



## Status of Mainstreaming of Education in Rajasthan Case Study



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## Case Study

### 1. Introduction

Education is one of the basic activities of people in all human societies. The continued existence of society depends upon the transmission of culture to the young. It is essential that every new generation must be given training in the way of the group so that the same tradition may continue. Every society has its own ways and means of fulfilling this need. Education is one of the ways of fulfilling this need. Thus, education is fundamental to the success of any modern society. Efforts are being made to universalize elementary education in Rajasthan through community-ownership. Programmes like *Sarv Shiksha Abhiyan* are attempting to provide an opportunity for improving human capabilities to all children, through provision of community-owned quality education in a mission mode.

The State Government is endeavoring to achieve the objective of total literacy through various programmes/schemes such as *Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan*, District Primary Education Programme, and Continuing Literacy Programme. School children are being benefited with mid-day meals in the state. *Apki Beti* Scheme has been introduced for the girl child belonging to BPL families and whose one or both parents have died. A scholarship is made available under the scheme. Special bridge courses have been started for physically challenged children and qualified teachers have been appointed for them.

For improving the learning ability of students, a new quality assurance programme has been undertaken. Under the programme, achievement levels of students are being tested and the feedback obtained is being used to strengthen teaching and undertake capacity building of teachers. To promote girls secondary education, the state government is providing free transport facilities through Roadways, bus pass and free distribution of bicycles in tribal areas. In order to meet the children's right to free elementary education, the state government has initiated efforts such as – free and compulsory educational facilities to children in the age group of 6 to 14 years, free distribution of books, etc. During the Eleventh Plan period 2007-12, special literacy camps for illiterate women and vocational training camps have been proposed under Literacy Continuing Education Programme. Further the role of education as an agent or instrument of social change and social development is widely recognized in the society. Educational scenario and mainstreaming of education in Rajasthan will be analyzed in this study. Educational statistics can provide some perceptive on educational issues associated with Rajasthan. Educational statistics is given in the following table-1

Table-1 Educational Statistics of Rajasthan

Category	Total Number	Total Enrolment
Primary School	35077	7204000
Elementary School	14807	2314000
Secondary School	3844	810788
Senior Secondary School	1789	401380
Degree College	267	180743
Teacher Training College	43	6339
Teacher Training School	46	4534
Polytechnic Institutes	15	-
Technical / Industrial / Arts & Craft Schools	134	10983

## 2. Objectives

This study is an attempt to document processes of change in educational scenario in Rajasthan, and to comprehend and analyze the implications and impact of these processes ushered in by these changes. This study is also an attempt to analyze the potential and efficacy of education system in the Rajasthan. Further the objectives may be described as follows:

1. The objective of this study is to examine the experience of mainstreaming in education in order to identify lessons learned and good practices for promoting gender equality and universalization of education.
2. To analyze need for community based approaches in developing proper education plan.
3. To identify factors that may foster quality in education.
4. To analyze status of education of girls, tribal's and minorities.
5. To sensitize communities to the importance of girls' education and gender equality.

### 3. Methodology

This report is based on both primary and secondary data. Focus Group Discussions (FGD) and Participatory Rural Appraisal methods used for collection of primary data. Secondary sources such as published reports and articles written by persons and institutions, analysis and comments on the subjects in relation to mainstreaming of education; various websites and number of journals were taken into consideration to develop logical argument in the form of this report. Hence secondary data was collected from government agencies, civil society organizations, existing research studies, news papers, magazines and reports. The data is both qualitative and quantitative in nature; however, qualitative data largely relied on due to the research focus. On the basis of reading of secondary sources and field experience, relative questions and issues were identified pertinent to the study objectives and mainstreaming of education in Rajasthan.

### 4. Education Policy

The 1990s saw fresh initiatives in achieving universal elementary education. A number of governmental programmes came into operation: the *Lok Jumbish*, the District Primary Education Programme (DPEP) and the more recent *Sarva Sikshya Abhayan*. The thrust of these programmes is to increase the public supply of schooling in a cost-effective and time-bound manner. Also, the use of local resources and the participation of the community in planning and management exercises for improving access to, and quality of schooling have been stressed. An interesting feature of these programmes is the larger space now provided by the government for innovative works. Programmes such as the District Primary Education Programme and the *Sarva Sikshya Abhiyan* have stressed the importance of diversity in designing strategies for addressing access and quality issues. Support in planning and implementation has been sought from diverse quarters, including NGOs. Despite governmental efforts, the involvement of non-governmental expertise and the funds committed to programmes for universalizing elementary education, there remains significant ambiguity about the results of these initiatives. Although access to schooling has increased greatly, evaluations of various programmes such as the DPEP have revealed little progress in achievement levels of the target segment. A recent study showed that grade attainment of children at these centers was low, and that the cognitive achievement levels of children who have reached the last year of their primary studies were quite poor. Programmes such as these have been accused of serving as 'second-track schooling facilities'. The co-existence of these schools, government schools and private schools appear only to further entrench divisive social structures that these interventions were aimed at erasing. Besides the fact that these programmes have fared poorly in terms of their main goals,

