

**ELEMENTARY EDUCATION IN JHARKHAND – A MICROSCOPIC ANALYSIS**

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Abstract

We cannot achieve the goal of universal, free primary education depending on the formal system of education. It is only a way to enter in the gateway of knowledge. Its every step is connected with each other. Free and compulsory education has been enshrined in the Indian constitution since its inception. It became a guiding force in the form of Article 45 for providing basic education for all children until the complete the age of fourteen years. Even after more than 65 years of Independence some Indian states are still struggling to achieve universal retention and quality education to all its children. At present the thrust of elementary education varies from state to state with a lot of regional disparities. In the article the author has given a picture of the elementary education of Jharkhand a homeland of tribes in a brief way. Education of tribes one of the weaker and deprived section of the country is essential for achieving the target of universalizing the elementary education. In the paper the author has described the plans and programmes obtained by the state administration and its achievement till now and suggested for the betterment of elementary education in Jharkhand, a purely tribal state.

Key words: Elementary education, Enrolment, CRC, BRC, Tribal Education.

Introduction : Article 45 of the Directive Principles of the state policy in the constitution of India affirms “the state shall endeavour to provide free and compulsory education to all children upto the age of 14 years within 10 years of adoption of the constitution” in 1950. However the target of achieving universalisation of Elementary Education has been eluding the country till now. Jharkhand is a newly created (in 2000) state. It is the homeland of the tribes for which they had been dreaming for centuries. The tribal population is around 26 per cent. It largely comprises of forest tracks of Chhotanagpur plateau and Santhal Pargana and has distinct cultural traditions. Birsa Munda, Sido-Kanhu and Chand-Bhairav are the legendary heroes of the state. It is bounded

by Bihar in north, Uttar Pradesh and Chhatishgarh in the west, West Bengal in the east and Orissa in the south. The state has a forest cover of around 29 per cent which is well above the average national forest cover of around 19 per cent. It is rich in industries and minerals. It has well developed road and railway system. Jharkhand has 22 administrative districts with a total population of 2,69,09,428 of which 1,38,60,859 are males and 1,30,48,569 are females. The state is inhabited by 30 tribal races of which nine (Asur, Birhor, Birajia, Korba, Mal Paharia, Sauria Paharia, Pahari Khariya, Pahariya and Sabar) are considered as most Primitive Tribal Groups (PTGs). According to census 2001, the literacy rate of Jharkhand is 54.13%. The tribal literacy is even lower. The literacy of PTG varies between 4% to 10%.

Programmes for elementary education : Programmes like SPEED (State Programme for Elementary Education Development) and PEEP (Primary Education Enhancement Programme) were launched to achieve Universalisation of Elementary Education (UEE). District Primary Education Programme (DPEP) was launched in 1994 in 9 districts: Chatra, Dumka, Hazaribag, Koderma, West Singhbhum, East Singhbhum, Ranchi, Jamtara and Saraikela, Kharsawan. Now all the previous programmes of UEE were subsumed to Sarva Siksha Abhiyan (SSA). SSA is run by Jharkhand Education Project Council (JEPC) in all the 22 districts since 2001-02.

There are 22,004 elementary level schools of which 16,370 are exclusively primary schools. 17,701 schools have pucca, 533 have partially pucca, 361 have kuccha and 1,999 have multiple type buildings. A total of 1,017 schools are without building and 7 run in tents. Nearly 5% of the elementary schools have single classrooms, 16.6 per cent have single teacher and 41 percent schools are without female teacher. More than 6.6 percent have pre-primary facility. Nearly 80 per cent schools do not have any common toilets and 90 per cent schools are without girls toilets. Nearly 83 per cent elementary schools have their own drinking water facility. More than half of the total schools need major or minor repair work. Nearly half of the schools did not receive TLM grant and 32 per cent did not receive school development grant during 2004-05. The elementary schools have an average of 3.2 teachers per school, which is lower than the national average of 3.7. Total number of teachers in elementary schools is 51,422 against the sanctioned strength of 68,470. The recent report of NIEPA reveals that out of 69,841 elementary teachers, 26 per cent are female. The pupil-teacher ratio (PTR) is 53 while student-classroom ratio (SCR) is 59.

Enrolment : In 2004 – 05, total enrolment in all primary and elementary schools of the state was 38,21,676 of which 1,74,139 were girls. Of the total enrolment at elementary level nearly one and half per cent children were identified as children with special needs (CWSN). Enrolment of SC children at primary and elementary section was 14 and 11.4 per cent respectively, where as SC girls' enrolment in primary and elementary sections was 44 and 37.6 per cent respectively. Similarly, Enrolment of ST children was 30 percent in primary and 24 per cent in elementary sections. Of the total ST enrolment in primary and elementary sections were 45 and 40 respectively. Nearly 11 per cent of the eligible age group children do not attend school. The identified figure of out of school children is 6,20,945.

School Administrative Set-Up : The system consists of eight years of compulsory elementary education (I-III), two years of secondary (IX-X) and two years of senior secondary (XI – XII) education. There is no pre-school education, although teachers maintain record called Bal Panji of children who are below six years of age and attend school. The elementary education has been divided into five years of primary and three years of upper primary for the age groups 6 – 11 and 11 – 14 years respectively.

Set-up at Secretariat Level : Elementary education is under the charge of Human Resource Development (HRD) Ministry. The Commissioner cum HRD Secretary is the head of the department.

Directorate of Primary Education : The Directorate of Primary Education is headed by a Director who is assisted by Deputy and Assistant Director. The Directorate is concerned with pre-primary and primary education, teacher's training including pre-service and in-service for primary school teachers, DIET and DPEP.

