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Kurukshetra seeks to carry the message of Rural Development to all people. It serves as a forum for free, frank and serious discussion on the problems of Rural Development with special focus on Rural Uplift.

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INSIDE

Education is perhaps the most vital requirement for inclusive growth, empowering individual and society, opening up opportunities and promoting true public participation in the development process. It is an important factor that fuels both social change and economic growth.

India is actively pushing forward with its agenda for revamping and restructuring education in the country. Thanks to schemes like the Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan and Midday Meal Schemes, enrolment rates in schools have gone up, as have the number of schools. Right to Education is now a Fundamental Right for all children in the age group of 6 to 14 years. In simple words, it means that the Government will be responsible for providing education to every child up to the eighth standard, free of cost, irrespective of class and gender. It has thus paved the way for building a strong, literate and empowered society in this country.

However, realization of this objective is not going to be very easy - not when the school system in the country, especially those in rural areas continue to be plagued by problems of poor infrastructure, shortage of teachers, their lack of training and motivation besides poverty and livelihood issues that are responsible for the huge drop out rates. It is estimated that there is a shortage of nearly five lakh teachers, while about three lakh of them are untrained at the elementary school stage. Over 53 percent of schools have a student teacher ratio much poorer than the 1:30 prescribed under the Act. About 46 percent schools do not have toilets for girls, which is another reason why parents do not send girl children to schools.

However, if our track records in literacy is an indication, we can be quite hopeful of achieving the target of providing school education for all our children. A 65 percent literacy rate in 2001 from a mere 14 percent in 1947 is a record established with a lot of vision and hard work - a record we can be justifiably proud of. India's commitment to provide compulsory education to nearly 22 crore children between the ages of 6 and 14 is evident in schemes like those providing rural children with stipends, free uniforms and text books, mid-day meals and special attention to education of the girl child. While issues of equity, quality and access remain areas of concern, particularly in rural schools, rapid efforts are being made to address these effectively and in a sustained manner.

In the current issue of Kurukshetra, we discuss the education scenario in the country, particularly in the rural areas, evaluating schemes that are in operation and analyzing what more needs to be done. By enacting the Right to Education, India now joins a select few countries in the world where education is a Fundamental Right. Education is the surest route to development. It will transform the whole society and the gains of such a development will be inclusive and widespread.

RURAL LITERACY IN INDIA: THE CHANGING SCENARIO

Anupam Hazra

A rights-based approach to education places the primary responsibility for ensuring good quality education on the state, so consideration needs to be given to whether it has the capacity – in terms of managerial, human and financial resources – to analyse, organize and provide all the inputs necessary to make meaningful education a reality for those who are left out of the system.

In the context of globalisation, education assumes greater meaning. Greatness of a nation should not be measured by its ranking in global economic order, but by its ability to provide quality education. The last two decades have shown enormous improvement in the literacy scene in the country as reflected by the average literacy figures. The scenario of educational progress in rural India began to change rapidly due to the new thrusts

given by the government's New National Policy of Education (1986) and the Programme of Action (1992), which aimed at improving access, reducing drop outs and improving learning achievements for all children between 6-14 years of age. A host of major initiatives by the government, and the mobilization of external resources for primary education, had a deep impact on the status of primary education in India. The Government of



India, as part of its Constitutional commitment, has initiated a number of programs to achieve the goal of universalisation of elementary education in a time bound manner. Some of the major initiatives have been the Operation Blackboard (1986), Non formal Education Scheme (1986), the Shiksha Karmi Project (1987), Mahila Samakya (1989), Lok Jumbish (1992), the District Primary Education Programme (1994), the Mid Day Meal scheme (1995) and the Sarva Siksha Abhiyan (2001) and the most recently introduced The Right of Children to Free and Compulsory Education Act or The Right to Education Act (RTE), which has come into force from April 1, 2010 ensuring free education to more than 92 lakh out of school children aged 6 - 14 in India.

The Changing Scenario of Rural literacy

In 1951, only 12.1% of rural population and 4.87% of females in India were literate. In 2001, rural literacy rate increased to 59.4% (71.4% for males and 46.7% for females). During 1991-2001, the increase in female literacy rate (16.1 percentage points) in rural area was relatively more compared to that of the male (13.5 percentage points). In 1991, the gaps in the male-female literacy rate in rural and urban areas were 27.3 and 17.1 percentage points respectively, which came down to 24.7 and 13.5 percentage points in 2001. In 1991, rural-urban gap in literacy rate was 28.4 percentage points, which decreased to 20.9 percentage points in 2001. But still more than 2/5th of the rural population was illiterate in 2001.

As per the recent report of the National Sample Survey Organisation (NSSO), literacy in India is increasing at a sluggish rate of 1.5 per cent per year. But the positive trend is that “as compared to 2004-05, the literacy rate increased by 2 per cent for the rural populace and 1 per cent in urban areas during

2005-06,” says the report. It says there were 656 literate men out of 1,000 in India’s villages in 2005-06, compared to 636 in 2004-05. During that year, the number of literate village women went up from 450 to 467 per 1,000. Educating all rural people is a huge challenge, and much is still to be done considering the number of out-of-school children living in rural areas.

Expanding Literacy in Rural India – Some Issues of concern

Over the last decade there have been enormous improvements in the education sector but issues like high dropout rates, low-levels of learning achievement and low participation of girls as well as of various systemic issues like inadequate school infrastructure, high teacher absenteeism, large-scale teacher vacancies, poor quality of education, poorly functioning schools, and inadequate equipment – still remain the matter of concern in rural literacy scenario. Apart from household income/wealth, caste and gender continue to determine access to education. The poor, girls, and members of scheduled castes and tribes still face

Apart from household income/wealth, caste and gender continue to determine access to education. The poor, girls, and members of scheduled castes and tribes still face formidable barriers in acquiring basic education.

formidable barriers in acquiring basic education. It has been widely acknowledged that the socio-economic conditions in rural India have constrained the process of primary education and the social inequalities of caste, class and gender have been identified as the major causes of educational deprivation among children in India.

However in recent years, the situation has improved for female schooling, especially in the younger age-groups; but the discrepancies between rural and urban areas continue to be large and the educational situation of scheduled castes and tribes lags considerably behind the rest of the population. Weak teacher motivations,

their apathy towards teaching and high teacher truancy plague the educational system. Teacher availability in rural areas continues to be low. Teachers posted to rural and remote areas usually apply for transfers and in general their willingness to be posted in such areas is rather low. This leads to severe imbalances in the distribution of school resources between rural and urban areas and adds to the low teacher-pupil ratios generally observed within the school system.

As far as the progress in rural literacy is concerned, initiative like provision of mid-day meals in primary school has increased enrolment, attendance and retention, especially of girls. Moreover, it helps in taking care of nutritional needs of the students. This not only affects positively the health of poor students but also improves learning outcomes by ending 'school hunger'. On the other hand - the Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan, initiated to universalise quality education, has brought about positive changes by increasing accountability of schools to the community through greater involvement of village education committees and parent-teacher associations.

Education for every child – Need For An Integrated Approach

Ensuring that every child has access to quality and convenient learning environments throughout his or her childhood necessitates action far beyond the ministries of education. The right to education can only be realized in a political and economic environment that acknowledges the importance of transparent, participatory and accountable processes, as well as broad-based collaboration both across government and in the wider society. It needs a long-term strategic commitment to the

provision of adequate resources, development of cross departmental structures, engagement with the energies and capacities of parents and local communities, and partnership with non-governmental organizations.

A rights-based approach to education places the primary responsibility for ensuring good quality education on the state, so consideration needs to be given to whether it has the capacity – in terms of managerial, human and financial resources – to analyse, organize and provide all the inputs necessary to make meaningful education a reality for those who are left out of the system. Education requires substantive, not just symbolic action. Merely passing laws, without sustained political attention that plugs yawning financial and administrative gaps in the school sector, is going to fail.

Though the State has the primary obligation to provide education for all children but non-governmental organizations and other civil society partners make a vital contribution to education

in many countries by mobilizing public demand and expanding participation. So, the Government needs to build effective partnerships with all key organizations and institutions that have an impact on the children's education. Collaboration, for example, is needed with non-governmental organizations, Gram Panchayats, teachers' union, the private sector, traditional leaders and religious groups to enlist their support and expertise in building capacity to ensure the right of education for all children in rural India.

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SARVA SHIKSHA ABHIYAN AND INCLUSIVE EDUCATION

**B.K. Pattanaik
Madan Mohan Singh**

India has the distinction of having one of the largest elementary education systems in the World. With more than 15 crore children enrolled and having more than 30 lakhs teachers, the elementary education is expanding in the country on a significant scale.

Education is the mirror of the society and is the seed as well as flower of the socio-economic development. It transcends human being from ignorance to enlightenment, from the shade of social backwardness to the light of social amelioration and the nation from underdevelopment towards faster social and economic development. The general conference of UNSCEO held way back in 1964 recognized that “illiteracy is a grave obstacle to social and economic development and hence the extension of literacy is a pre-requisite for the successful implementation of national plans for economic and

social development.” The first education minister of the independence India Maulana Abul Kalam Azad said in the parliament in 1948 that “I need hardly say that whatever be our programme for industrial, scientific, agricultural, commercial or material progress and development, non of them can be achieved without an improvement of the human material which is the basis of our national wealth. That human material is largely conditioned by the training and education which it receives. It seems to me that whatever we think of defence or of food or of industry and commerce, we must take every step to see that education is given the



first priority among our national requirement.” Amartaya Sen also emphasised that the solution of all problems, be they related to the economy, development or population, lies in education.

India has the dubious distinction of having one of the largest elementary education systems in the World. With more than 15 crore children enrolled and having more than 30 lakhs teachers, the elementary education is expanding in the country in a significant scale. The literacy rate in the country has been increased from a meagre 18.33 percent in 1951 to 65.38 in 2001. In reiterating its stand for universalization of primary education in the country, the 86th amendment to the constitution of India has made free and compulsory education to the children of 6-14 age groups a fundamental right.

Not only illiteracy, but also regional, social, gender and caste based inequality in literacy are the awe some features of literacy in India. The Table-I and Table-II reflect the picture. The educational exclusion of girls and other marginalized sections of society has remained a great concern of primary education in India. Way back what an educational expert J P Naik said holds true even today. He said that “the largest beneficiaries of our educational system are the boys, the people of urban areas and the middle and upper classes.”

Table-I		
Literacy Rate by Caste Group and Sex		
Categories	Types	Literacy (%)
General Literacy	Person	64.8
	Male	75.3
	Female	53.7
Scheduled Castes	Person	54.7
	Male	66.6
	Female	41.9
Scheduled Tribes	Person	47.1
	Male	59.2
	Female	34.8

Source: Census of India, 2001

In Asian Drama, Gunnar Myrdal remarked that “the hunger of education in the villages is largely a romantic illusion.” The inclusive education holds the key to all educational endeavour in India. The goal of inclusive education is to end all form of discrimination and foster social cohesion.

Table-II			
Literacy Rate by Religious Communities			
Categories	Person	Male	Female
Hindus	65.1	76.2	53.2
Muslims	59.1	67.6	50.1
Christians	80.3	84.4	76.2
Sikhs	69.4	75.2	63.1
Buddhists	72.7	83.1	61.7
Jains	94.1	97.	90.6
Others	7.0	60.8	33.2
All Communities	6.8	75.3	53.7

Source: Census of India, 2001

The government of India has launched several programmes after independence to uplift the literacy in the country. In order to achieve inclusive education it has provided incentives to the children belonging to the Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes and also to the girls. More recently, the government of India has launched in 2001 Sarva Shikhya Abhiyan(SSA) a flagship programme in partenership with the state government to cover the entire country and address the needs of 192 million children in 1.1 million habitations. The SSA programme aims at:

- ❖ Strengthening school infrastructure by constructing new building and upgrading the existing building.
- ❖ Providing teachers and also building their capacities through training.
- ❖ Seeks to provide quality education including life skills.

- ❖ Promoting community participation in primary education by formulating Village Education Committees. And involving them in planning and raising community contribution for primary education
- ❖ It aims at bridging social, regional and gender gaps in literacy and primary education.
- ❖ It focuses on girl education and children with special needs
- ❖ It seeks to provide computer education to bridge the digital divide.