there is concern that they might have weakened the capacity of the entire schooling system by making compromises at various levels, the recruitment of Para-teachers, for instance. However, even formal government schools, with well trained and well paid teachers, have been performing almost as poorly. Private schools may appear to be performing satisfactorily, but this, in the main, only reflects the quantity of education they deliver, not the quality. The *Sarva Sikshya Abhiyan* has laid out a plan for universalizing elementary education in India by 2010. Without falling prey to the general feeling of disillusionment, a careful consideration of the successes and failures in the schooling system is needed to help in the identification of areas where meaningful work can be pursued. While dwelling on its weaknesses, it is important that talent and ideas be directed towards finding ways of working with the programme such that its goals are met and existing systems and structures of mass education are enriched. The key area of concern is change in the policy and practice of education, in the very system of education. What changes are required in the present system of education? How can the suggested innovations be sustained, and mainstreamed? Why are some efforts successful at effecting positive changes, and some doomed to failure? What role do factors outside the education system have on its successful functioning?

## **5. Mainstreaming Educational Innovations**

The mainstreaming exercise is meant to bring the benefits of innovations to the largest possible number. It is important, in the context of universalizing elementary education, to address some issues: What do we mean by an innovation? In the field of education, the term has been used to describe almost every initiative that has attempted to differ from the 'usual' system. What is often striking is the absence of serious impact assessment, to understand whether the idea, method or device does in fact address the issue successfully, irrespective of its newness or originality. A good innovation should have a short shelf life, as it should be absorbed by the prevailing system without delay. Most educational innovations seek to inform the larger system in a significant manner. Yet, there are very few instances where innovative action has, in fact, become a core part of the mass delivery system. The presence of several compounding factors makes them remain isolated instances, rarely changing what already exists. The inability of the system to absorb the innovation, as also the inability of the innovation to adapt to the needs of the system, is a cause of general concern.

## **6. Elementary Education and Literacy**

The level of education and literacy rate is a major indicator of development achievement of a state. After sixty years of independence, Rajasthan is still lagging behind many other states so

far as providing education to all sections of the society. The 2001 census figure gave a chance to rejoice, when it was found that during the decade from 1991 – 2001, Rajasthan recorded highest literacy rate in India. Over all literacy levels in the state rose by 23 percent, from 38.6 percent to 61.03 percent, with literacy rate for males moving from 54.99 percent to 76.46 percent and for females from 20.44 to 44.34 percent. However, 2001 census figures also pointed out large inter-district variations in literacy. *Banswara* showed the lowest literacy of 44.22 percent. *Barmer* district had the lowest figure of 23 percent in 1991 census. Rest of the districts showed an improvement of literacy rate to the level of more than fifty percent. While, over all growth rate of literacy in the state was impressive, it did not speak any thing well about the education of women, especially those in rural areas, continued to be high in almost all the districts of the state. In 2001 only seven districts out of thirty-two recorded female literacy rates above fifty percent. *Kota* continued to record the highest female literacy rate with 61.25 percent, while *Jalor* had the lowest figure of 27.53 percent.

But this high decadal growth rate did not speak the whole truth about the educational scenario of all the regions as well as social groups of the state. The identified areas of concern in education in the state are shown below:

1. Improving the abysmal educational status of the girl child, especially among Scheduled Tribes and Scheduled Castes.
2. The challenge of universalizing literacy
3. Ensuring quality education that could sustain a pro-poor pattern of growth.

Educational system in Rajasthan needs considerable reform in order to improve the access of marginalized groups like women especially girl children, *dalits*, migrants and nomadic people. Educational infrastructure and reforms must make the system more relevant to the livelihood needs of people, and should enable them to exercise greater control over their lives. Without people's participation "education interventions cannot succeed in the state, given the persistence of low achievements in education in spite of considerable investment in the expansion of education infrastructure Government admitted the fact that the literacy situation in Rajasthan is quite grim, with many districts being among the most backward in the country in terms of literacy rates, and even more so in terms of female literacy.

## 7. Status of Primary Education

The momentum for the expansion of education in Rajasthan was reinforced by the constitutional commitment to universalisation of education, as spelt out in the Directive Principles of State Policy in the Constitution of India. The approach to education in the post-Independence era addressed the infrastructure lacuna of the earlier period, which was endemic especially in rural areas. While in 1949, at the time of the formation of the state, the total number of primary schools was 3,195 by 1981 it was 23, 12520, and this grew to 39,335 by 1991. During the Eighth Plan period (1991 to 1996), the number of primary schools increased by 13 percent and upper primary schools by 32 percent, resulting in a total increase of 17 percent. In 1932 there were 156 government primary schools, of which only 11 were for girls and 7 were night schools, and 254 private primary schools, of which only 30 were for girls and 2 were night schools. Article 45 of the Constitution enshrines, "The State shall endeavour to provide, within a period of ten years from the commencement of this Constitution, for free and compulsory education for all children until they complete the age of fourteen years".

