 Between 56-70% : Government: 66.7%; Private aided: 40%; Private unaided: 12.5%

V. INFERENCE THAT DATA LEAD TO

A great deal of work for the implementation of RTE provisions in rural area has been done, despite all the restrictive factors and the problems of varying degree. The efforts made are adequately reflected in the 'Key determinants'. There is improvement in the literacy rate, increase in the Gross Enrolment Rate (GER) and in the Overall Enrollment, decline in the proportion of children in the age group of 6 to 14 years of age, 'not enrolled', decline in the proportion of girls in the age group of 11 to 14 years and also 15 to 16 years, who are 'out of school'. Nevertheless, improvement in the learning levels, leave much to be desired, whether it is at Fundamental learning level of Reading or Numeric in all the standards of elementary education. For 'Beyond Basic' for the children in 14 to 16 years of age, a lot is required to be done.

In addition, there are many areas, as are being highlighted hereinafter, which are essential for the proper educational system and the learning outcomes at school level, need desired attention. Non-availability of basic education facilities and/or the improvement needed in the existing facilities are the Library, Computer/IT, Sports/equipment and the classrooms. Non-availability of the general facilities and /or the improvement needed in the existing facilities are Playground, Boundary wall, separate Toilets for boys and girls students, drinking water facility, furniture in the classrooms. Safety point of view earmarks the Building, Electrical aspects and the toilets. Regular Parent teacher meeting, Regular and proper School inspection by the DOE Inspectorate, Quality of teachers and teaching methodology, Continuous and comprehensive evaluation of the students and complete discontinuation of 'No Detention Policy' are other 'focus areas' requiring attention. Crucial to the implementation of RTE Act, is also to create thorough understanding of RTE Act amongst the School teachers and the school management, and to act in a planned manner to improve upon the extent of implementation aspects in the schools.

VI. ISSUES AND THE CHALLENGES (THE RESTRICTED FACTORS)

Lack of money: Most of the people in rural area are either living below the poverty line or managing their livelihoods with difficulty. They are always facing shortage of money even for their basic needs. Sparing money for the expenses required for the education of their children, is just not possible. Although, the Government schools offer education to the children without charging any fees, there are still certain expenses towards bags, stationary, uniforms and transportation etc. Any expense beyond their basic needs therefore, becomes, a biggest resistance for them to even think leave aside the children's education.

Contributing to family earning is the only priority: As mostly rural population is living in poor to poverty level, they have dire need to alleviate their condition of poverty by any which way. This drives them to all kinds of opportunities, which offer them some earning. Getting driven by this simple objective, all other things including education of their children take a back seat. From the very early childhood, they therefore, subject their children to all kind of work opportunities to learn and earn including the family vocation. Even when they are compelled to send their children to school, they find ways and means to escape and put them back to earning.

Practice of Child Labor: The curse of child labor, despite all the measure having been taken, still shows its prevalence in the rural area. Mostly people from the economic weaker section and socially disadvantage group, of the society subject their children to various forms of labor related work like Plantations, Agriculture, Cotton plucking, Firework, General help etc. for the sake of money on full time basis. Such children, thus, remain away from the education and constitute a sizable numbers.

Illiteracy of the parents: In the first place, illiteracy limits the earning and thinking potential besides, generating insecurity and low confidence. While illiterate parents do wish their children to be literate, many of them being under financial constraints opt to subject their children to contribute into the family earning instead. But others do send their sons to school so that after being literate they would have better earning capabilities. Somehow, many suffer from the conservative mindset in respect of their daughters and think that they should be better home and look after domestic chores while they are away on earning. This appears to be the major cause of the illiteracy among rural girl children.