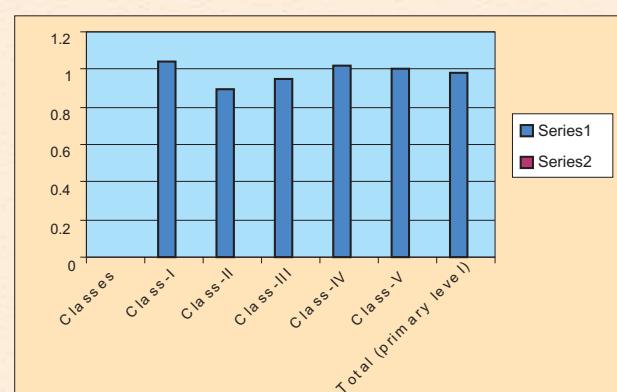
The present paper gives the finding of a study carried out in five districts of Punjab. Although Punjab is an economically developed state, in terms of literacy its position is not encouraging. In terms of the Census 2001 literacy, Punjab occupies 16th position. The Educational Development Index (EDI) developed by National University of Educational Planning and Administration(2007), New Delhi for primary and upper primary level also ranks Punjab 14th with an index value of 0.608, while Kerala, Delhi and Tamil Nadu ranks first, second and third with index values of .0.708, 0.707 and 0.701 respectively. The state has also the distinction of having the highest percentage of Scheduled Castes population, 29 percent well above the national average of 21 percent. Therefore, the importance of inclusive education occupies significant place in the state. The decline in sex-ratio also further justifies the stand.

Gender Parity

One of the essential features of inclusive education is to attain gender equality in terms of educational attainment and educational opportunities. The study shows that at the class five the gender parity is fully achieved. In class-I and class-II the girls enrolment is higher than the boys. The SSA has enabled to achieve this task.

The distribution of books, filling up of the teacher vacancies, availability of teaching learning materials and mid-day meal and school environment such as separate toilets for the boys and girls and clean class rooms and play grounds in many places positive allurements and incentives which attracted the girl children and also encouraged the parents to send their daughters to the school. Moreover, making the panchayats responsible for the school management including the enrolment of the students is also another reason for higher enrolment of girls in many schools.

Gender Parity Index in Primary Education	
Classes	Gender Parity Index
Class-I	1.04
Class-II	0.89
Class-III	0.95
Class-IV	1.02
Class-V	1.00
Total (primary level)	0.98



Social Inclusion

Jawaharlal Nehru once told that in the context of society today, the caste system and much that goes with it are wholly incompatible, reactionary, restrictive and barrier to progress. B R Ambedkar also told that the problem of raising lower order is to the spread education among them. In his opinion education is the panacea of social trouble.

Table-IV	
Percentages of Scheduled Caste Children to Total Children	
Classes	% of Scheduled Castes Children
Class-I	64.92
Class-II	64.34
Class-III	64.72
Class-IV	59.32
Class-V	59.09
Total (primary level)	62.47

The figures given in Table-IV clearly reveals that the Scheduled Castes children constitute more than sixty percent of the total children in first three classes from class-I to class-III and in class IV and V they are nearer to sixty percent. Thus the Scheduled Caste children constitute two third of the total number of children. Although, the upper castes and economically well off prefer to send their children to the private school, yet the attainment of educational institutions by the economically weaker Scheduled Castes is one of the significant finding. Thus it can be said that the SSA driven interventions has promoted inclusive education at the primary level.

The Scheduled Castes children constitute more than sixty percent of the total children in first three classes from class-I to class-III and in class IV and V they are nearer to sixty percent.

Suggestions

Some of the suggestions for strengthening inclusive education at the primary level are as follows:

- The panchayat member can play important role in promoting inclusive education. The village education committee should not be an ad hoc project arrangement and should be a permanent structure of the village panchayat. The Panchayati Raj Act of many states envisaged for the constitution of such committees at the village level.

- A frequent parent and teacher interaction will enhance student enrolment and attendance rate. However, the teachers are found to be interacting less with the parent because of paucity of time and sometimes even from the other side as the parents too busy in their livelihood earning activities also fail to make themselves available to the teachers.
- The incentives available to the students must be made at the beginning of the session. Any delay in the availability of books will demotivate the students.
- The parents those who are not sending their children to the school particularly women must be employed under Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act. The linkage between MREGA and education must be established.

- The quality of Mid-day meal needs to be improved, which will attract children of the weaker sections of the society to the school.

- Village monitoring committees must be formulated so that they will monitor the enrolment

and student absenteeism.

- The overall attitude of the people particularly the socially and economically backwards towards the education of the girl child needs to be changed

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TOWARDS A NEW EDUCATIONAL ORDER

K.K.Khullar

An ancient Indian proverb says , If you are for a year, plant a coconut tree, if you are planning for five years, cultivate rice but if you are planning for future send your girl/child to the school.

After six decades of investments in education India the largest system of education, has realized that benefits of knowledge are growing as rapidly as the penalties of ignorance. We have also not lost sight of the fact that the financial in-puts are a poor substitute for human efforts and that foreign aid for education is no longer a miracle drug for ailing educational systems. As a nation, have opted for inclusive education where instead of child going to the school, the school comes to the child and the teacher goes to the homes of the drop-outs. One such scheme is Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan where the deeper focus is that the poor do not pay for the education of the rich that rural India is not at the mercy of urban India.

Gandhiji said that the purpose of education is to establish a non-violent, non-exploitative social and economic order, a society where everybody is equal and nobody more equal, where the strong are just and the weak secure, where women can live with honour and dignity. One such scheme of the Government is 'Mahila Samakhya' (Empowerment

of women through Education). The programme has given a new confidence to rural women to demand education for their children. The scheme is being implemented in about ten thousand villages. Under this scheme women have taken up issues such as dowry (as in Himachal Pradesh), alcoholism (as in Haryana), Devdasi system (as in Tamilnadu) through women's collectives. As a result child marriage has decreased. Rate of female literacy has gone up to 54.16%. 'Jago Behna' (arise Sister) has done excellent work in Bihar.

Women's empowerment through education is the surest way to improve their status in life. Even otherwise female literacy is one of the strongest component of Human Development. An ancient Indian proverb lays down : If you are for a year, plant a coconut tree, if you are planning for five years, cultivate rice but if you are planning for future send your girl/child to the school.

Enrolling all boys and girls in schools by 2015 is one of the important millennium goals. India will do



that probably earlier than the UN target date through non-formal, formal and Inclusive Education.

The present educational systems the world over stands for all intelligence and no intellect. In other words intelligence is being developed at the expense of intellect. We, in India are trying to strive an equable balance in our school curriculum between acquiring intelligence and developing intellect so that human development really means the development of body, for mind and soul, so that educational system is not held responsible for the vagaries of human mind and the perversion of human development, because undoubtedly social and economic development is dependent on education, which in turn is the sustainer of economy and society.

Education, therefore, shall have to accept much greater responsibilities than before. So far the focus has been on quantity, now it will shift to quality. The main focus is to produce better human beings rather than better commodities. This can be done by making education an exercise in quality with quantity matched to what our economy can absorb. At the moment we produce the maximum number of graduates which our economy cannot absorb, leading to unemployment which is the main cause of youth frustration, agitation even violence.

In the New Education Order there is, therefore urgent need for educational reform. According to Economic Survey (2008-2009) : 'Education in India comes under the concurrent list thus both the Central and the State Governments are involved leading to multiple controls and regulations by the Government and statutory bodies. There is an urgent need for replacement of bureaucratic controls in education by professional regulators along with public-private partnership to ensure universal primary education.

Capitation Fee

Above all the curse of Capitation Fee should be fought on war footing. The practice continues in professional, technical and medical colleges despite govt's determination to curb it. The capitation fee practice continues even in pre-primary and primary school admissions particularly in the English-medium schools.

According to Swami Ranganathananda, in his book 'Education and Human Excellence', the New Educational Order must follow not precede the

New Spiritual and moral order. In this context two questions must be asked, viz what is the nature of national society that is waiting to receive the Indian youth after completing his or her institutional or formal education? And what is the type of youth that our educational institutions are sending out into the nation?

Missed Opportunities

The story of Indian education is a story of missed opportunities. We could have done away with Macaulay-type of education at one go in 1947 itself after independence when men of vision led the nation such as Jawaharlal Nehru, Dr. Radhakrishnan and Maulana Azad. Even a fool-proof blue-print of Gandhiji's 'Nai Talim' was readily available. But we rejected that and set up one Committee after the other who led us nowhere. That great opportunity we missed. Similarly an opportunity came in 1976 when education was brought on the con-current list by a Constitutional Amendment. It was a far-reaching step of a new sharing of responsibility between the Union Government and the States in respect of this vital area of national life. In simple words it meant that the Centre could legislate in education. It was a golden opportunity and we could have made education as an agent of change. Again we missed it. The third opportunity came at the time of formulation of New Education Policy in 1985. A fine document emerged which conceived of a National system of Education which meant that up to a given level, all students irrespective of caste, creed location of sex will have access to education of a comparable quality, and that there shall be a Common School System. Here we failed at the implementation level.

Now when our economy has moved to a higher growth plane with growth in GDP at market prices exceeding 8% and there is developmental climate in the country, we should seize this present opportunity and launch an educational revolution, Indianise education without further delay. Time is of essence and the target set in the millennium goals are beckoning us. The only test of fire makes fine steel.

Let us make the Right to Education a practical reality.

(The author is a freelance writer)

PROGRESS OF HUMAN DEVELOPMENT IN THE CHANGING SCENARIO

Gurmeet Singh

The development of a strong nation requires that the human resources of the country are endowed with higher level of education, skill and specialization.

The recently released United Nations Development Report 2009 titled 'Overcoming Barriers; Human mobility and Development', ranked India 134 out of 182 countries, it also presents a strong case for governments all over the world to encourage human mobility. Migration, including those of low skilled workforce pays dividends all around. While economic growth is extremely important, it has to be accompanied by improvement in the quality of life of the people for the development process to be sustainable in the medium to long run. More importantly it has to be inclusive in nature. Ultimately, a healthy, educated and an empowered population contribute

to improved productivity which, in turn sustain growth. Literacy as a qualitative attribute of the population is one of most important indication of the socio economic and political development of a society. It is a major component of human resource development and is thus basic to any progress of social and economic progress.

The commitment to improve the human development parameters, especially provisioning of education, both at elementary and higher levels, was lower in the list of priorities of the British India so as to become a major national objective. India has been under British rule for more than two centuries



and expansion of indigenous elementary education took a low priority during the expansion of the British Raj.

Education Transition

Although the Indian census were conducted since 1881 and the data series on literacy was available since 1901 census, one can notice that only 5 people out of 100 were literate in 1901, 18% in 1951. It has taken another 50 years for literacy to increase from a meager 18% to 65.4% in 2001. Female literacy has increased from a very low of 8.9% in 1951 to only 54.3% in 2001, an increase of six times while male literacy increased by three and half time during the same period.

Further it is essential to note that educational disparity is starting between various states and regions of India. While the state of Kerala is exceptional with 91% literacy with low gender disparity, the second most literate state is way below at 77% and the least state is Bihar with only 48% of its citizen educated.

Primary Education

The 86th Constitutional amendment Act, 2002 led to insertion of a new article 21-A in Part III of the Constitution that made free and compulsory education to all children of 6 to 14 years of age a fundamental right.

Drawing on Nehru ji's vision, and articulating most of his key themes, the Kothari Commission (1964) was set up to formulate a good education policy for India. After around two decades of National

Policy on Education of 1968, in 1986, Rajiv Gandhi announced a new education policy, the National Policy on Education (NPE), which was intended to prepare India for the 21st century.

Various Education schemes started by Govt.

1. **Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan:** SSA is being implemented in partnership with State Government to address the needs of children in age group 6-14 years. The achievement of SSA till Dec. 2008 are opening of 2,76,903 new schools, construction of 2,25,383 school buildings and various infrastructure facilities, appointment of 9.66 lakh teachers and in service training for 26.62 lakh teachers. Enrolment targets for the primary classes have been largely achieved in most part of the country.
2. **National Programme for education of Girls at Elementary Education:** Its is being implemented in educationally backward blocks, where the level of rural female literacy is less than the national average and the gender GAP is more than the national average. About 3286 educationally backward blocks are covered under the scheme in 25 states.
3. **National Programme of Mid day Meals in school:** The programme provide a mid day meal of 450 calories and 12 grams of protein to children at the primary stage. During 2009-10, about 11 crore children were benefited by the scheme.