Improvement in literacy figures do not give any idea about how the education scene is likely to evolve. On the contrary, school enrolment is an important indicator of future of children's growth and its impact in the over all development of the state. Three different studies in different time span surprisingly give the same story of girl's education lagging behind. Let us start with the situation prevailing in the state with regard to the pre-school going children, before taking up the status in the primary education. ASER Report 2006 indicates that even though *Balwadi* or *Anganwadi* programs are available in all the districts of the state through ICDS and various privately run schemes by Non government organizations, around 31 and 23 percent children in the age group of 4 and 5 years were no where found to be enrolled. Together they constitute 56 % (Table-2), means more than half the child population remained out side the pre school facilities. In this age children were supposed to attend *Anganwadi/Balwadi* centre's so as to benefit from the provisions of "Integrated Child Development Scheme" sponsored by the Government of India and also prepare them for the basic education starting with primary schooling. The reasons for this state of affair may be ascribed to the fact that not too much importance is given to the issue of early child care activities. ICDS is taken more as a mother and child health care program and less as an activity for educational preparedness of the child. This scenario, itself gives some indication about status the enrolment pattern of 6 to 14 years children in the state.

Table-2 In *Balwadi/Anganwadi* or in School

Children in pre-school or school (%)

Age (Years)	In <i>Balwadi</i> or <i>Aanganwadi</i>	In School			No Where	Total
		Govt.	Private	Other		
3	63.2	0.0	0.1	0.0	36.7	100
4	68.3	0.0	0.6	0.0	31.1	100
5	6.0	48.5	22.2	0.3	23.0	100
6	0.8	59.4	28.6	0.3	10.9	100

Source: Annual Status of Education Report

### 8. Enrolment of 6 -14 years Children

The overall enrolment rate in schools for the age group of five to fourteen years in Rajasthan was estimated in 1998/99 at 67.6 percent. The enrolment percent during the period for boys was estimated at 85 percent, while girls still lag far behind at 48 percent. Rajasthan Human Development Report 2002 puts the female enrolment abysmally low in all the thirty two districts in the state. In 24 districts the enrolment percent of girls varied between 10 to 20 percent, in six districts the figure was between 20 to 30 percent, where as in *Barmer* and *Jalor* district girls enrolment was as low as 8.9 and 7.8 percent respectively.

In another report by NIEPA 2002 -03 indicated that while 46.5 % girls were enrolled in primary school, in upper primary the figure was 38.8 %. So there was 7 % fall in enrolment. In primary plus upper primary the figure was 41.5 and primary plus secondary the figure came down to 38.8 and in upper primary plus secondary level the figure further came down to 33.8 %. Mere enrolment rate also do not always reflect the actual number of children attending schools with regularity. As evident in the above figures the number of children enrolled in class I in all schools, especially in rural areas, drop sharply after initial enrolment and by class II and beyond, it drops even further. In a most recent report namely "Annual Status of Education Report (ASER), January 2006, a nationally renowned non government organization, has given startling revelation about the trend in enrolment in education in the state. The study was conducted in all the 32 districts covering 621 schools and 27163 children in the age group of 7 - 16 years. The findings pointed out that 94.4 % enrolment found in case of boys in 7-10 age group where as it was 89.1 % in case of girls in the same age group. The percentage girls who were

never in school plus drop out in the same age category was 11 percent in comparison to only 5.7 % in case of boys. In 11 -14 years age category, the enrolment percent of boys was 90.1% and that of girls was 80.4 %. Again while 9.9% Boys were never in school plus dropped out, 19.6% girls were either never in school or drooped out. In 15 -16 year age category 77.3% boys and 62.3% girls were found to be enrolled in various schools. But very high percent boys (22.6) and girls (37.7) were found to be either dropped out or never been to school. From the data it becomes clear that in each age category higher percentage of girls are out of school education. This means even if there is a growth in literacy rate, the basic education of girls remains an unfulfilled task by the government.

An analysis of enrolment condition In the districts of Rajasthan reveal that, as many as eight districts like *Ajmer, Banswara, Bhilwara, Bikaner, Chittoregarh, Dhoulpur, Jaisalmer* and *Jodhpur* more than 15% children were found to be out of school. While Bikaner had the highest percent (18.9%) children out of school, the lowest percent was found in *Jhunjhunan* (1.6%). The question arises there fore, why the situation is better in some districts than of others? We hope government can answer this question.

## **9. Quality of Education in Primary level**

In the Rajasthan Human Development Report 2002-03, the state government had stated about the quality of primary education by quoting the figures of a study conducted by the quoted the Institute of Education Research and Training (SIERT). The report said that “the achievement levels of students who do complete primary education, which concentrates on the three “Rs” (reading, writing and arithmetic), paint an equally disturbing picture. The achievement levels in 10 DPEP districts, according to the Baseline Assessment Study conducted by the State Institute of Education Research and Training (SIERT), are generally low. The mean achievement score of class IV students in Mathematics was found to be ranging between 10.66 (22.56 percent) and 17.67 (34.15 percent), while for language, the range was between 29.00 (40.58 percent) and 38.83 (49.09 percent) 29”.

If this was the case and government was aware of the problem, then was there any action taken in due course to correct the situation. A most recent study by PARTHAM a leading non government organization has once again brought the following facts about the quality issue in primary education. The report once again confirms the continuation of the same old problem. Let us look into the ASER report in detail to find out the difference if any has happened.