Inadequate educational facilities: The system of education in rural area is not very well-developed on account of various reasons and suffers from different shortcomings. The general condition of schools, in most cases is not very conducive to inspire, being there, feeling at ease so as to create an ambiance to enjoy the process of learning. There is not only lack of or inadequacy of necessary facilities but even the condition of the existing facilities requires improvement of varying order for their proper use and even from the safety point of view. These cover, classrooms, library, computer and Information technology aids, sport facilities and equipment, separate toilets for boys and girls, furniture, clean drinking water, boundary wall, heating equipment in extreme weather locations and the teaching-learning materials etc.

Lack of Quality of teachers and proper teaching methods: Quality of teachers is the real problem experienced in the rural area. Quality refers to qualified, experienced and well trained having ability to create interest, explain and make things understand in

simple manner, relate to children in warm and friendly manner and make the process of learning a matter of enjoyment. The Quality teachers demonstrate competence to use appropriate ways and means for different students and different standards and thus, add value into teaching-learning methods. Quality teachers are fully conversant with Continuous comprehensive evaluation of the students, the discipline aspects as well as their own developmental needs mapping. Very few quality teachers are interested to move to rural area for unique locational issues, condition of schools, inadequacy of remuneration, their own development needs and aspirations, family constraints and the options available for better locations. Most of the teachers in rural area do not have desired aptitude, mindset, approach and training to teach children entrenched with certain social and psychological complexes.

Traditional teaching pattern: The approach and pattern of teaching in rural schools is still very traditional and confines to mere completion of course curriculum by and large. With Communication technology having spread its wings far and wide and mobile and internet connectivity reaching almost every household, children see and know many things happening around the world and therefore, intend knowing more about what they want and the way they want. This creates a huge gap in the manner they are being taught and the way they are interested in and would respond better in terms of learning. The traditional way of teaching is slow, mundane and even boring. They look for something new, enjoyable, engrossing and memorable. They look for meaningful takeaways daily. They also look for variety and diversity. They look for the daily dose of motivation and worth being at school including for extracurricular activities for their development. They intend visualizing a direct link between their being at school and the future. A lot is changed in urban schools particularly in Private unaided while rural schools are still laggard.

Lack of Interest in Studies: Various socio economic reasons in rural area contribute disinterest towards school education. The involvement of both the parents in earning and being away from home as a matter of necessity, parents 'compulsive expectation from the children to either support in earning or other house hold work, getting into the company of people or even slightly elder children, who dwindle away their time in unproductive activities or even so to say bad things for want of proper parental attention, caste and religion based differentiation, and with no positive inspiration from anyone right in their upbringing of children for education, are few important primary reasons. The temptation of free meal, books and no fee, do impel children to get enrolled in the schools but again creating interest and giving them necessary direction and motivation fall immensely short on the part of teachers and the school, which eventually precipitates into dropping out.

Transport related problems: Mostly schools in the rural area are still located at a certain distance from home besetting the neighborhood concept. Reaching school in many cases, are not possible by walk and needs some mode of transportation. For young children, transportation creates dependency for taking to and bring back from school on parents or other family members, which becomes a real problem on daily basis and more regressive in rainy or extreme cold weather. For girl children, this assumes a bit of criticality. This aspect, therefore adds to other restrictive factors for the purpose of education.

Shortage of Teachers: Shortage of teachers is the perennial problem for the rural area. In the first place, not many qualified, experienced and trained teachers, are keen to seek employment or posting in rural schools. Secondly, if they are deployed they hold hesitance or disinterest. Thirdly, there is not enough demand created by the school or the Gram Panchayat or the Block Development or the Cluster Head for filing up the vacant positions on to the local government, to facilitate hiring locally influenced candidates, who are simply a compromised option, with intent to get them regularized over a period of time. The shortage of teachers in schools, leads to a vicious circle of inadequacy, lack of competency, desired experience and training of the teachers resulting into disinterest in learning and substandard quality of learning outcome snowballed into decline in the enrolment of students and the dropouts.