Table 1: Important Achievements

S. No.	Item	Figure in 1950-51	Figure in 2005-06 (Unless otherwise stated)
1.	Literacy Rate	18.3%	64.8% (2001)
2.	Female Literacy Rate	8.9%	53.7%
3.	Schools	0.23 million	1.28 million
4.	General Colleges	370	11698
5.	Professional Colleges	208	7797
6.	Universities	27	350
7.	Gross Enrolment Ratio in Elementary Education	32.1%	96.62%
8.	Gender Parity Index at Elementary level	0.38	0.92
9.	Public Expenditure on Education as % of GDP	1.5%	3.46%

4. **Kasturba Gandhi Balika Vidyalaya:** It was launched in July 2004 for setting up residential school at upper primary level for girls belonging predominately to SC, ST, OBC and other minority communities.
5. **Thrust for female literacy (Saakshar Bharat):** The National Literacy Mission has been launched recently as Saakshar Bharat in which at least 7 crore non-illiterates will be made literate to achieve 80% literacy and to reduce gender disparity in literacy from 21% to 10%. 365 districts in the country, with adult female literacy rate of 50% or less, have been identified for the implementation of Saakshar Bharat.

Despite rapid growth in literacy in Post independence India, gender deprivation still exists and needs to be over come. Despite progressively increasing gains for female in literacy and education resulting in declining disparity in 2001, only slightly more than half of the female population was literate as against three fourth of males (75.85%). It may be seen that it took almost five decades for male-female disparity to receive to half of what it was in the 1960s.

Table 2: Male-Female literacy gap in India (In percent)

Census Year	Persons	Males	Females	Male-Female Literacy gap
1951	18.33	27.16	8.86	18.30
1961	28.30	40.40	15.35	25.05
1971	34.45	45.96	21.97	23.98
1981	43.57	56.38	29.76	26.62
1991	52.21	64.13	39.29	24.84
2001	65.38	75.85	54.16	21.70

Source: Census of India 2001

Education in India comes under the concurrent list and thus both the central and state governments are involved leading to multiple control and regulations by the Govt. and statutory bodies. There is an urgent need for replacement of bureaucratic controls in education by professional regulation along with Private-Public Partnership to ensure universal primary education.

Strengthening and Reform of the Higher Education System

The target of increasing Gross Enrolment Ratio to 15 percent by the end of 11th five year plan and 21 percent GER by the end of 12th five year plan is considered necessary to reap demographic dividends. Improvement of access, along with equity and excellence, enhancing the relevance of higher education through curriculum reforms, vocationalization network and information technology and distance education, along with reforms in the Governance structure, are some of the main policy objective in higher education.

The National Authority for regulation and Accreditation of Higher Educational institutional bill for mandatory accreditation of all higher education institution has been introduced in Parliament. Several bills for improvement in higher education have been introduced in Parliament, Such as a bill for regulating the entry and operation of foreign educational institution in India.

To increase access, improve quality and to remove regional imbalances in higher education. Sixteen Central Universities were established under the Central Universities Act, 2009.

A new scheme has been approved by the UPA Govt. to provide central assistance for setting up of a model degree college in each of the identified 374 educationally backward districts where gross enrolment ratio (GER) for higher education is less than the National (GER).

Besides there reforms UPA Govt. has also approved the setting up of six Indian Institute of Management (IIM), two new (IIT) and National Institute of Technology in each of the larger States/ UT's. The UPA Govt. has declared to provide full interact subsidy to poor students, where parental income is limited to Rs. 4.5 Lakh per annum, in educational loan taken by them to pursue technical and professional courses

Table 3: Progress overview during 2009-10

Indicators	Primary and upper primary level achievements
1. Access	99% of the rural population has a primary school within 1km
2. Gross Enrolment Ratio	GER increased in 6-14 age group to 114.61 at primary level and to 77.50 at upper primary level in 2007-08
3. Gross Enrolment Ratio-SC and ST	124.9 at primary and 76.3 at upper primary for SC and 129.29 at primary and 74.44 at upper primary for ST
4. Gender parity Index	Improved to 0.98 at primary level and 0.92 at upper primary level in 2007-08
5. Drop out Rate at primary level	Reduced by 13.48% to 25.55% in 2007-08
6. Pupil Teacher Ratio	Is 46:1 at primary and 35:1 at upper primary level. 10.22 lakh teachers were recruited by December 2009
7. Enrolment of children with special needs	29.57 lakh children identified and 24.77 lakh children enrolled in school by 2009-10
8. Number of schools	7,89,950 primary and 3,20,354 upper primary
9. National programme of Mid-Day Meals	11.19 crore children covered at primary and upper primary level

Source: Annual Report, MHRD, 2009-10

Challenges

While the growing globalization and the demand for quality education in India, it has been observed that both Central and State Government have initiated the process of making education available to the persons in the society. The landmark legislation giving every child the fundamental right to face and compulsory elementary education is

The challenge of quality in Indian education has many dimensions for eg.

- ❑ Providing adequate physical facilities and infrastructure.
- ❑ Making available adequate teacher of requisite quality
- ❑ Effectiveness of teaching learning processes.

Besides the need to improve quality of our education institute in general, it is also imperative

Table 4: Progress overview during 2009-10

Indicators	Higher and professional education level achievements
Enrolment in universities and colleges	136.42 lakhs of which 16.69 lakhs (12.24%) in university deptts and 119.73 lakhs (87.76%) in affiliated colleges.
Enrolment in distance learning	30 lakhs
Enrolment of women	65.49 lakhs
Intake in technical education	14.10 lakhs in degree and 5.09 lakhs in diploma
Institutions in Technical education	7272 Degree level institutions and 2324 diploma level
Number of universities	504
Number of colleges	25,951
Faculty	5.89 lakhs
Academic staff colleges	66

Source: Annual Report, MHRD, 2009-10

just one step towards setting right what is wrong with the sector. The emphasis on education in the eleventh plan, the setting up of knowledge commission, and Yash pal committee to advise on revamping and rejuvenating higher education have all helped to discuss the more reality to education that need to be advanced urgently.

that an increasing number of them to attain world class standards and are internationally recognized for them, quality and skill development is also a major area that needs attention.

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LEISURE EDUCATION FOR HOLISTIC RURAL DEVELOPMENT

*D. K. Pandey
Ng. Narahari Singh*

when we speak of education for leisure, we have in mind the process of developing all persons in appreciations, interests, skills, and opportunities that will enable them to use their leisure in personally rewarding ways

The current decade has witnessed rapid technological changes and advancements through science and technology which has benefited mankind immensely. Indian science and technology has attained great strides by providing the country with defense, food and economic security and enabling it to hold its head high. But these technological advancements have also drawn an unfavorable impact on society. In spite of these gains there are deep concerns in terms of national value system. Exploding widespread social evils, ignorance of law and specific issues

are threatening our social fabric, whereas a congested and wounded eco-system are posing new challenges. Of course, science and technology produces a variety of materialistic things but it is not capable of producing human beings who have humanity, tolerance, great advent of ideas and search for truth. Rather they give rise to aversion, dehumanization and thrusting society into nuclear war. It is true that without science, we can't imagine life. In such an environment social science can act as a catalyst in including a strong base for societal values. What are these values and how



social science can help in implanting the same is the subject matter of the present paper.

“Leisure is an activity to which the individuals may freely devote himself outside the needs and obligations of his occupation, his family and society, for his recreation, diversion and personal development” (Dumazedier, 1960) and when we speak of education for leisure, we have in mind the process of developing all persons in appreciations, interests, skills, and opportunities that will enable them to use their leisure in personally rewarding ways”

Social and Individual Function of Leisure

Leisure has functions in the life of an individual, its experience by individuals and groups, as well as has functions for the society in which they live. We may consider first, how leisure serves society. It performs this in three main ways:

- It helps people to learn how to play their role in society,
- It helps them to achieve societal or collective aims, and
- It helps the society to keep together (Gross, 1961).

It is clear that if leisure is beneficial to the citizens of a community – it benefits society in general.

The advancement in science and technology has made the leisure a highly organised and commercial business and also an opportunity of

mass entertainment but these definitions and concept are ideological, which may be suited for industrial sectors. The rural population utilizes leisure time mostly in unproductive activities and unconstructive efforts, this may be substantiated with the findings of the study conducted by Pandey (2001); that the farmers have considerable amount of leisure hours which are not utilized at all, for constructive activities, as agricultural profession is of timely/seasonal activities after which the farmer is free and waits for the next agricultural operation. These leisure hours were utilized mostly for non-productive and personal purposes. Once again, it was found that this leisure time especially available among young generation has been

creating social problems in the area and mass-migration. Therefore, there is a need to restructure the utilization of available leisure time of the farmers for productive purposes in view of the technological development and economic opportunities. If the village youth, and even adults, are not provided with a healthy programme of recreation and utilization of their leisure period, they can

indulge in vices like drinking, gambling, etc., and there will be more quarrels, litigations, wastage of money leading to indebtedness. So there is need for a programme for the utilization of the leisure period and provision for recreational facilities.

Programmes for villagers

1. Because rural people work in the open fields and exert themselves a good deal, therefore, games requiring heavy exertion may not be suitable for them.

The advancement in science and technology has made the leisure a highly organised and commercial business and also an opportunity of mass entertainment but these definitions and concept are ideological, which may be suited for industrial sectors. The rural population utilizes leisure time mostly in unproductive activities and unconstructive efforts

2. Rural people are mostly illiterates/neo-literates.
3. Programmes have to be of the seasonal type.
4. Villagers are generally poor and may not be able to afford costly games.
5. Recreational programmes should be of the educative type combined with already existent materials/inputs.

As rural people need to be introduced to a variety of leisure activities, it is important to design custom-made programmes to address the special needs of the communities. Leisure programmes thus needs to facilitate holistic development in terms of skills, values and knowledge. As leisure is seen as an opportunity to alleviate poverty and contribute to the improvement of quality of life in these communities, a different approach to leisure programmes are required. The following components of a general leisure programme were identified, but the degree of importance of components will vary according to different programmes.

SKILLS include aspects of coordination, balance, locomotion, handling objects, handling the body and body awareness.

KNOWLEDGE include aspects of health, safety, express communication, movement patterns and skills, concepts, rules and strategies and mechanical principles.

VALUES include aspects of self-esteem, positive attitude, cultural awareness, interaction and social skills, environment, independent behaviour and moral behaviour (NSC, 2000).

One-third of India's population is living in rural

areas and their main profession is agriculture and allied activities. Leisure education can contribute to the improvement of the quality of life of rural communities in a number of ways.

- ❖ The community feels liberty, liability and obligation, and they will take responsibility to ensure sustainability.
- ❖ Reduced vandalism and crime.
- ❖ Specific needs of the community were met.
- ❖ Jobs were created.
- ❖ A sense of belongingness was created in the community.
- ❖ Environmental awareness was created.

From the above it is evident that leisure education contributes to the improvement of quality of life of communities. Sustainability needs to evolve through effective planning with clear guidelines on the breadth and depth of development. This goal can be achieved by educating and training people involved and by the actions of governments (Eccles and Costa, 1996).

Conclusion

The growth of any nation depends on the holistic development of its various sectors in society. "Education" is the key instrument in this process. The higher learning centers, particularly the universities are being confronted with new issues, challenges, threats and opportunities.

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THE RIGHT TO EDUCATION NOW A FUNDAMENTAL RIGHT

Ashok Handoo

If Gopal Krishan Gokhle, one of the greatest sons of India, would have been alive today, he would have been the happiest person to see his dream of 'right to education' for children of the country come true. It was he who, a hundred years ago, urged the Imperial Legislative Assembly confer such a right on Indian children. That goal has been realized a century later.

The Government has finally come over all the odds and given effect to the Right to Education Act (REA) from 1st April this year. The right to education is now a fundamental right for all children in the age group of 6 to 14 years. In simple words, it means that the Government will be responsible for providing education to every child up to the eighth standard, free of cost, irrespective of class and gender. It has thus paved the way for building a strong, literate and empowered youth of this country.

The Act envisages providing quality and compulsory education to all children and equip them with knowledge, skills and values to make them enlightened citizens of India. Considering that today there are about a crore of children across the country out of schools, this indeed is a huge task. The realization of this goal, therefore, calls for a united effort by all the stakeholders- the parents, the teachers, the schools, the NGO's, the society at large, the state governments and the central government. As the Prime Minister Dr. Manmohan Singh put it in his address to the Nation, all have to work in unison and meet the challenge as a national mission.