Set-up at Division, District, Block and Area level : For the smooth supervision and support to the school system the division is divided into districts, dist into educational blocks and block into educational areas. The elementary education is under the charge of Regional Deputy Director of Education (RDDE) at division level. RDDE is responsible for the planning, implementation and supervision of all education schemes. District Superintendent of Education (DSE) is the in-charge of primary and upper primary education and district level. Block Education Extension Officer (BEEEO) is the in-charge at Block level and Area Education Officer (AEO) at area level.

School curriculum : Jharkhand government has revised its school level curriculum on CBSE pattern. The new format included; yoga, art education, work experience and health education.

The curriculum of grade I and II consisted of language (Mother tongue and English) and Mathematics where as that of grade III and IV consisted of Language, Mathematics and Environmental Science (EVS). In addition to these subjects the students of grade VI and VII have to study Science and Social Studies. But the curriculum components of grade VIII consisted of Language (Mother tongue, English and third language Sanskrit and Urdu), Science, Social Studies, Mathematics, SUPW and Health and Hygiene. English is taught as a compulsory subject from the grade I.

Medium of Instruction : Hindi is the school language throughout Jharkhand and broadly considered as mother tongue but Mundari and Santhali are two major local dialects through which classroom instructions are also given.

Academic Session : Normal academic session in the schools of Jharkhand is from April to March.

Teacher empowerment : Short term in-service training modules were developed from time to time for empowering teachers. Almost entire primary teacher population of Jharkhand was given short duration in-service training through UJALA-I and II training modules. Ujala I module focusing the pedagogical skills required for grade I and II) covered aspects like increasing community contact, training in gender sensitive teaching methods, developing communication skills and effective use of teaching aids. UJALA II module (focusing on pedagogical skills required for grade III, IV and V) covered the aspect of Multi Grade Teaching (MGT) along with many others. As short term in-service training has been conceived as a continuous program for empowerment of primary teachers, short duration training modules are being developed time to time as per the emergence of needs for making teachers abreast of new and relevant skills. During UJALA II training the need was felt to improve upon this module and another training module called SAMAJH was developed. Apart from UJALA and SAMAJH training modules have also been developed for teaching English, Mathematics and Science subjects in the light of subject specific needs of teachers and teachers training evaluation study. Training of teachers in English is important as English has been introduced as a subject right from class I. It enabled the teachers to develop proficiency in English and professional competency for teaching English as well. Altogether 9,625 teacher were trained in English during 2003-04. Visualizing the need for learning mathematics in joyful manner, an innovative training module was developed. A total of 17,708 teachers were trained in teaching of Mathematics. Another training module has also been

devised so that the teacher can teach topics of Science through experiments and activities in a very simple manner linking it with the curriculum coverage plan. A total of 7,301 teachers were trained in Science (JEP, 2003-04). In addition to subject specific training modules, induction of training for EGS teachers, training modules for BRC co-coordinators and CRC coordinators have also been developed so that the implementation, monitoring and supervision would take place in a co – coordinated manner.

Training Support System : In order to provide in-service training to all primary teachers of the State an elaborate support mechanism was developed. It would be appropriate to present here a brief outline of the support mechanism developed for in-service training and primary and upper primary teachers. At the apex level, the State Level Office, State Resource Group consisting of experts in teacher education, a large number of teachers and pedagogues worked together to develop the training modules. The implementation is largely the responsibility of the District Level Office of the project, District Institute of Education and Training (DIET) and District Education Office. All the districts have educational blocks and each block has a Block Resource Centre (BRC) with self sufficient facilities for training. Teachers from each block are identified and trained to function as Resource Persons (Trainees). Local Block Education Extension Officer (BEEO) of Area Education Officer (AEO) is designated as coordinator of the BRC (BRCC). The batches of 35-40 teachers drawn for 12 – 16 physically contiguous schools who undergo training together form a school identified as Cluster Resource Centre (CRC). The same group selects one of the teachers as coordinator.

Training at BRC : It was identified to offer 10 days training to each of the teacher every year. The idea was to impart various phases of short term training modules alternately till a different demand emerged from the teachers. All the districts have been able to achieve nearly 90 percent of training target.

Training at CRC : CRC may be singled out as the most crucial mechanism in translating the training inputs in classroom transactions and institutionalizing the pedagogical reform processes started by recurrent UJALA training. The qualities of activities in CRC, the contribution that teacher makes and the continuity of the process combined together give a fair indication of teacher's practices in classrooms. In other words, CRC may be viewed as a mirror of quality of classroom transactions. Realizing that a 10 day exposure in a year may not be enough to achieve the desired transformation, provisions for one day recurrent monthly training at CRC were

strategically planned. The same trainers/ resource persons who had trained these teachers were to offer academic help to these training sessions. It was expected that this arrangement would provide opportunities to teachers the missing links of annual training besides opening up new vistas of self-sufficiency in academic trouble shooting at the local level itself.

Conclusion

Education is the most effective instrument for ensuring quality of opportunity but the tribal people are lagging far behind non tribals due to one or more reasons. The problems associated with the Elementary education of tribal children in India in manifold complex and interrelated. Factors like poverty, superstitions and prejudice, lack of suitable teacher, alien language, inadequate facilities in the educational institution etc. So awareness generation in the tribal community and tribal areas either through governmental agencies, non- governmental organizations or public is of vital necessity to bring children from the house to school. Education of the tribals is not a mere learning process rather it should be a process for creativity and occupation as per the requirements of the tribal community and national necessity.

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