While conducting the study, ASER tried to categories the performance of children in two levels. The tests were carried out to find the reading ability and numerical ability of the children up to

14 years and school standard -VIII. In Level- 1 the test was carried out to find the “Ability to read a small paragraph with short sentences of std. 1 level difficulty. In Level-2, the test was carried out to find the ability to read a story text with some long sentences of std. 2 level difficulty. For the purpose of testing numerical ability, the children were asked for doing a 2 digit subtraction with borrowing and for Division of 3 digits divided by 1 digit. The results of the study are presented in the following Table-3.

Table-3 Learning Ability

Age Group (Years)	% Children who cannot read		% Children who cannot solve numerical written sums	
	Level - 1	Level - 2	Subtraction or Division	Division
7 – 14	36.5	51.4	42.2	61.1
7 -10	49.9	66.9	55.6	75.7
11 – 14	19.3	31.5	25.1	42.3
Govt.- Std. II - V	49.5	68.3	55.3	78.4
Pvt.- Std. II - V	31.7	53.0	38.2	62.2
Govt. Std. VI - VIII	7.0	19.5	14.0	33.5
Pvt. Std. VI - VIII	4.2	13.0	8.4	20.4

Source: ASER – 2005

With regard to the performance of children in the state as a whole, it was found that merely 59.1 percent children of Standard– V could read level– 2 and only 45.2 % children of Standard– V could solve division and subtraction. This data presents a clear indication of quality of learning in the state.

While the state figure presents such a sorry state of affairs, the performance of children in some of the districts gives a discouraging picture. In *Ajmer, Banswara, Dungepur, Jaipur, Jhalawar, and Sirohi* districts, less than 50 percent children of standard– V had the ability to read level– 2 and solve division and subtraction. Among all the districts *Dungepur* and *Sirohi* had the worst performance. Details of performance of all districts are shown in the following Table - 4.

Table-4 Quality of learning performance of all 32 Districts

Districts	Std-V Children	
	% Can Read Level- 2	% Can solve division & Subtraction
<i>Ajmar</i>	41.8	22.0
<i>Alwar</i>	51.8	39.5
<i>Banswara</i>	47.5	17.7
<i>Baran</i>	63.3	45.0
<i>Barmer</i>	79.8	60.9
<i>Bharatpur</i>	53.0	36.0
<i>Bhiwara</i>	51.4	39.2
<i>Bikaner</i>	70.3	47.0
<i>Bundi</i>	66.7	51.7
<i>Chittogarh</i>	60.9	29.7
<i>Churu</i>	80.2	78.3
<i>Dausa</i>	66.1	51.2
<i>Dhaulpur</i>	54.4	41.6
<i>Dungerpur</i>	38.7	21.9
<i>Ganganagar</i>	72.1	46.7
<i>Hanumangarh</i>	70.2	75.4
<i>Jaipur</i>	45.4	38.9
<i>Jaisalmer</i>	54.8	53.9
<i>Jalore</i>	73.3	72.8
<i>Jhalawar</i>	42.9	40.5
<i>Jgunjhunan</i>	69.1	59.1
<i>Jodhpur</i>	50.8	34.9
<i>Karauli</i>	52.5	52.5
<i>Kota</i>	59.3	46.2
<i>Nagaur</i>	50.4	27.2
<i>Pali</i>	58.0	45.7

<i>Rajsamand</i>	59.9	28.9
<i>Sawi Madhopur</i>	55.6	41.0
<i>Sikar</i>	78.8	65.7
<i>Sirohi</i>	22.2	22.5
<i>Tonk</i>	62.9	59.4
<i>Udaipur</i>	57.4	27.9
<i>Rajasthan</i>	59.1	45.6

Source: ASER – 2005

In six districts almost 50% children lack the ability to read and in as many as 15 districts children lack the numerical ability in varying percentage. The performance of these districts is shown in red.

For the purpose of better understanding about the performance of the districts in relation to quality of education, ASER had categorized the districts as top five and bottom five districts. The facts are presented in the following Table-5.

Table-5 Performance of Top Five and Bottom Five Districts in State

Reading	% Std- V Cannot read Level -2	Arithmetic	% Std- V Cannot Solve Division
Top-5		Top-5	
<i>Churu</i>	19.8	<i>Churu</i>	21.7
<i>Barmer</i>	20.2	<i>Hanumangarh</i>	24.6
<i>Sikar</i>	21.2	<i>Jalor</i>	27.2
<i>Jalor</i>	26.7	<i>Sikar</i>	34.4
<i>Ganganagar</i>	27.9	<i>Barmer</i>	39.1
Bottom - 5		Bottom - 5	
<i>Sirohi</i>	77.8	<i>Banswara</i>	82.3
<i>Dungarpur</i>	61.3	<i>Dungarpur</i>	78.2
<i>Ajmer</i>	58.2	<i>Ajmar</i>	78.0
<i>Jhalawar</i>	57.1	<i>Sirohi</i>	77.6
<i>Jaipur</i>	54.6	<i>Nagour</i>	72.8

Source: ASER -2006

Another finding of the study was comparative performance level of children studying in government and private schools. What is the performance level of Std.-V children in these two types of schools? While 60% children in Std.- V had the ability to read level-2, in private school 70% had the same ability. Similarly, merely 42% children of Std.-V were able to solve division and subtraction, where almost 65 % children in private schools had the same ability. This clearly speaks about the quality of learning or should we conclude that it also reflects the quality of teaching in the government schools. Why it is so, is the government taking note of such findings of a respectable study done by a respectable organization?