Dr. Singh put across his point to the countrymen in his own inimitable style by telling them that it was only because of education that he is what he is today. He referred to how he studied in the dim light of a kerosene lamp, walked long distances to reach his school in Wah, now in Pakistan and suffered considerable hardships to get elementary education. The message, urging the deprived class to get education, could not have been put across in a better way.

The Act provides for neighbourhood schools within reach, with no school refusing admission to any child. It also provides for adequate number of qualified teachers to maintain a ratio of one teacher for every 30 students. The schools have to train all its teachers within 5 years. They have also to ensure proper infrastructure, which includes a playground, library, adequate number of classrooms, toilets, barrier free access for physically challenged children and drinking water facilities within three years. 75 percent members of the school management committees will comprise parents of the students who will monitor the functioning of the schools and utilization of grants. The school management Committees or the local authorities will identify the out of school children and admit them to standards appropriate to their age, after giving them proper training. To promote inclusive growth even private schools have to reserve 25 percent of seats in the lowest class for the poor and marginalized sections of the society, beginning next year.

The goals are indeed laudable. But to realize them is a huge challenge. The sheer size of the

out of school children – about ten million- is the biggest one. Shortage of trained teachers, lack of infrastructure in schools, requirement of additional schools, and finances are the other big challenges.

The current situation presents a dismal picture. 46 % schools do not have toilets for girls, which has been an important reason for parents not sending children to the schools. There are over 12.6 lakh vacancies of teachers across the country. 7.72 lakh untrained teachers constitute 40 % of the total number of teachers in 1.29 million recognized elementary schools. Over 53% schools have the student teacher ratio of well above 1:30, prescribed under the Act.

Shortage of trained teachers will be one of the major challenges in implementing the Act. A plan has thus been drawn to recruit as many as 5 lakh teachers in the next six months, to fill up the vacancies.

As far as the finances are concerned the Act provides for sharing it with the states, with centre contributing 55 percent of the total expenditure.

It has been estimated that the implementation of the Act will require Rs. 1.71 lakh crore in the next five years. In the current year there will be a requirement of 34 lakh crore. Out of this, the central budget has provided for Rs.15,000 crore. There is also an unspent amount of about Rs. 10,000 crore with the states, provided earlier by the centre for educational programmes. The Finance Commission has allocated Rs. 25,000

crore to the states for implementing the Act. Despite this, states like Bihar, Uttar Pradesh and Orissa have asked for additional funds. The Prime Minister has made it clear that finances will not be allowed to come in the way of implementing the Act. What is needed is the sincerity of approach by all the stakeholders to make the project a success. There will be a Child Rights Commission to look into the violations of the Law.

Many other challenges also stare us in the face. Parents in the low income group, send their children to work, for adding to the family income. Issues like early marriages and migration of people for sustenance also need to be addressed to successfully implement the Act.

India has thus embarked upon a massive programme to lay foundations of a strong country with a statutory support. It has joined the small group of countries which have such a statutory provision. It is indeed a path breaking step towards universalisation of education. The Prime Minister made it clear that dalits, minorities and the girl students will be the focus of the effort to provide education to all.

By saying that he wanted “every Indian to dream about a bright future and live this dream,” Dr. Singh emphasized his government’s commitment to make every Indian literate. It is for us now to see this goal through. That education is in the concurrent list underlines the need for better cooperation at all levels. (PIB Features)

[The author is a Freelance Writer]

There are over 12.6 lakh vacancies of teachers across the country. 7.72 lakh untrained teachers constitute 40 % of the total number of teachers in 1.29 million recognized elementary schools.

ALLOW THEM TO BE TAUGHT BY NATURE ALSO

Rajshekhar Pant

The other day he came to me running immediately after the morning assembly and blurted looking straight into my eyes,

“Sir..Sir yester-evening I saw two *minivets* in the slope close to the tuck-shop.... You know Sir *minivets* don't like huge trees for nesting and that slope is so full of brush and weed.....Don't you think Sir it is quite surprising to sight *minivets* at this height.”

His eyes were still riveted on my face. Undoubtedly he expected me to react in an equally excited manner. Wearing a 'say cheese' look on my face I dilated my eyes and said, “Wow! You are lucky, keep a watch on them from distance. If they nest here by the coming autumn we shall have plenty of them here.”

With a beaming face he doubled up to his class reassuring me,

“Don't worry Sir, no one ever steps on that slope.....they are safe.”

It reminded me of our maiden interaction-

It was the opening of the new session and he had his birthday. With a pack of 'Perks' he came to me in the quadrangle during the recess. While wishing him many happy returns of the day I noticed that he was trying to crush a lady-bird that sat on his toe. Desisting deliberately from some spontaneous articulation to deter him from doing so, I picked up the insect softly. Lady birds have a tendency to creep on your upright palm till they spot the tip of your finger. They stay there for a brief spell and



then fly away. Showing him the colours on that tiny thing creeping on my palm I said,

“Look! how nice a T Shirt with this amber colour on the collars and waist-line and this ocher on the rest would look like.”

Putting my hand closer to his fingers holding the chocolate box I allowed the insect pass on to his thumb. He shuddered for a while and then kept on looking at it till it flew away. That day in the third period when I went to class IX, a class of freshers assigned to me for the first time, I saw him occupying a seat in the front row. A brief interaction with the kids revealed it to me that the majority of them were from towns and cities in plains. Staying atop a verdant hillock- the valley view wherefrom is often eclipsed by the speeding flakes of the famous brown-fog of the Central Himalayan region infusing a somewhat eerie feeling of getting marooned in an alien Shangri-La –was more instrumental in dampening their enthusiasm than arousing a sense of childlike wonder in them. Always an articulate and outgoing kid he, while introducing himself, did not mince his words in criticizing blatantly the frightening darkness,

“especially when the raindrops platter on rooftops and harrowing wind rustles through the deodar trees.”

While talking to him I suddenly noticed a chick of *laughing thrush* knocking the window-panes with his yellow beak –a popular pastime with this friendly species when the lights of the room are on and the outside is all enveloped in fog. Interrupting him I asked the class quite abruptly, whether they knew anything about that bird. No one seemed to be aware of it and I told them about it being the last in the avian fraternity to go to bed and first to announce the crack of the dawn. They were quite excited to know that it has the longest and one of the sweetest call

among all the Himalayan birds and it can imitate quite a few of its compatriots.

Triggered with the chance arrival of a *thrush* our friendly chit-chats in the days to come would often meander to so many other interesting themes. I would tell them of the friendly *river-chats*, I saw just once in my life at the origin of a glacial stream in the alpine heights of the Nandadevi Biosphere Reserve. Passages lifted from the stories of Jim Corbett for comprehension exercises would charm them and exciting tales of the chance discovery of Nainital by a liquor-baron traversing over seven hundred miles across the Himalayan region way back in 1840 would often be instrumental in running their imagination wild while attempting a short composition. It indeed was nothing short of a pleasure seeing them identifying a *foxglove* from a *larkspur*; talking of blotches and variegations in the newly arrived pots of *zinnia* in the school or writing to their parents about the blooming of the *Rhododendrons* or *Azaleas* when they were back after the winter vacations. One could even see that their stationery was tucked rather more properly inside their bags or desks and the jostling crowd in the elongated gallery with the row of classrooms on either side, immediately after a period was over, was thinning gradually. The furniture in the classroom, with its twin windows always open, was invariably to have a perfect layout and one day when I tore a page from the copy of a boy to substitute the missing duster he did not miss to inform me in private that at least two kg of wood is consumed in making the centre spread of a copy.

‘A spirit from the vernal wood’ was teaching them ‘more of men’ and the world than I with all my efforts put together could ever do.

(The author is associated with one of the schools in Nainital, e-mail : pant.rajshekhargmail.com)

GROWTH OF EDUCATION IN RURAL INDIA: A PRE AND POST INDEPENDENCE NARRATION

Dr. Krishan K. Yadav

One of the most recent programmes viz. Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan (SSA), launched in 2001 is an extensive initiative of the Government of India. Its comprehensive module presents detailed guidelines, planning methodology, data on elementary education created under District Information System for Education (DISE), list of districts covered, addresses of state implementation societies and outcome of the research studies conducted on school attendance,

teachers absenteeism, out-of-school children, mid-day meal and many other aspects of elementary education in India.

Post-independence India, a country of villages had very little to say as for the state of education and literacy. In a country that had more rural population than any other country in the world, the education was largely confined to metropolitan centres and larger cities. Even the smaller towns and other urban settlements were seriously lacking adequate education facilities, so at that time, it looked obvious that villages were to be attended at last given the limited resources of nascent independent Indian State.

Pre-Independence Scenario

In 1881 there were 82916 schools in entire country that would teach 82916 students in all. A separate department for education was formed for the first time during 1910 by the British Government.

Growth of Literacy in India	
Year	Literacy Rate
1881	3.2%
1931	7.2%
1947	12.2%
1951	18.3%
1961	28.3%
1971	34.5%
1981	43.6%
1991	52.2%
2001	65.4%



As for adult education, up to 1920s, the sphere was confined to few night schools in metropolitan cities while villages were totally unattended. Some Indian rulers of princely States of Baroda, Mysore and Travancore however extended support to night schools through financial support, setting up of libraries in rural areas and other sort of patronage in the 19th century. Education of rural masses was part of the independence agenda of the national leaders. In 1937, when the Congress Government came into power in some Provinces, education and literacy got included among the responsibilities of the government. A series of mass literacy campaigns were initiated during 1937 to 1939, but owing to the ouster of the Congress Government, all these efforts were petered out. A committee appointed in 1939 suggested provision of facilities of adult literacy and free and compulsory primary education for all, as a complementary activity. This committee also advocated for supplementation of official efforts by the volunteer organizations interested in social amelioration. However, the Sargent Committee in 1944 asserted that the State must accept the responsibility and solve the problem within the next 25 years. In 1946-47, the number of schools had increased to 134866, while the total enrolment stood at 10525943 students

Post-independence Scenario

In 1947, India achieved independence and inherited a system of education which was characterized by large scale inter and intra regional imbalances. The system educated a selected few, leaving a large gap between educated and illiterate. The country's literacy rate was a mere 14 percent and only 8 percent of females were literate. What was wide-spread was social inequality, gender disparity, and rigid social stratification. On achievement of independence, a full-fledged Ministry of Education was established on 29th August 1947 merely fourteen days after achieving independence. This showed the need, commitment, and determination of the country towards extension and growth of education in India, the efforts have strengthened many fold since then. Eradication of illiteracy was

Literate population as a crucial element for nation building is a universally recognized fact. Compulsory education for all in the age-group of 6 to 14 years was given due consideration in constitution and in successive Five Year Plans. Various illiteracy eradication programmes have been adopted since independence.

1. Social Education (1951-56)
2. Gram Siksha Mohim (1959)
3. Education Commission (1964-66)
4. Farmers' Functional Literacy Project (1967-68)
5. Non-Formal Education Programme (Fifth Plan)
6. Polyvalent Adult Education Centres (1977)
7. Functional Literacy for Adult Women (1975-76)
8. National Adult Education Programme (1975-76)
9. Rural Functional literacy Project (1978)
10. State Adult Education Programme (2005)

one of the major national concerns at the time of independence. Most villagers were illiterate and most villages had no access to education centres. During the First Plan Period, the programme of social education and literacy was introduced as part of the Community Development Programme in 1952. Implementation machinery comprising of Social Educational organizations both at grass-root and project level was created. This was aided by a comprehensive training support through the establishment of Social Education Organizers' Training Centres. Rural establishments such as community centres, rural libraries, janta colleges, youth clubs, mahila mandals and folk schools were encouraged. Folk schools on Danish High pattern with different names in different regions; as such vidyapeeths in Karnataka, Jagriti Vihars in Bihar provided a variety of skill-oriented education programmes for the rural youth. Government of India established a Council for Rural Higher Education for promoting the graduate level manpower through rural institutes.

A Standing Committee on education was established and a National Fundamental Education Centre was started in 1956 to boost the rural education and hence the rural development programmes. Various States at their level also took individualized efforts in this direction also. Of such

many efforts, the *Gram Shiksha Mohim* initiated in 1959 in Satara District of Maharashtra State was one of the few successful mass campaigns. Under this scheme, literacy was to be promoted with the help of primary school teachers and high school students. Targeted villages were taken in a pre-planned sequential manner and the goal was largely achieved within the targeted 3 to 6 months' time period. The scheme, despite bringing good results suffered setback due to inadequate follow-up and financial constraints.