Availability of adequate funds and slow decision making: Unavailability or the deficiency of funds is one of the prime reasons for the non-execution of or delays in various actions necessary for the implementation of RTE Act. For making funds available, things moves through various channels and levels. This apart, village level and block level influences play their active role leading to indecisions or the delayed decisions. At school level, people are afraid of charges being labeled for corruption in respect of action taken by them. In rural area, village people being so intermingled with school and related authorities that the objective of RTE and perspective of education seems becoming obscure. There are not even few instances, where this matter has been taken up rather strongly at appropriate level for corrective action.

Virtually no use of technology: Schools in rural area are not equipped with basic modern information technology like computers or laptops, internet and Wi-Fiat. Even most of the teachers are not very well exposed to or trained in using Computer and information technology (CIT) for educational purposes. Usage of mobile has made it almost mandatory to upgrade the teaching methodology employing CIT adequately to the extent possible. Rural urban divide in this regard is very clear. During lock down of schools, on account of Corona, rural children suffered the most for virtual teaching and learning.

Low teachers' remuneration: Except Government teachers, who are paid on the basis of Seventh Pay Commission, remuneration of teachers working in other schools particularly in rural area, is fairly low. On account of unattractive remuneration, most of the people despite having aptitude and qualifications for teaching opt for other professions. Those, who still choose to teach, do not find enough motivation for putting in their best resulting into completion of just teaching formality and related compliance. Low remuneration of teachers also encourages private tuitions.

Not much focus on extra-curricular activities: The other very important aspect of rural schools, which makes education a bit disinterested for the students, is not giving enough focus on extracurricular activities like sports, debates, musical activities, painting, events and celebrations on various occasion including inter schools competitions etc. This is the reason; there are not adequate facilities and equipment available for the purpose in most rural schools. Education without extracurricular activities is rightly said to be half done.

Liberal promotion to next standard: Earlier 'No Detention Policy' was the reason for lack of seriousness on the part of children for learning and slackness on the part of teachers' for teaching. But for want of proper evaluation system for the children's learning and overall development and teachers training thereof, being put in place till date, rural education would continue to suffer for the quality of education and the learning outcomes.