While the goals of universal literacy and enrolments are laudable in themselves. The achievements in these areas would remain hollow without ensuring quality education. A qualitative improvement in the content and processes of basic education, in order to make them more responsive to the learning needs of individuals and the development needs of different socioeconomic sectors, continues to be a major challenge. The challenge for providing quality education at the elementary level involves improvements in the preparation, motivation and deployment of teachers, the quality of textbooks and of infrastructural facilities. It also involves making education relevant to society's needs and strengthening the management and institutional capacity of educational institutions especially at the state, district and local levels.

Apart from parental education and socio economic condition, Enrolment of Children and quality of education are related to a number of factors. These factors directly or indirectly influence the performance level of children and also act as a de motivation cause for the parents. In a report on elementary education in India, NIEPPA, 2002-03 reported the following data.

Table-6 School Related indicators

School Related Indicators	Primary	Upper Primary
% Single Class room Schools	4.2	2.0
% Single Teacher Schools	39.6	4.8
% Schools with Common Toilets	29.6	59.9
% Schools with Girls Toilets	13.4	44.1
% Schools with Drinking Water Facility	64.0	81.7
% No female teacher Schools	36.0	42.5
% Enrolment in Single Teacher Schools	24.9	2.4
% Enrolment in schools without building	8.6	1.3
% Enrolment in schools without Black Board	10.8	10.8
% Female Teachers	24.2	27.1
Pupil Teacher Ratio (PTR)	43	27
Student Class Room Ratio (SCR)	38	29

Source: Elementary Education in India- 2002-03

In the above table-6 one could find that in as many as nearly 40 percent primary schools only one teacher is available. So far as facilities like toilets are concerned almost 60% upper primary schools have common toilets and only in 44% schools have separate facilities. This may be a good reason why there are a high percentage of dropouts among young girl children from continuing education further. Although drinking water facilities are available in many schools, still these facilities are yet available in all the schools. The reason for non availability of such basic is very difficult to understand. Another point which comes to mind that even if toilet and drinking water facilities are available, how many of them are in usable condition. Knowing the condition of schools in the rural areas one can easily imagine the real condition.

There are some other interesting data. Usually where there is female teacher, parents are more inclined to enroll their girl children in the primary level of schooling. But in Rajasthan in 36% and 42.5% primary and Upper Primary schools, no female teachers are available. Out of the total teachers strength, female teacher constitute only 24.2 and 27.1 in Primary and Upper Primary schools. In the state there are schools neither having any building nor a black board to write. The figure states that enrolment percent in schools without building in primary is only 8.6 % and in Upper Primary only 1.3%. The enrolment percent in schools without black board is only 10.8 in both the primary and upper primary level.

ASER– 2006 presents a dismal picture about the attendance record of teacher and student in the primary and upper primary schools. Out of 321 and 281 primary and upper primary schools visited, only 77.5 % teachers were found attending primary schools and 76.2 % in upper primary level. This means large percentage of teacher is not attending schools at all. Over all the study found that only 48.6% and 33.1% primary and upper primary schools all teachers were present.

When teacher's attendance depicts such sorry story, can there be a happy picture about enrolled children's attendance in schools? Perhaps not! Because only 69.7% and 73.2 % enrolled children found to be attending primary and upper primary schools, as the study revealed. Further, in 13.8 % and 6.4% primary and upper primary schools less than 50% enrolled children are attending schools.

The above analysis clearly reveals the real status of basic education in the state. If the teacher and student school attendance record is so dismal, it is not very difficult to understand why the quality of elementary education is not up to the desired level in the state.

## 10. Role of PRI in Augmenting Elementary Education

In compliance of Article 40 of the Constitution and the 73rd amendment, Rajasthan government transferred 16 subjects to the *Panchayati Raj*. Elementary education in Rajasthan is now with the three tiers *Panchayati Raj* Institutions, i.e. *Zila Parishads* at district level, *Panchayat Samitis* at the block level, and *Gram panchayats* at the village level. It may be noted that the system of accountability is highly centralized and planning is mostly a top down one, in terms of programme management, design and implementation. Even a decentralized approach to planning is not fully decentralized in true spirit. Communities, therefore, have limited options to operate as they are governed by the complex criteria, rules and regulations set by planners at the state level.

As per the Rajasthan PRI act, the standing committee on education is mandatory at GP level, PS and at ZP level. It is one of the 6 committees required as per the PRI (Rajasthan) act. Mere formation of committees does not imply its functioning. For the functioning of institutions, it is important that three Fs (funds, functions and functionaries) need to be transferred to PRIs. Due to lack of devolution, only partial devolution has taken place. At GP level, the role of monitoring the mid day meal and *Gandhi pustakalaya* is with *Panchayats*, but no other functions remain with them. However, at PS level and ZP level, the administrative power of 17 CC is with PS and ZP members. Partial devolution of functions and functionaries but with no devolution of finance is crippling the PRIs.