However, despite the efforts were made, the rural literacy did not take much headway. The literacy increased from 14 percent in 1947 to 18.4 percent in 1951 and further to 24 percent in 1961. The war period diverted some attention of the Government to the border front but the Kothari Commission in 1964 took up the threads again and emphasized the need for eradication of illiteracy. Kothari Committee suggested various measures with the hope that adoption of these could help the literacy rate rise to 60 percent by 1971 and 80 percent by 1981. The Education Committee ruled in favour of functional literacy for it to be worthwhile. In this direction the inter-ministerial project of "Farmers' Training and Functional Literacy" launched in 1967 was

aimed at popularizing the High Yielding varieties (HYVs) of seeds through adult education. Under the programme approximately 8600 classes for about 260000 farmers were conducted in 144 districts till 1977-78. Despite that many were benefited, those like village artisans and landless labourers remained unattended. In 1974 the Central Advisory Board of Education recommended for non-formal education programmes and need for functional dimension. In that regard the scheme of Functional Literacy for Adult Women (FLAW) started in 1975-76. Under FLAW illiterate adult women were helped to acquire functional skills alongside normal literacy, awareness about health, hygiene, child care etc. In 1986, the National Policy on Education gave an unqualified priority to universalization of education system, non-formal education in educationally backward States. The major thrust of the policy was literacy promotion among women, scheduled castes and scheduled tribes particularly in the rural areas.

Despite all such efforts the results were not satisfactory. Eradication of illiteracy from one of the world's most populated country is not as easy. The need was for a more comprehensive and specifically targeted approach. Realizing this National Literacy Mission came into being and was implemented on May 5, 1988 to impart a new sense of urgency and seriousness to mass education. Under NLM, an area specific, time bound, volunteer based campaign approach was adopted for the first time. The responsibility of running the developmental programmes and future course has been put on the shoulders of the community itself, and the results have been fruitful. As per the Census of India 2001, the literacy rate had increased to 65.38 percent despite the fact that the population during the last five decade had grown exponentially at 8 percent per annum. The remarkable performance under NLM programmes received international recognition when it was awarded the UNESCO's NOMA Literacy Prize for the year 1999. The mission then sought to achieve the target of 75 percent literacy by 2005. The actual figures however shall be available only after 2011 Census.

Literacy Scenario as per 2001 Census

Literacy rate: 65.38% (increase of 13.17%)

Male literacy: 75.85% (increase of 11.72%)

Female literacy: 54.16% (increase of 14.87%)

Male literacy is over 60% in all States

Highest increase: Rajasthan (61.3% from 38.55% in 1991)

Male-female literacy gap: 21.7% (24.84% in 1991)

Smallest gap: Mizoram 4.56%, Kerala 7.45%

Decline in absolute number of illiterates in the decade (first time since independence)

No. of illiterates down by 31.96 million

Literate persons: 562.01 million (addition of 203.61 million)

Literate persons

Rural areas: 59.21% (71.18% males, 46.58% females)

Urban areas: 80.06% (88.42% males, 72.99% females)

Rural Development under Ministerial Control

Initially, the issues relating to rural development were linked with those of agricultural development. On 31st March 1952, Community Projects Administration was set up under the Planning Commission. The Community Development Programme inaugurated on 2nd October 1952 is still considered as a landmark in the history of rural development. The Programme underwent many changes and was handled by many ministries at different times. Department of Rural Development as a part of Ministry of Food and Agriculture came into being in October 1974. In August 1979, the Department was given the status of a ministry in form of Ministry of Rural Reconstruction that was renamed as Ministry of Rural Development on 23rd January 1982. The ministry was again converted into a department under the Ministry of Agriculture in September 1985. The department was again upgraded as Ministry of Rural Development in July 1991. Department of Wasteland Development was created in July 1992 under this ministry. The ministry was once again renamed as the Ministry of Rural Areas and Employment in March 1991 and three departments viz. Department of Rural Employment and Poverty Alleviation, Department of Rural Development, and Department of Wasteland Development were put under it. In August 1999, the Ministry was again renamed as Ministry of Rural Development. The ministry has been working as the apex body in implementing and supervising programmes for poverty alleviation, education, employment generation, infrastructure development, social security and allied issues. Three departments viz. Department of Rural Development, Department of Land Resources, and Department of Drinking Water Supply work under the ministry.

Recent Developments in Rural Education

Presently several new initiatives have been taken to bring the children to schools. Of such Several programmes intended to provide rural children access to education include stipends, free uniform and text books, mid-day meals and special attention to girl child education. These initiatives have helped to the level of education in schools located in remote and backward villages. All these initiatives have encouraged parents to send their children to school. The Government, on its part,

recently constituted a Rural Education Cell and a Department of Educational Surveys and Data Processing to analyse the current scenario in rural education, identify problems and to come up with recommendation to improve the situation overall. Schemes like the Kasturba Gandhi Balika Vidyalaya (KGBVs) for girls belonging to rural and disadvantaged groups have been welcomed wholeheartedly as it aims to realise the constitutional commitment of providing free and compulsory education to all children in the age group of six to 14 years. For meritorious students belonging to rural areas, opening of *Jawahar Navodaya Vidyalayas* have yielded very good results.

Besides these many ground efforts, there have been attempts to keep the rural children up to date with the latest technical know-how. Provision of internet based education and satellite transmission have been provided through electronic media. One of the most recent programmes viz. *Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan (SSA)*, launched in 2001 is an extensive initiatives of the Government of India. Its comprehensive module presents detailed guidelines, planning methodology, data on elementary education created under District Information System for Education (DISE), list of districts covered, addresses of state implementation societies and outcome of the research studies conducted on school attendance, teachers absenteeism, out-of-school children, mid-day meal and many other aspects of elementary education in India.

The progress that the country has made during the last sixty years has been remarkable. The country of villages is viewed entirely differently then what it was sixty years ago, by the outside world. A lot however, it still pending to be done, and with such concerted efforts that have been taken in recent past, the outcome should be fruitful. However, much will depend upon the approach of which sincerity and dedication at all levels are essential elements.

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MAINSTREAMING STAKEHOLDER PARTICIPATION FOR INCLUSIVE GROWTH AND DEVELOPMENT OF INDIAN CORPORATE SECTOR

R. Bandyopadhyay

With the economic reforms that were initiated during the 80s and were further given a new direction in the current decade, the Indian corporate sector has been growing at a rapid pace and has become increasingly integrated with the global economy. While the last decade of the previous millennium had witnessed large scale investments by foreign companies in India, the current decade has witnessed the Indian companies invest substantially in other countries. This decade also witnessed a sustained high growth and the corporate sector becoming the main driver of the growth of Indian economy.

The current decade has also seen an increasingly sharp focus on the national and global challenges related to underdevelopment, disparities, sustainability and non-inclusion. Therefore, while on one hand, the corporate sector expects a regulatory and service delivery framework which helps it to sustain its growth, the stakeholders are increasingly demanding that the functioning of the corporate sector should become more inclusive and responsible. In this context, the Ministry of Corporate Affairs has brought a new paradigm in its functioning by mainstreaming stakeholder participation in all the initiatives undertaken by it.



At the first level, the Ministry has adopted two new mottos to guide its functioning so that the concerns and expectations of the corporate sector as well as the stakeholders can be duly taken into account while designing its initiatives. These mottos are “Corporate Growth through Enlightened Regulations” and “Corporate Sector and Inclusive Growth”. In this direction, the Ministry formulated and released the Voluntary Guidelines on Corporate Governance and Corporate Social Responsibility in December 2009. These guidelines were prepared after wide consultations with the stakeholders. While the Voluntary Guidelines on Corporate Governance raise the bar with respect to the internal governance of the company, the Voluntary Guidelines on Corporate Social Responsibility encourage the companies to address various concerns related to the environmental and social impacts of their functioning and contribute to the well being of the society. These voluntary guidelines are issued on the “comply or explain” principle. The Ministry will also be revising these guidelines on the basis of the experience with respect to their uptake and adoption by the corporate sector.

In order to mainstream the role of corporate sector in the overall social and economic development of the country, the Ministry organized the India Corporate Week was organized in December 2009 with the theme “Corporate Sector and Inclusive Growth”. 124 programmes were organized throughout the country during this week to showcase the above theme in partnership with the trade and industry chambers, Professional Institutes and other organizations. During these programmes the stakeholders, including common people, were exposed to the initiatives of the Ministry, the role of corporate sector and the contribution made by it for improving the economic and social development of the people. With these programmes, the Ministry was able to bring together the regulatory authorities, corporate sector, professionals and a number of other stakeholders on a single platform so that they can collaborate and work together on common issues.

While bringing the stakeholders together, it was felt that it is important to integrate the common man with the corporate economy through informed investments. The participation of Indian people in the corporate economy through various investment instruments has been low as compared to some of the developed countries. While on one hand, the corporate sector needs more investments to grow, on the other hand, substantial household savings are available with the Indian people which do not find a channel of getting invested into the corporate economy. In order to bridge this gap, the Ministry has up-scaled its investor awareness programmes by bringing about a ten-fold increase in the number of programmes from 300 in the previous year to 3000 in the current year.

The Ministry has also organized the India Investor Week in July 2010 in partnership with a large number of organizations to bring a national focus on this important area of nation building. The theme of the India Investor Week has been chosen as “Informed Investor – An Asset to the Corporate India”. These partner organizations include Confederation of Indian Industry; FICCI; ASSOCHAM; All India Management Association (AIMA); The Federation of Andhra Pradesh Chamber of Commerce and Industry; The Southern India Chamber of Commerce and Industry; Indian Merchant Chamber; PHD Chamber; All India Association of Industries(AIAI); Bombay Stock Exchange; Institute of Chartered Accountants of India; Institute of Company Secretaries of India; Institute of Cost and Works Accountants of India; MCX Stock Exchange; National Stock Exchange; Reserve Bank of India; Securities Exchange Board of India and UTI Mutual Fund.

Through these initiatives the Ministry has transformed its functioning to make stakeholder engagement as the mainstay of its functioning. This engagement is also bringing a new awareness in the corporate sector on their role in the larger content of social and economic development of the country. (PIB Features)

[The author is Secretary, Ministry of Corporate Affairs]

PROBLEMS OF TRIBAL EDUCATION IN INDIA: *A MICROSCOPIC ANALYSIS*

Dr. Sanjay Kumar Pradhan

The total literacy rate of the tribals in India is 47.1 percent whereas it is 64.8 percent at the national level. And on the basis of male-female percentage, the male accounts 59.2 percent (75.3 national) and female 34.8percent (53.7 national)

For the development of a society there is need for equitable and balanced progress of all the sections of human communities and for this perspective, it is imperative to bring the weaker, deprived and discriminated sections such as Scheduled Tribes (STs) in India to the forefront of educational revolution and mainstream of national development. Education imparts knowledge, and knowledge of self identity and human environment will infuse a sense of confidence, courage and ability among

the weaker sections of the society to know and overcome their problems associated with exploitation and deprivation, and avail socio-economic and political opportunities extended to them. Although there is a significant increase in the literacy of population of all categories in India, the tribals are far behind from the national increase. Despite special initiatives on tribal education by the government, since independence, the achievement is not as per expectations and the problem of tribal education



is still a matter of concern. Tribal education, being a distinct discipline with different socio-cultural fabrics and hardships, needs to be analyzed to focus on the problems associated with it.

Profile of Tribal Literacy in India

Since independence there is an increase in the tribal literacy but not as per the national average. The total literacy rate of the tribals in India is 47.1 percent whereas it is 64.8 percent at the national level. And on the basis of male-female percentage, the male accounts 59.2 percent (75.3 national) and female 34.8 percent (53.7 national). There is wide variation of tribal education at the State or Union Territory level. For example Mizoram tops with 89.3 percent, followed by Lakshadweep (86.1), Manipur (65.9), Nagaland (65.9), Andaman & Nicobar (65.8) and Himachal Pradesh (65.5). The poor performing states in India are: Bihar (28.2), Uttar Pradesh (35.1) and Orissa (37.4). The female literacy of the STs in India is 34.8 percent but yet much below the national level (41.9). States with low general and tribal literacy are also states with higher gender disparity. Accordingly, the ST female literacy rate in India varies across states and Union territories such as from 15.5 percent in Bihar to 86.9 percent in Mizoram. Except Mizoram, Lakshadweep, Nagaland, Sikkim, Andaman & Nicobar, Manipur, Meghalaya and Kerala, all other states and Union Territories have women literacy below the national level of 41.9 percent. (*Census of India 2001*).

