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## A Gist of Kurukshetra Magazine (November 2019 Issue)

Rural Education

Availability of Teachers for Better Education

Involving Local Communities in Rural Schools

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# Kurukshetra Compendium

November, 2019

## Rural Education: Teacher Education(Te) and Development in Rural India

### Status

- The rural TE landscape is imbued with District Institutes of Education Training (DIETs), primary Teacher Education Centers (PTEC) in addition to the B.Ed. colleges.
- In review of the amendment to Section 23(2) of RTE which mandates that all teachers should be trained, a widening and deepening of TE, particularly in the rural areas, is the need of the hour.

### What does Widening and Deepening of Te Mean?

The widening of TE means spatial coverage of TEIs to all districts and also to some of the blocks, if needed.

- The deepening of TE involves –
- Enlarging the bouquet of course
- Bringing in new techno-pedagogical particles
- Leveraging information and Communication Technology (ICT) in education
- Designing and conducting several thematic modular courses for the Continuing Professional Development (CPD) of the teachers.

### Initiatives

- The State Council of Education Research and Training (SCERT) and DIETs would constantly conduct Teacher Need Analysis (TNA) and devise CPDs to address them.
- MHRD, under the aegis of Samagra Shiksha Abhiyan (SSA), has started a condensed one – week CPD for all elementary schools in India.
- This ambitious CPD programme has been named, National Initiative for School Heads and Teachers Holistic Advancement (NISHTHA).
- Another aspect of deepening TE entails attracting good students to the profession of teaching.
- The draft New Education Policy (NEP) envisages a four- year integrated B.Ed. course with attractive variations to attract bright students to B.Ed.
- The next logical step would be to bring in effective regulation as well as infuse necessary functional autonomy into the TEIs.
- The draft NEP envisages to bring TE under the umbrella of higher education and the proposed National Higher Education Regulatory Authority (NHERA) would be the sole regulator whereas the NCTE would transform into a Professional Standard Setting Board (PSSB).

### Conclusion

- It is expected that widening and deepening of TE would not only meet the rising need of teachers but would also bring honour and pride to the profession of teachers, a profession which has been exalted to the status of the gods in our holy scriptures.

## Availability of Teachers for Better Education

- According to Swami Vivekananda, education is that by which character is formed, strength of mind is increased, the intellect is expanded and by which one can stand on one's own feet.
- It is through teachers that our children are imparted with values, knowledge, empathy, creativity, ethics, life skills, and social responsibility.

### Current Situation

While India has done well in terms of access and equity, and brought almost every child to school, the learning levels of children need considerable improvement.

- Data shows that currently 8.33 lakh teacher posts are vacant at the elementary stage and 1.11 lakh teacher posts are lying vacant at the secondary level.
- There is an uneven availability of teachers across school and subjects, even while most states have an overall Pupil – Teacher Ratio (PTR) within the norms.
- Classroom processes remain mostly ‘traditional’ with most one-way transmission and little interaction.
- Most in – service teacher needs are still met by a one-size fits all ‘training’ approach. Transaction in this training is also largely one – way.
- It is important to involve teachers as professionals in any training programme and discuss their experiences and understanding.
- There does not seem to be enough focus on building the capability of the Head Teacher. For change to happen at the school level, school leadership is a key factor.

## Issue Regarding Teachers

### Suggestions to Improve Teacher Efficacy

- To ensure that truly excellent students enter the teaching profession from and in rural areas, merit based scholarships need to be instituted across the country.
- In rural areas, special merit-scholarships that also guarantee employment in their local areas should be established upon successful completion of their four-year integrated B.Ed. programmes.
- To ensure decent and pleasant service conditions, all school need to be equipped with adequate and safe infrastructure.
- Teachers need to be given more autonomy in choosing finer aspects of curriculum and pedagogy.
- Teachers must be given constant opportunities for self-improvement and to learn the latest innovations.

### Recommendations

- Ensure availability of a full complement staff of teachers in every school with a focus on remote school and remote districts.
- States should develop a strong core group of outstanding teacher educators through a rigorous process of selection and professional development in partnership with identified institution.
- Make material for teachers and teacher educators available in the state/local language.

### Conclusion

- If education is to improve, teaching has to improve.
- Any change effort has to recognize the centrality of the teacher.
- Teaching is an intellectually and ethically demanding profession.
- Teachers must be seen as independent capable and responsible professionals with respect given to their professional identity and knowledge.

## Involving Local Communities in Rural Schools

### Finding Creative Solutions

- Firstly and most importantly the solution must come from grassroots. It is very important to involve the local communities in rural areas as the most crucial stakeholder in educating the rural masses with quality education. They must take the ownership of rural education.
- Decentralization in school/college management and governance is the key for fixing and reviving the broken governance system of rural education in India. In this connection, the role of local bodies and self-help group becomes most crucial.
- Both can mobilize local communities to take the ownership of the local schools/colleges and motivate its members to contribute physically and financially (for example Shramdaan or giving land or other resources for school/college) in expansion and maintenance of the school/college infrastructure on regular basis.
- SHGs can be used in management and governance of rural schools on pilot basis after giving proper training and capacity building programmes.