The parent department– education department holds major powers; even the committees formed under the departments supersede the committees under PRIs. For instance, In the current framework of SSA there is also no proper linkage of the institutions created under the SSA and the PRIs. Though at the *Zila parisad* and the *panchayat samiti* head of the PRIs also heads the institutions of management of the SSA but at the *panchayat* this also, does not exist at all. The SDMC created at the school level has been entrusted with all the management of the SSA with teachers as head, and there is token representation of ERs. This institution has no accountability and linkage with the *panchayat* as an institution. This calls for greater attention towards devolution of funds, functionaries and functions to constitutionally mandated bodies, PRIs and strengthen the standing committees of Education. So even if PRIs have been given the governance role to augment elementary education in the state, there are many odds to effectively carry out their responsibility. The following expectations have not been achieved so far.

- People or communities are not aware of and do not have a clear understanding about the power and authority devolved to PRIs to meaningfully participate in the process.

- Greater community participation is expected for promoting enrolment, retention and other aspects of education. That is not happening. As it stands now, it is almost another form of bureaucratic arrangement.
- Secondly local institutions lack the capacity to manage the system of education, since nothing concrete has been done to strengthen their capacity. The 10<sup>th</sup> Plan Document – Elementary Education, Government of India) envisages that “The qualitative participation should mean that the community is able to have a voice and exercise its choice. It also involves the development of human, organizational and management capacity to solve problems and sustain the improvements
- PRIs and grassroot level organizations like VECs, PTAs, MTAs etc. who are required to become the vehicles of community mobilization, have not yet been actively functional.
- Community-based monitoring system has not yet been evolved.
- Making community mobilization through intensive micro-planning and school mapping is nowhere in sight.

In a highly stratified and patriarchal societal culture, the inclusive management of the education at the local level poses a difficult challenge. Even though the problems pose some constraints, there has to be a way out to come of the existing situation of our elementary education and build a strong foundation to shape the future of formal education in the state with a focus on removing all the barriers to achieve hundred percent successes in the education of girl children, children from *dalit*, minority and tribal communities in the state.

Over the years Government of Rajasthan has implemented several major programmes to improve the formal education system and to provide access to education to those children who were unable to take the benefit of formal schooling system. Some of the major educational programmes implemented in the state are:

- Non-Formal Education Programme
- *Shiksha Karmi* Project
- *Lok Jumbish Pariyojana*
- *Rajiv Gandhi Swarna Jayanti Pathshalas*
- District Primary Education Programme
- *Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan*

*Shiksha Karmi* and *Lok Jumbish* were two externally-aided projects for basic education implemented in Rajasthan. Both these projects were considered as innovative which had primary focus on gender along with two other goals such as universalizing elementary education and improving the quality of education in remote and socially backward villages. The projects aimed to address some of the major obstacles in achieving UEE, namely, teacher absenteeism, high drop-out rate, working children, uninteresting teaching methods, lack of contextual learning materials, low motivation and competence of teachers, a centralized and inflexible approach etc.

*Shiksha Karmi* project had a special emphasis on community participation because of which Village Education Committees (VECs) were formed and have contributed a great deal to the improvement of the school environment, augmentation of infrastructure and facilities, larger enrolment of children through school mapping and micro-planning in the *Shiksha Karmi* schools. The *Shiksha Karmi* project covered 2,708 villages in 147 blocks spread over 31 districts. As per government's assessment the project has been able to achieve a seven-fold increase in the enrolment of children in schools taken over by the project.

The *Lok Jumbish* project has been able to set up innovative management structures incorporating the principles of decentralization and delegation of authority as well as building partnerships with local communities and the voluntary sector. The project has also made a positive contribution to quality improvement through the development of improved MLL-based textbooks for Classes I-IV, which is also being used in all schools in Rajasthan. It has conducted school mapping in 8,921 villages, opened 2,560 *Sahaj Shiksha Centre's* covering 47,000 children and started 529 new primary schools and 268 upper primary schools. The programme has also strengthened 239 pre-school centres of *anganwadis* and formed over 7,600 *mahila* Groups".

The objectives of the *Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan* are:

1. All children to be in schools, Education Guarantee Scheme centres, alternate schools, back-to-school camps by 2003
2. All children to complete five years of primary schooling by 2007
3. All children to complete eight years of schooling by 2010
4. Focus on elementary education of satisfactory quality with emphasis on education for life
5. Bridge all gender and social disparities at the primary stage by 2007 and at the upper primary level by 2010
6. Achieve Universal retention by 2010.

In Rajasthan all these above mentioned programs are being implemented. However, it must be remembered that the literacy rate in Rajasthan (61.8%) is till lower than the national rate of (64.8%). Especially women's literacy is as low as 44.34%. In order to assess the implementation methods of the program and the role of PRI in universalizing primary education at the local level, PRIA Rajasthan Chapter's under took a study in two districts (*Jaipur and Jhunjhunan*). The study also critically looked in to the financial provision and contributions of the National Government and the state government for the implementation of the *Sarva Siksha Abhiyan* at the state, district, block and the school level. Data clearly shows that in the three years period from 2002–03 to 2005-06 centre government had released less than 50% of the amount than what was committed. Again If we compare the actual amount released with the actual amount Planned for the program, it did not exceed one third of it.