Table 1: Tribal Literacy in India

Year	All categories			Scheduled Tribes		
	Boys	Girls	Total	Boys	Girls	Total
1961	39.44	12.95	24.04	13.83	3.16	8.53
1991	64.13	39.29	52.21	40.65	18.19	29.6
2001	75.3	53.7	64.8	59.2	34.8	47.1

Source: *Census 2001, and Working Group Report on Education for Disadvantaged Sections-SCs and STs, Minorities, Women, Handicapped and other Disadvantaged Sections for the formulation of Tenth Five Year Plan (2002-07)*, Ministry of Human Resources Development, Department of Secondary and Higher Education, 2001

Problems

Poor economic conditions accompanied by subsistence economy is a great hindrance to successful education of the tribal children. Since their economic condition is poor and the very survival being at stake, the importance of education touches only the periphery of the tribal life. Almost all the tribes-whether food gatherers, hunters, fishermen, shifting cultivators, or settled agriculturalists lack adequate food to maintain the family for the whole year. In this situation, they find it difficult to afford their children to go school; rather, they see children as an economic asset in the family and contributes to the family income by working along with the parents and with others (Hasnain 2004: 349). Boys work in the field with their parents and girls give help to their mothers at the housework. If the child is taken away from his normal economic work to attend school, the family deprives of the little income, which he brings. As a consequence, the parents have to feed the child out of their earning and resulted economic marginalisation of the household. In these circumstances, education, the basis necessity of life, is a matter of luxury for the tribal family. Further, the system of education and the economic benefit accrued from it is of 15-20 years of education from schools and colleges, where the parents have neither their patience or resource nor foresight to wait for such a long-term return.

Apathy of Parents

Both the tribal and non-tribal teachers find it very difficult to convince the tribal to send their children to school to adopt new ideas as they are more concerned with the present than the future and their concept of time is circular rather than longitudinal (Sujatha 1994). A large section of tribal parents do not send their children to school to utilise the free education opportunities offered to them. It is practical, utilitarian and vocational

aspect of education accompanied by the notion of immediate economic return appeals to the parents more than the academic discourse (*Shah* 2005: 114-133). In addition, there are many factors responsible for apathy of the parents towards education.

- Psychological and social factors like illiteracy of the parents and their indifference to education, lack of encouragement by the community, motivation and “insecurity” of future for being educated.
- Low social interaction between students and teachers, and between teachers and parents.
- Suspicion over the sincerity of the non-tribal teachers and shortage of tribal teachers.
- The scattered population with low density and location of schools at a long distance, in consequence, has resulted in the indifferences of the parents to send their children to walk a long to reach the school
- Parental hesitation to send the girls to co-educational institutions. (Mishra 1996 163-65 and Pradhan 2004: 150-153)

Apathy of children towards Formal Education

In many states tribal education is taught through the same book, which forms the curriculum of the non-tribal children. A tribal child who lives in an isolated and far flunged place, untouched by civilisation, can hardly get interest in any information about Indian society, history, polity, geography, economy and technological development of his country. So the contents of the teaching syllabus, instead of pleasing the learners, generate indifferences within the tribal students. All these are necessary part of any curriculum but the students are far away from these real

perceptions and they do not understand what they are taught. For them these information and knowledge constitutes alien and imposed portions of their thought, which have nothing to do with tribal history and tribal surroundings.

Superstitions and Prejudice

Superstition, blind beliefs and prejudices play negative role in imparting education in the tribal areas and tribal schools. Expect tribal communities in north-eastern region, there is widespread feeling in the tribal community that education makes their children defiant and insolent and alienates from the rest of their society. Since some of their educated boys felt alienated and cut off their links with their families and villages after getting education and employment, a large section of tribal groups oppose the spread of education. This is further complicated when religious groups teach the students by focusing on the glory of their religion and religious values. This religiosity, in consequence, often encourages educated pupils to abrogate their ancestral village and their socio-cultural interaction with the kins as it found among Ziminagas in North East (*Panda* 1988: 79-83). Further, some of the superstitions and myth prevent parents to educate their children. Some tribal groups believe that their god shall be angry if they send their children to schools run by ‘outsiders’. Here outsiders include formal curriculum for education, non-tribal teachers and teachers outside their locality.

Problem of suitable Teacher

The competency and interest of the teachers is of prime importance in generating interest of the students towards education. The non-tribal teachers treat themselves ‘civilized’ and tribals as ‘uncivilized’ and ‘savage’. So there is little appreciation of the tribal values and way of life. There is no good relationship between children

and the teachers. Sometimes the teachers for their personal work use the tribal students. For a non-tribal teacher, the cultural gap plays a vital role due to the long hanging dominant ideology, and he treats tribal students differently. Even a tribal elite, often a proactive teacher, has a special power in the village setting for which tribals are afraid of him. The ego and selfish motive of such tribal teachers have been discouraging the tribal to send their children to the educational institutions (Panda 1988: 79-83). Moreover, although there are views that the tribal teachers are best suited to non-tribal teachers, instances shows that the tribal teachers of one community looks students and parents of another community hesitantly. Some of the tribal groups, better educated and progressive in thinking have some prejudices against backward tribals e.g. the Valmik tribe in East Godavari district of Andhra Pradesh occupies lower ritual status than Kondareddi tribes, but are mostly educated. If a teacher from Valmik tribe teaches Kondaredies, the later will not prefer to give the former a house for shelter, and does not treat them equally. On the same way, Valmiki teachers feel that the Kondareddis are lazy and superstitious. (Sujatha 1994)

Effective functioning of the tribal education much depends on teachers and their willingness to teach and positive attitude to live in tribal areas-close to tribal schools. However, in practice the teachers are reluctant to reside in such areas, rather they stay in nearby towns. Only in those cases teachers would like to stay if the area is inaccessible. In maximum cases teachers in the tribal areas see the appointment as 'stop-gap' arrangement. So there comes the problem of insincerity and non-

commitment of interaction of the teachers with the guardians and discussion with them over the education of their children.

Problem of Language

Language provides social, psychological and emotional expression of an individual in a society. But in the absence of knowledge on tribal dialect both students and teachers face the problem of communication and teaching-learning. It is found that tribal students are often ridiculed, humiliated and reprimanded for speaking in their own language, and are punished for failing to talk in their standard language or continuously lapsing back in the mother tongue (Nambissan 1994: 2752). It is the regional and national language that reduces tribals to minorities in their own home. Educating children through the regional and national language is not wrong but the students should be familiar with her own language first to develop enthusiasm in education which in turn bring linguistic and social skills that prepare them for formal education in future.

Although there is the need for introduction of tribal dialect in the curriculum and teaching-learning process yet there is paucity of literature and text books in tribal dialects.

Although there is the need of introduction of tribal dialect in the curriculum and teaching-learning process yet there is the paucity of literature and text books in tribal dialects. Developing script and vocabulary and preparing teaching and learning materials for tribal children is a complex and problematic task because of a large number of spoken languages involved and their rudimentary forms which have not developed into a written form that can be used in school language. The government and different commissions have recommended that the teachers knowing tribal languages are to be posted in tribal areas, the data reveals that only 6 percent of the teachers who are in the primary schools belong to tribal communities and out of

this 50 percent of the teachers are untrained and are basically matriculates or below that (*National Population Education 1996: 91*).

Inadequate Facilities in Educational Institutions

School buildings in the tribal areas are without basic infrastructural facilities. The schools basically have thatched roofs, dilapidated walls and non-pastoral floors. In Ashram schools which are residential in nature, there is no space for the children to sleep. As a consequence, the classrooms turn into dormitory and vice versa. In addition to poor maintenance of the school and class rooms, inadequate teaching-learning materials such as blackboards and chalks causes problems for the teachers and students in teaching and understanding the content.

Wastage and Stagnation

Problem of education in the tribal areas is also the problem of wastage and stagnation. Wastage is the withdrawal or dropping out of a student before completing the prescribed period of the concerned course. A data revealed by the Eleventh Five Year Plan also indicated the high drop out of the STs at different levels of study. As per the data, at the Primary level, the dropout rate among STs in 2003-04 was 48.9% and 70.1% at the Upper Primary level. It indicates the apathy of the Tribals and tribal students for the existing curriculum and system and problems of teaching-learning process. When a student takes more than one year to pass a class it is considered a case of stagnation. As per the 11 Five Year Plan report, stagnation at the

primary level was 67.3 percent whereas it was 49.3 percent at the Upper Primary level. School timing i.e. clash of class hour with the working hour particularly, during the harvesting period, formal education, poverty, lack of academic atmosphere, unwillingness of the teachers to convince the parents and parental apathy towards education and lack of proper medical aid, balanced diet and suitable self-employment opportunities are the major factors for which there is wastage and stagnation.

Conclusion

Education is the most effective instrument for ensuring equality of opportunity but the tribal

people are lagging far behind non-tribals due to one or more reasons. The problems associated with education of the tribal children in India is manifold, complex and inter-related. Factors like poverty, apathy of the parents, superstition and prejudice, lack of suitable teachers, alien language, inadequate facilities in the educational institutions and

wastage and stagnation causes major hindrances in the process of education in the tribal schools, schools located in tribal areas and spread of tribal education. In this context, educating tribals needs concerted effort by the government and officials.

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EDUCATION : A CASUALTY IN BASTAR

Dinesh Sahu

To provide the right environment for education, to create the motivation amongst the community and to establish the infrastructure and resources is clearly the task of the government.

To provide the right environment for education, to create the motivation amongst the community and to establish the infrastructure and resources is clearly the task of the government.

Storm clouds have been gathering over Bastar for a long time now. The growing violence, the insecurity of life and limb and what seems to be a protracted battle to establish the rule of law and a modicum of good governance. This is the disturbing and even fratricidal picture that emerges from south Chhattisgarh.

The present environment of conflict spells a threat to the tribals in Kanker district, though it is not quite in the eye of the storm. This is just a little on the periphery but what here are the storm clouds that have now burst upon Dantewada. There is here

the presence of Naxal groups, now over the years, a fact that locals live with, but has not mercifully reached the flash point. Yet the ongoing conflict has forced them to live compromised lives, and nowhere is this more glaring than in seeking and getting their entitlements, the benefit of government programs that is their due.

The government run primary catering till Class V and middle schools till Class VIII have been established and functioning but many have been badly hit by the ongoing conflict. Several school buildings have been systematically destroyed by Naxals in the Durg Kondal block particularly over the last one-year leaving the children, their families bereft of education. Ironical, as in the rest of the country, moves are afoot to make it a right as per the Constitution. Are the tribals in Kanker then excluded



from this? The fall-out of the conflict then is deeper than the incidents of violence, highly condemnable by themselves but those are not the only casualties

Earlier a 'Grameen Bank' was the target in the same block but this destruction of school buildings has been a step-up in the violence and one that strikes at the root of any development. It is not about the physical damage to school buildings alone. In far flung villages, teachers fearing Naxals are reluctant to take up their assignments, which means that the students suffer the consequences. Though the destroyed school buildings are then taken up as an issue at the panchayat followed by an official intimation to the local MLA, restoration of these buildings does not keep pace with the requirement. In the interim, unfortunately education suffers.

The need for education and an exposure to the world outside, to skills and training is perhaps one of the overriding needs of the region. One, which would enable the tribal, cocooned in a kind of timelessness to engage with this world more meaningfully. Even in a normal scenario, the impetus for education amongst the tribal communities is low. So used are they to their life pattern based on agriculture and gathering of forest produce to be sold in village 'haats', the older generation is not overly enthusiastic. They do not urge the youth to take to this path. In most cases after finishing Class VIII, parents are unwilling to send their children out of the village for higher education. Invariably their journey of education ends here. The children inhabit a no-man's land, cocooned and hung between the life-patterns of the older generation and the modern developments which they are not equipped to keep pace with.

Understandably it is a difficult situation. To provide the right environment for education, to create the motivation amongst the community and to establish the infrastructure and resources is clearly the task of the government. Yet in the face of intimidation and threat by the Naxal groups, all of this stands compromised. So where does the buck stop? Essentially what would it entail for providing

an environment where access to available education is unhindered, for that is clearly the first step towards an enlightened society.