- In the beginning, on experimental basis the state governments can hand over the operational management of five rural schools to different SHGs with a clear mandate and full financial as well as manpower support to improve the quality of education in three years time period.
- Another area where SHGs can play an important role is managing the mid-day meal in rural schools. Similarly, SHGs can play important role in dealing with the rampant problem of teachers' absenteeism in rural school. Teachers should be accountable to the school management committee managed by a SHG.

### **Conclusion**

- It is important to note that India cannot ignore the issue of quality of education in its rural areas.
- The time has come to involve local bodies and SHGs creatively and purposefully in revitalizing the rural education.

## **Towards Digital And Financial Literacy**

- Digital literacy is the understanding and navigation of several digital platforms and analyzing their potential as a medium of communication.
- On the other hand, financial literacy is the ability to understand different areas and concepts of finance like financial planning, budgeting, investment, saving and much more.
- Combining the digital platform and financial facility, the digital-financial interface is the new medium that has revolutionized the experience of financial connectivity and interaction the world over.

### **Importance of Financial Literacy**

- Inclusive Growth and Financial Inclusion: Financial literacy, and education, plays a critical role in making available the services and benefits that the weaker groups need so as to achieve the agenda of inclusive growth and sustainable prosperity.
- Familiarity and Ability – To make an informed choice, it is necessary to have financial literacy.
- Freedom From exploitation – It will make people aware about manipulative financial schemes and inflated interest rate charged by moneylenders.
- Prevention of over indebtedness
- Promotion of entrepreneurship
- Positive Spill-over effects – A household with a substantial amount of financial education would make regular savings and invest in correct channels to generate income. The financial well being of persons will in turn augment the societal welfare.
- Making the Pension Responsibility an individual or personal affair and not that of State / Corporations – An individual who is financially literate would be in a superior situation to evaluate his/her own necessities and make savings in suitable schemes. This lead to a reduced strain on social programs and pension plans, and promote an economy that is tougher.
- Behavioral Change – The outburst of many financial products has made their usage grow quite rapidly without any refrain from the larger financial implications. There can be brought about certain degree of behavioral change by means of financial education.
- More and better input in Financial Markets: In India, the need of the hour is to 'convert savers into investors'.

## **Government Endeavours to Strengthen Financial Literacy in India**

### **1. National Strategy For Financial Education (NSFE)**

- It has been prepared in 2012 to bring about a massive financial education campaign that would create awareness and would educate the consumers on how to gain access to financial services, what are the products available and how a change in attitude of people can be brought about so as to "translate knowledge into behavior".

### **2. Project Financial Literacy**

- This is a central bank (RBI) endeavor that aims to disseminate information regarding its basic banking concepts to schools, colleges, economically weaker sections in residing in the rural and urban areas, senior citizens, defense personals, and many more in the specific target group.

- Under this initiative, RBI organizes trips of school and college students to the RBI headquarters and also conducts banking and insurance related quizzes in schools (for classes VII to XIV) to create awareness about general economy and bring about financial literacy.
  - It also creates modules on General Indian Economics for the same purpose.
  - There is also a Financial Literacy Week that is observed by RBI.
- 3. Digital Saksharta Abhiyan (DISHA)**
- National Digital Literacy Mission (NDLM) Scheme has been initiated by the government in order to impart IT training to citizens who are not literate in the IT sphere.
  - This schemes aims at making target groups like Anganwadis, ASHA workers etc. IT literate.
- 4. Digitize India Platform (DIP)**
- This is an initiative of Union Government under the Digital India Programme.
  - This scheme aims at creating a digital repository of all existing content, which includes the certificates and degrees of people, in various formats and media in a digitized pattern.
- 5. Direct Benefit Transfer (DBT)**
- It is an initiative to reform the delivery system of the government and ensure efficient, effective and simpler transfer of information/funds in order to achieve the goal of “Maximum Governance, Minimum Government”.
- 6. AADHAR and AADHAR Enabled Payment System**
- AADHAR platform is one of the main pillars of the Digital India Platform.
- 7. AGRIMARKET App**
- This app has been created to enable the farmers to stay updated with the crop prices.
  - It automatically traces the location of the farmer through GPS and fetches the market prices of the crops within a range of 50 km.
- 8. Bharat Interface for Money (BHIM)**
- This app makes the bank transactions simple, swift and uncomplicated.
- 9. Cyber Swachhta Kendra**
- Under this initiative, the main aim of the centre is to quarantine and safeguard the cyber space by spotting botnet infections and subsequently notify the end-users to prevent further damage.
- 10. Vittiya Saksharta Abhiyan (VISAKA)**
- The principle of the Vittiya Saksharta Abhiyan is to energetically connect the Higher Education Institutions and their students and encourage all payers and payees to use a “digitally enabled cashless economic system” for their fund transfer.



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