## 11. Issues Possibilities and Problems

1. The teachers of the schools where tribal and nomadic children studying find it difficult to accommodate these children as their culture and habits are totally different from the children who come from mainstreams. For example, with different eating habits, many tribal children eat tobacco as this is a normal act for them. They are used to a free environment and do not like schools that are enclosed within four walls. However, if these children are pushed out of school, the community refuses to enroll them in school next year, creating a negative environment. Thus, it is important to develop successful methods of integrating tribal and nomadic children in mainstream schools and ensuring retention of such children after enrolment. There is a need to preserve the culture and heritage of tribal children and tribal and nomadic children should not be uprooted from their environments to be placed in alien surroundings. Instead, teachers and schools could be sited within their environment. They suggested that schools could introduce subjects that deal with the history & culture of different tribes to educate all children and to sensitize them. *Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan (SSA)* could be extremely useful in this regard, provided the State machinery and the *Panchayat* join hands together with the public.

2. Working to get the following conditions in place will enable the most excluded children to go to school and learn:

- Parents are aware that all children have the right to education
- Families' basic survival needs are met so that children can attend school rather than go to work

- Schools are near to children’s homes, they are physically safe and accessible to all, and have a reasonable number of trained teachers
- Teachers are trained and motivated to work with a diverse range of children, and are able to try out different approaches in their day-to-day work
- School principals and teachers do not turn children away, and they reach out to all children in their community
- Teachers are recruited from a range of marginalized groups (including disabled people and linguistic minorities)
- Children are not prevented– from examinations, fees or other barriers– from progressing through school
- School management is informed by children’s and parents’ views
- Children and adults try not to discriminate against those who are seen as different.

Where just some of these conditions are in place, dramatic benefits can be achieved for children. For example:

- A child with mobility difficulties might be taken to school by parents and friends. He or she may be given an individualized programme of learning at school and then praised for making progress and have that progress formally recognized. The child does not feel inferior or unwelcome at school.
- A girl might be encouraged by her parents to stay in school and progress through exams, despite previous expectations that she would stay at home. She would not have to put schoolwork after housework or automatically be expected to clean the classroom.
- Children from a minority ethnic group in the mountains would be taught using words, images and concepts rooted in their own lives rather than in the unfamiliar lifestyle of an urban, majority ethnic child.

- Children whose parents are extremely poor are noticed and are helped to attend school by people or institutions in their community, who also try to ensure the children have enough food, healthcare and free time to be able to learn.

3. Several education programmes have viewed the community as a central participant in determining issues of quantity and quality. Democracy calls for a proactive role for people, rather than a top-down approach where the 'target group' is intrinsic to planning and implementation. Education is one of the areas that, by definition, must adopt a democratic ethos in its functioning. Policy documents are replete with references to 'community participation', the most basic form of which relates to sharing information and building awareness. More intense forms include involvement in decision-making regarding school and teacher management, and the practice and content of education. Community participation is believed to make schools and teachers more accountable, thus leading to a more efficient school system. Proponents of community participation also argue that it facilitates the process of making schools more responsive to local contexts, and enables the use of community-level knowledge, creativity and initiative. The late 1980s and 1990s saw new programmes in primary education that advocated substantial community participation like the *Lok Jumbish* in Rajasthan, District Primary Education Programme (DPEP), *Janshala* and the *Sarva Sikshya Abhiyan*. Each of them stressed quality primary education and envisaged a proactive role for the community. The DPEP's objective, for instance, is the universalization of elementary education, with an emphasis on access and quality. The programme stresses participatory processes- the local community is involved in monitoring teacher-attendance, maintenance of the school building, selection of Para-teachers and curriculum formation, all through the Village Education Committee (VEC). It is supported by other community-based institutions such as the Parent Teacher Associations (PTAs), Mother Teacher Associations (MTAs) and *Mahila Mandals* (MMs). These committees are trained by DPEP functionaries. A study of community mobilization in the DPEP claimed 'expanded spheres of participation from the community' in the school, including the integration of disabled children and increased teacher accountability. According to DPEP literature, Para-teachers managed by the community are more accountable and agreeable to training compared to regular teachers, and capable of relating to the child's context. They are thus, also better teachers. As a strategy, community participation has also been explored in formulating curriculum and pedagogy, linking the child's social, cultural and environmental contexts with the teaching-learning process, thereby making education more relevant and interesting. Adopting local-knowledge curricula may also aggravate interregional disparities, leading to schisms in the quality of education along socio-economic or cultural lines. A second challenge relates to the 'capability' of the parents and the community in facilitating

participation. While it is generally accepted in theory that community participation and the accompanying aspects of choice are desirable, very little is known about the effects of choice on learning, implying that this, and other such questions, are problems of practice. This highlights the need for maintaining a balance, so that all children are able to attain certain basic learning and skill standards, with the foundational belief that the state is ultimately responsible for education, even as the community may participate in that process.