Not that that the state government is oblivious to the cause of education in the villages in the Bastar region. (The earlier undivided Bastar included Kanker district) Its schemes are very much in place. Girl's students of Class IX are provided with bicycles by government, to promote their mobility as often the distance to the high school is far. Books are provided free of cost till Middle school, Class VIII. The Mid-Day Meal scheme till Primary School or Class V is also functioning. The state government has made an additional provision to provide meals to students in senior classes till Class VIII.

Despite all these steps, education lags behind. The government has remained powerless to change the mindset of the people, to instill in them, the critical need for education. What it instead is focusing on is to ensure that there are no loopholes in the provisions in the system. For instance, the number of vacant teaching posts. In December last, the state government conducted an admission test to fill a shortfall of 30,000 for teacher posts across Chhattisgarh.

What is the answer to the vortex of problems that ails the region? Is it the end of violence or the beginning of good governance? Or does it all begin with a rising awareness, of setting of developmental agendas with full participation of the people themselves? If that is so, then the case for education becomes even stronger. Only if people were educated would they be able to make informed choices and take steps towards their advancement in the overall sense.

This impetus for this will need to come from within. Perhaps if this happens amongst the tribal communities, we could hope for not only a growth in education but in all those aspects of development which could help Bastar reject the present path of destruction and adopt an alternate one leading to peace and plenty.

(Charkha Features)

EMPTY STOMACH, RECURRING DECIMAL AND RED TAPE

Sujata Hira

Various orders and memos from the Ministry of the Rural Development during the last fifteen years have not been enough to feed the primary school children, specially the target group-the needy and the malnourished, through the National Programme For Nutritional Support to Primary Education (NP-NSPE), popularly known as Mid Day Meal Programme .

Children of a lesser God ?

Let us not forget that 19.4% of our population falls in the age group of 7-14 years of age according to our last census. Now, it means that almost one fifth of our population theoretically should be within the noon meal scheme but we have only 117 million inside it[see Table I]. The population in the age group was 240 million in 2008-09 (projected data from 2001 census figure).

Table I		
	Primary	Upper Primary
Number of Children covered	8,23,90,147	3,50,42,987
Foodgrain allocated	17,47,923.53 MTs	11,12,504.26 MTs

[This is the Annual Work Plan and Budget 2008-09 of Mid-Day Meal Scheme for all the 35 States/Uts approved by the Programme Approval Board for Mid-Day Meal (PAB-MDM) headed by Secretary (SE&L).

Even if we keep aside the privately –run-schools which are negligible in number compared to the total number of schools in the country run by government , a huge number of government,



government aided and local body-run-schools remain outside the purview of the scheme.

Added to this is the number of children who are enrolled in a primary or secondary school but are unable to get their noon meal because of various administrative or technical difficulties.

Reluctance on the part of the school is another reason. Extra burden, even if not a direct one, causes resistance. Opposition may come citing numerous causes, sometimes funny, like, local politics in forming the Village Education Committee, Monitoring Committee or Self Help Group to cook the food, suitable place to build a kitchen-cum-store, absence of water source to cook the food and washing the utensils.

While creating infrastructure is the responsibility of the local administration, the delay in it shows that the noose of the red tape does not spare even the hungry children.

Elsewhere

Though Mid Day Meal is seen as a populist move by a section of people in India, many countries in the world, both developed and developing, have taken this route to ensure minimum nourishment to the future of the nation.

Finland: Since 1948, free school dinners in elementary and secondary schools have been served. Lunch in Higher Education is subsidized in this country.

Japan: *kyūshoku*, or school lunch is provided to 99% of elementary school students and 82% of junior high school students. Parents pay 250 to 300 yen per student for the cost of the ingredients, with labour costs being funded by local authorities

Sweden: Since 1993, Swedish primary and secondary schools serve school dinner.

UK: School meals were first introduced in the 1870s to combat the high levels of malnutrition amongst children in poor areas. In 1944 it was made compulsory for local authorities to provide school dinners, with legal nutritional requirements. Free school meals were available to children with families on very low incomes.¹

USA: National School Lunch Act, 1946 provided a federal nutrition assistance programme, named The National School Lunch Programme. It is now operating in over 101,000 public and non-profit private schools and residential care institutions.

INDIA

There is no denying the fact that the attendance has improved in schools where NP-NSPE is running. But a common allegation is that the populist move is only ruining the education process as children are more interested in lunch menu than on paying attention in the class.

The fact remains that most of the boys and girls in rural areas, especially in agrarian states, are children from agricultural families. Mothers, in these families work in the field. Thus, children go to school after having an early morning meal. Children of a lesser God even go empty-stomach. This implies that they remain without food for six to seven hours, if not more.

Does empty stomach allow concentration in addition-subtraction-multiplication-division or recurring decimal sums ?

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EMPOWERMENT OF WOMEN THROUGH EDUCATION

Dr. Anita Modi

Gender equality is a constituent as well as an instrument of development. It is not possible for a country to achieve the objective of growth in real terms unless half the population is at disadvantage in terms of basic needs, access to knowledge and political voice. Before independence, Indian women were subjected to gender oppression and gender discrimination. Gender biases prevailed in all spheres of life whether social, political or economic.

It is widely recognized fact that unequal educational status of men and women is both a cause and consequence of a wider gender inequality. Keeping this fact in mind, the government has considered education as the most effective weapon to break the vicious circles of gender discrimination and gender inequality. Truly, education is associated with a wide range of desirable outcomes like higher productivity and

rate of growth, lower level of fertility and better child nutrition, higher level of self esteem and better management of domestic relations. It is a well recognized fact that education of women is the only panacea for all kinds of problems. Education has been considered as one of the most important means of empowering women with knowledge, skills and self confidence necessary to participate fully in the development process.

Considering education as one of the most important means of empowering women, many programmes, schemes, awards and facilities have been initiated by the Central Government and State Governments to promote girls and women education. The Government of India has taken recourse to comprehensive literary drive for girls related to poor and socially weaker sections of the society.



Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan (SSA), Sarva shiksha Abhiyan is a comprehensive scheme launched in the year 2000 with an objective of widening the scope of elementary education throughout the country. This programme aims to improve the performance of school system through community owned approach and to impart qualitative elementary education to all children in the age group of 6 to 14 years by 2010. To bridge the gender gap in education, special emphasis is laid on girl's education in this scheme. Operation Blackboard Programme was also merged in this programme in the year 2002-03.

National Literacy Mission – The main objective of this mission is to provide literacy to all. This mission is a blending of activities related to nutrition, literacy, environmental protection and skill formation .Because of this programme the enrolment of children in schools has increased and the drop-out rate has declined.

Adult-Education Programme- The main objective of this programme is to achieve self-reliance in terms of literacy. The special emphasis is laid on to equip women with necessary skills and education to improve their economic status and well-being in the society.

Efforts have been made to ensure that at least one third of the students in each Navodaya Vidyalayas are girls. It is also noted that free education is imparted to girls up to class XII in Navodaya Vidyalayas and Kendriya Vidyalayas. Provision of free education for girls is available in many states of the country to promote girls education.

National Girl's Education Programme, 2004 – The aim of the programme is to provide extra facilities and financial help to motivate the girls for education at primary level. In this programme, emphasis is being laid on the construction of model schools, provision of text books, stationary, uniform and other necessary inputs for education of girls,

thereby the burden of education of poor class can be reduced. It is well known fact that the girls of poor families are deprived of education because of economic burden of education. Wide spread poverty and discriminating cultural practices and the prime causes for the gender gap in education. This programme is intended to remove these barriers, thus promoting girls education.

Mid Day Meal Scheme – it has been started by the central Government in 1995 to ensure nutritional food to the students of class I to V, now extended up to class VIII. The scheme also aims to promote enrolment, retention and attendance of children in primary schools. The scheme has motivated the girls to primary education by relieving them from household chores. Because of this programme, the enrolment and relation of girls to schools has increased remarkably. Under the centrally - sponsored programme at +2 levels, **Vocational Programmes** are being designed to encourage the participation of girls in the non- traditional and emergent technologies.

Shiksha Karmis Programme – It has been started in Rajasthan to make provision for girls education in hilly and inaccessible terrains .In the scheme, the primary school teacher in single teacher schools is substituted by a team of two locally resident educational workers called Shiksha Karmis.

In the same way the Central Government has sponsored the District Primary Education Programme (DPEP) in 1994 to provide primary education to all children. It aims at reducing the drop-out rates to less than 10 percent.

Literacy Award Scheme- Central Government has launched a scheme of "Decadal Literacy Award and Decadal Female literacy Award for those who have done a pioneer task in the field of education.

Because of the active involvement of Central and State government in women's education,

the enrollment of girls in schools has increased remarkably.

We have seen that because of these programmes the literacy rate of women has increased. However there is still a gap between male and female literacy rates, high dropout rates of girls in school is also alarming. Many factors are responsible for the non-enrolment and high drop-out rates of girls.

1. Poverty is attributed as one of the main cause of deprivation of girls from education. Because of poverty, the girls have to take care of the siblings at home, do household works and work outside to contribute in family income.
2. Early marriage of girls is also a factor responsible for the high drop-out rate of girls. It is reported that in some parts of the country, almost 50 percent of girls are married between the ages of 10 to 14 years.
3. Conservative attitude and social traditions are also responsible for the withdrawal of girls from schools. The belief that "Education is of little value in practical life" also hinders the path of education of girls.
4. Inadequacy of infrastructure facilities like toilets, drinking water, transport and hostel facilities in schools is also responsible to the high drop-out rates of girls. Lack of qualified teachers is also a major barrier in the path of girl's education.
5. Again, the fear of sexual harassment deters the parents to send their daughters to the schools and a factor responsible for high drop-out rates of girls.
6. The fixed school time is not suitable for girls in rural areas. During the school times the girls have to perform different tasks related to home, fields and youngsters. So this is one of

the major causes of the lower enrollment of girls in schools in rural areas.

It is a well known fact that problems of adult women are more acute and complex. They are engaged in household chores, rearing children and fields work continuously and little time is left for education. So, special measures should be taken to spread literacy among these illiterate women.

To achieve the goal of 100% female education, the following measures should be adopted by the Government in collaboration with NGO's and Community. Some of these are as follows:-

1. Creating community awareness for girls education at all levels.
2. Strengthening's adult literacy programs and freeing the illiterate women from their home management occupations are necessary to attain the objective of functional literacy.
3. To bring about an attitudinal change in the society towards girls and their education.
4. Special women fellowship and training programs may be started to cater the special needs of the women folk and they can be motivated to join these programmes.
5. Organizing career campaigns in schools and educational centers to make the girls aware about the education and career opportunities.
6. Improvement in the infrastructure like availability of water, sanitation and toilets in schools should be done on priority basis.
7. The effective and cognitive efforts of parents are necessary for ensuring girls education so efforts must be done to change the mindset and attitude of parents towards girl's education.

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EMPOWERING THE DISABLED IN RURAL INDIA: *THE ROLE OF DISTANCE EDUCATION*

Dr.R.Srinivasan

Distance education mode of learning has emerged as a blessing in disguise to those citizens who aspire to become learned and knowledgeable as they could not access regular mode of collegiate education due to their economic compulsions. In a way they are a deprived lot not in par with the majority who are college goers. Similar is the condition of the disabled citizens who could not join the mainstream citizens due to their disabilities. However a lot of soul searching has happened in the modern era internationally and nationally to instill confidence in the minds of the disabled that they are not

really disabled but differently abled. A lot of efforts towards this end in the form of reservation in jobs, sectoral concessions etc. are already in place in both national and state governmental departments and schemes providing timely benefits to this naturally deprived community. Again the problem of inclusiveness and maximum reach comes in the way of effectively implementing the government schemes.

This article tries to explore the existing welfare measures and establishments that specially serve the needs of the disabled in India.



It also delves into the possibilities of an effective distance education mechanism incorporated with I C technology that could bring betterment to the widely illiterate disabled community in India.

A Genuine Alternative for the Disabled

India, the largest democracy and the second most populous country in the world has, as per the official estimates, 55 million disabled people of different age groups. Unofficial estimates put the figure at 100 million. In other words, 10% of the Indian people are disabled. 'The disabled' in the Indian context usually constitute these four categories: Visually Handicapped, Orthopaedically Handicapped, Hearing-Impaired or Deaf and Dumb and the Mentally Retarded. If we include the other categories of the disabled too as recognized in the developed countries, the disabled sector in India will be much larger than what it is supposed to be at present. As per the UN standards, every sixth Indian is disabled in some way or other.

With these many Indians in the disabled community, we are not doing enough to ensure the disabled people their due rights as ordinary citizens of the country. Educational attainment could be the best indicator of a country's human development.