VII.SUGGESTIONS

1. In order to address the issues and the challenges, which are the causes of the hindrances in effective implementation of RTE, most of the 'rural aspects' which requires necessary development need to be put on priority and to be accomplished in well planned, structured and time bound manner as early as possible to support and strengthen RTE agenda. These relates to electrification, availability of potable water, proper sanitation, housing, construction of roads, supply of food and the generation of employment opportunities etc. Various Programs, Yoginis and the Schemes have already been launched by the government in this regard. But, the impact is rather slow and inconsistent from area to area. Desired level of development of the rural area, with added focus on 'alleviating the poverty' year on year, would help in a big way dealing with other issues relating to education or the implementation of RTE.
2. The other crucial aspect, which required sustainable work in concerted manner at the village, district and even state level by the government, it's all agencies and even by the NGOs to make the illiterate or economically weaker or socially deprived people understand how and why the education is important in making their lives better in time to come and persuade them as a matter of no option to send their children including girls to school. It must be made a part of the political agenda. It would repose a sense of confidence and encourage them to send their children to school, when 'free' and 'compulsory' part of law is also explained to them properly. Simply keeping a track of children, who ought to be in school is not enough, parents of such children need to be persuaded through a political mandate by all influencers for putting them into school and retained there by all means.
3. The concept of 'free' education need to be further liberalized. It should mean and include no tuition fee along with the provision of books, stationary, school bag, uniform, shoes without any charge, even for Economic weaker section and socially disadvantaged group of children against 25% reservation in private schools.
4. A little more stimulus tith poor people (to begin with below the poverty line) irrespective caste, creed or religion, in terms of an appropriate amount per child for sending them to school and studying there for full term, to be credited directly into the account of the parent (s) on completion of the school year, would further act as a positive catalyst. This amount can be increased on completion of first three years, and after fifth year and then after completing the seventh year. Introduction of minimum 2 Merit scholarships (one for girl and another for boy) for each class for poor children for their better performance in school would further traverse a right message in the community.
5. There is also tremendous need to strengthen the existing Anganwadi system (Early Child Care) with Pre-schooling preparation (ECCE) in the rural area so that very young children from poor sections also have the option of getting some exposure of school preparedness before they enter Class 1 in government school. This may also encourage poor parents, to leave their children behind for Early Child Care (ECC), and children will be prepared for schooling through ECCE.
6. The big 'mass of actions' to improve the elementary education cover in rural area relate to a) Opening of new government schools on priority, in time bound manner - as the number of schools are not adequate, the concept of neighborhood school is not existing, and children have to travel a fair distance, which is a problem for the children and the parents both. b) Teachers vacancies to be filled on priority, in time bound manner - as there is apparent shortage of teachers, which seriously affects children's attendance, engagement, activities, learning and desired pattern of development, apart from leading to bad practice of engagement of teachers on casual basis with compromised candidature, and ultimately impacting adversely the accomplishment of the objective of RTE Act. c) Teachers' competency mapping to be done and they should be trained or retrained as and where considered necessary on priority, and in time bound manner - as the existing teachers are seriously lacking in the latest methodology and the techniques of teaching and facilitating the learning including usage of computer and information technology and related electronic devices. d) All deficiencies in necessary 'education related facilities' and the 'general facilities' for the children including in their existing condition and from the safety aspects, in all the schools should be rectified on priority, in time bound manner. e) All the teachers and the members of schools management and the parents need to be made adequately aware of the objective and the provisions of the RTE Act. f) School inspection by the Directorate of Education must be done thoroughly for corrective action every year without fail and all such schools which are below 'Adequacy level' on the implementation of RTE Act, a Report should be sent to the Minister responsible for education in the Council of ministers in the State Legislative Assembly as well as to Minister of Education in the Centre. g) In Government schools, School Management Committees (SMCs) should be properly constituted and its members should be trained for desired efficacy. h) A proper standard system of 'Learning & Overall Development Evaluation' for the students in the schools to be implemented for corrective INPUTs on regular basis. i) No compromise should be permissible on Mid-day meal for the quality and quantity as well no delay in the availability of books etc. for the students in government schools. j) Liberal promotion to next standard should be discouraged. Rather special attention should be made by the teachers toward children not doing well in terms learning to understand their problems and put them to correctional course. k) Sports and extracurricular activities must be given due importance for the overall development of the students. Studies reveal that these activities also influence the curriculum based learning positively.
7. The genesis of the problem originates from the inadequacy of budgeting in the first place, then improper allocation of funds, followed by undue delay in the disbursement and then in the decision making. This ordeal is from Centre to State governments and from State governments to local governments. Shortfall suffers from delays with biased allocation to different districts

even between urban and rural requirements. It needs to be put to an objective, factual and orderly discipline, duly audited by Comptroller and Auditor General of India (CAG) every year and placed in the Parliament.

VIII.CONCLUSION

Rural economy being the base line for the development of our country, rural development becomes very important. The rural development permeates a whole lot, from the basic needs for human living, to opportunities for earning, to individual, social, economic and political needs, wants and aspirations and a continuous up gradation, progression and reformation therein. The education is the core of very idea of development and the basic education becomes its foundation. Rural spread being very large and widely spread, a great deal of focus, resources and the efforts are needed in a sustained manner to establish a strong foundation of the education there, not only for the rural development but also also for the development and the growth of the country. Since, the scale of operations is huge with problems and challenges of its own, pace of rural development and so the elementary education has been slightly slow. With RTE coming into force, things have made good progress but still there is a long way to go and therefore, RTE Act, is required to be implemented fully along with many corrective and supportive actions as suggested above for the rural area. Besides, the efficacy of RTE law also deserves to be examined for its coverage, approach, exhaustiveness, controls and deterrence etc. from the substantive to procedural aspects, based on the experience of eleven long years and keeping in mind the fast changing socio-economic and technological scenario.

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