4. Where resources are limited, boys tend to receive preferential treatment for schooling. In some cases, both girls and boys may be enrolled in school, but their chances of continuing their education, especially if they come from a poor, large family, are dramatically different. There is a perceived notion that the 'rate of return' for a son's education is greater for parents, as sons have more opportunities to access better paying jobs and will therefore be better able to take care of their parents in later life. Because girls' most valued contribution is to the home, they are often withdrawn from school either to save money or so that they can take care of siblings or elderly relatives while their parents work outside the home to earn income.

5. Education can be the key to empowering women and men to break out of the vicious cycle of gender inequality and poverty. The benefits of educating girls, to their families and society at large, have long been documented. Educating girls helps to improve communities and societies and can also help to reduce child mortality, improve maternal health, and tackle the spread of HIV/AIDS. Equally important is the intrinsic value of education and the opportunity it provides for girls to be empowered to overcome situations that cause inequalities. Education can strengthen girls' dignity and self-confidence so that they themselves can begin to challenge discriminatory and biased gender roles and relations. Schooling can be a transformative process, providing children with the awareness and tools to fight discrimination and gender bias.

## **12. Conclusion**

No society can claim to be developed without educating its children. Education cannot also be selective and should not cater only to the interests of few communities who are economically and socially rich. Since independence the central and federal governments have been trying to provide education to all as enshrined in the constitution to provide universal and compulsory education to all children below the age of 14 years. In Rajasthan one finds a plethora of schemes. The need for so many has been arisen as a result of populist political necessity rather than a hard commitment to serve the purpose of educating all. Divergent schemes have brought

divergent method of administrative control and management systems. These methods some times exert undue interference in the system including transfers and appointments of schoolteachers etc.

Out of many other problems one most demanding issue relates to the additional demands on teachers time to perform several other functions than teaching, such as election duty, data collection during various surveys (e.g. livestock census and population census), and participation in campaigns such as pulse polio eradication.

However, in Rajasthan the regular schooling system has been unable to provide primary education to the disadvantaged groups of the society, namely the Scheduled Tribes, Scheduled Castes, women and communities in remote areas. Thus, alternative systems have been devised to fill the gap. These have been successful in providing some education and some functional schools where none were there.

During all these years lot of attention have been given on the quantitative expansion of education infrastructure ignoring the quality aspects of teaching and learning. Therefore, there is an urgent need for improvement of the quality of education, given the abysmally poor levels of learning as evident in studies carried out by various agencies in the primary schools.

The administrative and institutional structure of school education has been placed directly under the purview of *Panchayati Raj* since 1999. The aim was to decentralize the management and control in order to strengthen the ability of the poor and marginal groups to participate in local governance. It was strongly felt that the participation of the people could provide the best answer to face the challenges. In reality there still exists gaps in the performance of the PRIs, because of complex set of rules and regulations thrust upon by bureaucratic system of governance. Until the local people and the local governance mechanisms are fully functional without any interference the vision of “quality education for all” will remain a distant dream. It would apt to quote here the thinking of our educational planners about the future vision of education in our country.

India “Vision 2020” document states that successful population policy is directly linked to successful education policy. Success in raising literacy rates and school enrolment rates while, reducing drop-out rates, especially for girls, are closely correlated with the delayed onset of marriage and child birth, improved mortality for both mothers and children, and reduction in family size. In fact, a successful education policy forms the bedrock of all fields of national development- political, economic, technical, scientific, social, and environmental.

One of the concerns is about accepting a minimalist, functionalist, relativistic agenda for education. The standard very often is only functional literacy and numeracy. That is followed almost across the country, considered rather sacrosanct; it is very difficult to shake that paradigm. A linear and additive model of the construction of knowledge has become deeply ingrained. It only follows that a large number of educational programmes across the country follow an assembly line approach to education. It is precisely because of this low threshold that a concept of education in 'shifts' does not induce much discomfort. But the problem that one would have to contend with is that the education system has failed to deliver even a basic minimum.

Increased education is essential for the empowerment of women. The empowering effects of girls' and women's education are manifested in a variety of ways, including increased income-earning potential, ability to bargain for resources within the household, decision-making autonomy, control over their own fertility, and participation in public life. In particular, education increases girls' self-confidence, social and negotiation skills and earning power, and makes them less vulnerable to violence and ill health— all factors that exacerbate gender inequality and poverty.

In order to reap the fruits of education and also to remove the prejudice and biases, adult illiteracy has to be removed by launching appropriate programmes. By following a "policy of protective discrimination" all efforts must be made to increase the opportunities for education to all the weaker sections of the society like the schedule castes, schedule tribes, backward communities and even women. Honest attempts should be made to provide compulsory education to all the children at least up to 14 years. No one should be made to suffer for want of educational opportunity and facilities.

Decision-makers in education ministries should decide to support inclusive education strategies, they often want to know what costs will be involved and what results any investment should deliver. Therefore, alongside attempts to demonstrate what inclusive approaches look like in practice, there is a need for information on appropriate ways to predict the cost of inclusive education. More evidence on the extent to which flexible, devolved school financing models result in improvements to inclusivity, quality and achievement is also needed.

An assessment system that recognizes progress towards national competencies, but does not exclude any child from progressing through education on the basis of exam failure, is being

recognized as vital to education. There is a need for more thinking and evidence on how to devise inclusive assessment systems that capture all children's competencies and knowledge.

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