It is roughly estimated that less than 10 percent of children and youth with disabilities have access to any form of education, compared with an enrolment rate of over 70 percent for non-disabled children and youth in primary education in the Asia Pacific region. This exclusion from education for children and youth with disabilities results in exclusion from opportunity for further personal, social and vocational development. Four targets are set for these problems by the ESCAP.(the economic and social council for Asia pacific).

- 1) Children with disabilities will be an integral part of the population targeted by Millennium development goal target 3, which is to ensure that, by 2015, children everywhere, boys and girls alike, will be able to complete a full course of primary schooling;
- 2) By 2010, at least 75 percent of children and youth with disabilities of school age will be able to complete a full course of primary schooling;
- 3) By 2012, all infants and young children (0-4 years) will have access to and receive community-based early intervention services;
- 4) Governments should ensure detection of childhood disabilities at a very early age.

Disabled: the Biggest Minority with the Poor Status Report

There are an estimated 100 million with disabilities in India and they are overwhelmingly poor. The link between poverty and disability is undeniable. However, little has been done in the way of systemically examining the linkages between the two. Disability is both a cause and consequence of poverty. Persons with disabilities are the poorest of the poor. It is estimated that 160 millions persons with disabilities in the region, over 40 percent of the total, are living in poverty, unable to benefit from their socio-economic rights. It is also estimated that 70 to 80 percent of people with disabilities in some countries of the region live below the national poverty line.

The vulnerability of people with disabilities to poverty is multidimensional – impacting on their employment and income earning potential; they are often excluded from participating or taking up opportunities open to others; they are discriminated against at the institutional,

social and cultural levels; and they are often marginalized or isolated within their own societies and families. Poverty reduction strategies and basic support services for economic development and capacity building for them is urgently needed. This includes localization of power and ownership of programmes and activities by people with disabilities and their organizations.

The four apex institutions at the national level providing a complete package of welfare services to persons with disabilities in each of the four major areas of disability are as follows :

1. National Institution for the Visually Handicapped, Dehradun
2. National Institution for the Orthopaedically Handicapped, Calcutta
3. Ali Yuvar Jung National Institute for the Hearing Impaired, Bombay
4. National Institute for the Mentally Handicapped, Secunderabad

Besides the above four, two more institutions which are performing the functions similar to them are:

The Institute of the Physically Handicapped, Delhi; and

The National Institute of Rehabilitation Training & Research, Cuttack

Artificial Limbs Manufacturing Corporation (ALIMCO), Kanpur, manufactures and distributes appliances needed by the orthopaedically disabled at reasonable costs. The four Spastics Societies of India established by the Voluntary Organizations with partial financial aid from the government operate in the four major regions of India: North, South, West and East operating respectively from Delhi, Madras, Calcutta and Bombay. Besides these, there are rehabilitation centers established the

State governments, non-governmental agencies and Voluntary Organizations. As per the data available, 2466 of organizations are working for the disabled under different managements. The efforts of all the above institutions have covered just about 5 percent of the disabled people in India. Therefore, alternative means must be found to meet the needs of the rest.

A Holistic Approach and A Wholesome Distance Education: The Only Panacea

Persons with disabilities remain disproportionately undereducated, untrained, unemployed, underemployed and poor. They have insufficient access to the mainstream labour market owing to social exclusion, lack of trained and competent staff and adequate training for independent workers.

By 2003, only 11 countries in the Asia Pacific region had ratified ILO Convention concerning Vocational Rehabilitation and Employment (Disabled Persons), 1983. This does not augur well for the secured future of the disabled in the region. Three targets set by the ESCAP follow:

- 1) By 2012, at least 30 percent of the signatories will ratify ILO Convention concerning Vocational Rehabilitation and Employment (Disabled Persons);
- 2) By 2012, at least 30 percent of all vocational training programmes in signatory countries will include persons with disabilities;
- 3) By 2010, reliable data on the employment and self-employment rates of persons with disabilities will exist in all countries

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AN HERB WHICH HAS PROPERTIES TO CURE COMMON COLD AND EVEN CANCER :

*Garima Mishra,
Kuldeep Bauddh,
Sanjeev Kumar*

The 'magical' component in garlic is allicin, which is proven to be anti-microbial and contains anti-fungal properties. It inhibits the growth of parasites in the intestines, as well as inhibits synthesis of fats

Garlic belonging to family alleaceae, is an important bulbous vegetable, spice or condiment with medicinal value, commonly used throughout the world. Garlic is a rich source of carbohydrates, proteins, and phosphorus. The ascorbic acid content is reported to be very high in green garlic (13mg/100g) and it also contains an amino acid called allin. The familiar smell of garlic derives from sulphur containing constituents, which also give it medicinal properties. The pH of soil between 6.0-7.5 is suitable for good crop. Highly alkaline and saline soils are not suitable for garlic cultivation.

Garlic is a frost-hardy plant, requiring cool and moist period and relatively dry period during bulb maturity. The flowers, which bloom in the summer, come in a variety of white and cream shades, although occasionally they are lilac or pink. The flowers look pretty in salads and are a useful tonic food.

Garlic's main active constituent is alliin, which is contained in its' volatile oil. Allicin and other constituents include minerals such as zinc, calcium, iron, magnesium, potassium and trace minerals; vitamins (mainly A, B, C and E); and enzymes, carbohydrates, essential



oils, fatty acids, sterols, flavonoids, nucleosides, anthocyanins and more than 200 other sulphur compounds. Garlic also contains 17 amino acids, which include lysine, arginine and cysteine. The leaves of Garlic contain Chlorophyll, Carotenoids, Carbohydrate, Protein and Proline. The leaves and stems are antiasthmatic, antiscorbutic, antiseptic, deobstruent, diaphoretic, vermifuge and vulnerary. Externally, they have been used as an antiseptic poultice on ulcers etc, and are effective in relieving the itching caused by bites and stings. The leaves and stems are harvested before the plant comes into flower and they can be dried for later use. The juice of the plant has an inhibitory effect on *Bacillus pyocyaneum* and on gram-negative bacteria of the typhoid-paratyphoid-enteritis group.

In general it may be used as a preventative for most infectious conditions, digestive as well as respiratory. For the digestive tract it has been found that Garlic will support the development of the natural bacterial flora whilst killing pathogenic organisms. Garlic is being used from ancient times for the cure of several diseases including Diabetes, Anemia, Heart disease, antibacterial, Cancer, Antiviral, Immune system, Skin care and Antioxidant. Garlic is able to improve the quality of the blood by raising the level of haemoglobin and the red blood cell count - this is very helpful for people with anemia. The 'magical' component in garlic is allicin, which is proven to be anti-



Medicinal values of garlic

microbial and contains anti-fungal properties. It inhibits the growth of parasites in the intestines, as well as inhibits synthesis of fats (lowers blood lipid and cholesterol levels). Allicin can be transformed into Ajoene, which has anti-clotting properties and thus helps reduce heart ailments. Garlic's sulfur compounds, in addition to certain selenium-containing compounds, add up to make extremely potent antioxidant.

Common cold: Garlic soup is an old remedy to reduce the severity of a cold, and should be taken once daily. Garlic contains antiseptic and antispasmodic properties, besides several other medicinal virtues. The oil contained in this vegetable helps to open up the respiratory passages. In soup form, it flushes out all toxins from the system and thus helps bring down fever. Five drops of garlic oil combined with a teaspoon of onion juice, and diluted in a cup of water, should be drunk two to three times a day. This has also been found to be very effective in the treatment of common cold.

Diabetes: Garlic is helpful for diabetics because it helps to stabilize blood-sugar levels and encourages the pancreas to produce insulin. It is also a fine anti-allergy food that helps to ease hay fever, asthma, allergic rhinitis and food allergies.

Anaemia: Garlic is able to improve the quality of the blood by raising the level of haemoglobin and the red blood cell count - this is very helpful for people with anaemia.

Heart diseases: Regular ingestion of Garlic can help to lower blood cholesterol levels significantly. This in turn can drastically reduce angina and in some cases may even help to prevent heart attacks. Garlic may also reduce blood pressure. Numerous studies have reported that oral garlic is associated with reduced systolic and diastolic blood pressure.

Antibiotic : Garlic is effective against specific bacteria that are notorious for developing resistant strains, such as staphylococcus, mycobacterium, salmonella, and species of Proteus. Garlic is a broad spectrum antibiotic, killing a wide variety of bacteria. "Due to the presence of garlic has the broadest spectrum of any antimicrobial substance that we know of it is antibacterial, antifungal, antiparasitic, antiprotozoan and antiviral".

Antiviral: Garlic or its constituents directly kill influenza, herpes, vaccinia (cowpox), vesicular stomatitis virus (responsible for cold sores), and human cytomegalovirus (a common source of secondary infection in AIDS).

Immune system: Although garlic attacks bacteria, viruses, and other microorganisms directly, it also stimulates the body's natural defenses against these invaders. For instance, diallyl trisulfide, a constituent of garlic, was found to activate natural killer cells and macrophages directly, and indirectly to increase B-cell activity to make antibodies.

Skin care: It can be used externally for skin problems and fungal infections. Garlic has been used to treat the acne problem by simply rubbing it on affected area. The antibacterial properties of garlic help in healing acne. The external use of garlic helps to clear the spots and pimples from the skin.

Antioxidant: Garlic is rich in antioxidants, which help destroy free radicals that can damage cell membranes, interact with genetic material, and possibly contribute to the aging process as well as the development of a number of conditions, including heart disease and cancer. Antioxidant compounds neutralize free radicals and may reduce or even help prevent some of the damage they cause over time.

Effective Atiparasitic: It helps to displace parasitic infestations such as *Giardia lamblia* and *Endameba histolytica*. These organisms are sensitive to the sulphur compounds (particularly allicin) in Garlic.

Blood Improver: Some of Garlic's healing abilities are due to its' fibrinolytic action, which increases the speed at which blood flows around the system, making it less likely to clot and resulting in faster circulation and better metabolism of oxygen.

Lung Medicine: The sulphur compounds in Garlic work together to give the herb an expectorant action. Garlic reduces excessive mucus levels in the lungs, thus alleviating many bronchial disorders such as chronic catarrh and bronchitis. The roots are chopped up small and then heated in oil to make an ointment to rub on the chest in order to bring relief from bronchitis.

Male Sexual Dysfunction: Garlic in certain forms can stimulate the production of nitric oxide synthase, which is primarily responsible for the mechanism of penile erection.

Anticandidal: Garlic has long been a traditional cure for Candida infections, thrush and Athelete's Foot. Again it is the allicin in garlic that has strong anti-candidal properties. Wash the fungus-infected skin with an infusion of garlic and water, and include plenty of garlic in your diet.

Liver: Protection of the liver from toxic substances: Garlic activates the cells of the liver and thereby protects the liver from toxic substances; it also rejuvenates a tired liver and promotes its normal functioning. For the digestive tract it has been found that Garlic support the development of the natural bacterial flora whilst killing pathogenic organisms.

Regulation of stomach function: Allicin promotes the secretion of gastric juices by stimulating the mucous membranes of the stomach; furthermore, it combines with proteins which can reduce excessive activity of the stomach. In addition, allicin regulates the functioning of the stomach by activating the large intestine and thus cure both constipation and diarrhea.

Cancer: Garlic contains allyl sulfur and other compounds that decrease or prevent the growth of cancer cells. Garlic inhibits the formation of nitrosamine (cancer-inducing compounds) by stopping nitrosamines, which are toxic chemicals found in food and the environment, from binding to healthy cells. Garlic also stimulates liver enzymes that are thought to be partly responsible for anticarcinogenic reactions. It contain two compounds known as diallyl disulfide (DADS) and diallyl trisulfide (DATS) that help in the prevention of lung, skin and colon cancers.

Conclusion: Today garlic is used to prevent heart disease, including atherosclerosis (plaque buildup in the arteries that can block the flow of blood and possibly lead to heart attack or stroke), high cholesterol, high blood pressure, and to improve the immune system. Garlic has sulfur-containing compounds, which give it such a wide range of healing properties. Garlic is among the few herbs that have a universal usage and recognition. Its daily usage aids and supports the body in ways that no other herb does. It benefits a wide range of metabolic, cellular and chemical processes in the body. In particular, it helps the digestive, circulatory and immune systems to function at optimum level and it destroys harmful bacteria and free radicals. Truly, Garlic deserves its' ancient reputation as a 'cure-all'.

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