Enhancing Education Rate through Capacity Building Programs: Reflections from Jammu and Kashmir

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ABSTRACT
Jammu and Kashmir is the only state in India which enjoys special status and is governed by a Constitution of its own adopted by the State of Jammu & Kashmir on 17th November 1956. Under the Directive Principles of State Policy of the Constitution of Jammu & Kashmir, vide Article 20 and 21 various Rights including the right to free and compulsory education for all children up to the age of 14 years have been guaranteed. The Rights guaranteed to children have been enumerated as under:

20. Rights of free and compulsory education in certain cases:- The State shall endeavour-
(a) To secure to every permanent resident the right to free education up to the University standard;
(b) To provide, within a period of ten years from the commencement of this Constitution, compulsory education for all children until they complete the age of fourteen years, and
(c) To ensure to all workers and employees adequate facilities for adult education and part-time technical, professional and vocational courses.

21. Rights of children:- The State shall strive to secure-
(a) To all children the right to happy childhood with adequate medical care and attention; and
(b) To all children and youth equal opportunities in education and employment, protection against exploitation and against moral or material abandonment.

Despite the Constitutional guarantees to the children of the State on their various rights, as stated above, the children have suffered silently in the past over two decades of strife torn areas covering the most of the districts. Many gaps have been reported in the entitlements, especially in the past when the children on account of their tender age and fragile moulds both physical and mental were made absolutely vulnerable to the crisis situations prevalent in the valley.

As per estimation more than 2.4 lakh child labourers are there in Jammu and Kashmir, which does not include the home based cottage industry and it is difficult to track. In Jammu and Kashmir, like elsewhere, The Child Labour Act 1986 puts total ban on engagement of child labour below the age of 14 years in any hazardous process/occupation.

The present paper would focus on the programmes initiated by the state and centre government for the enhancing education rate of Jammu and Kashmir through various capacity building programmes.
The paper will also focus on the initiatives for Girl Education in J&K and challenges undertaken by state for quality education. It will also focus on Notable achievements of state in field of education(2011-12 and 2012-13)

Introduction
Education is the most important lever for social, economic and political transformation. A well educated and skilled population not only drives economic and social development but also ensures personal growth. The spread of education in society is at the foundation of success in today’s globalised world, where the real wealth of a country or state is not in its tangible natural resources but in knowledge.

Although, the literacy rate of the state is well short of the rate recorded at the national level, yet figures reveal that the rate of increase in the literacy in the state is faster than at the national level. During 1961-2011, while the literacy rate in the State increased by 58 points, it recorded increase of 46 points at the national level. Category-wise also, the rate of increase in literacy percentage both among males and females is better in the State than the country.
Gender Gap in Literacy:

Gender differential exists both in rural and urban areas, but it is high in rural areas. This can be attributed to a number of factors like Social dogmas, engagement of girl child in agricultural and other domestic activities etc. At the national level, the gender gap in literacy has decreased drastically from 25.06% in 1961 to 21.59% in 2001 and further to 16.68% in 2011. Contrary to this, the gender gap in literacy increased in the State from 12.71% in 1961 to 23.60% in 2001. Accordingly, the Govt, both at National and State level made all out efforts to reduce the gender gap in literacy. A number of steps for accomplishment of the goal of bridging gender gap in literacy were taken up and these include National Programme for Education of Girls at Elementary level (NPEGEL), Establishment of Kasturba Gandhi Balika Vidyalas (KGBVs), Free Text-Books/ Scholarships, Community mobilization, Establishment of Women ITIs and Women wings in the existing ITIs, reservation of half of the seats for females in the Medical Colleges, Focus on adult female illiterates under Saakshar Bharat Mission (SBM) etc. As a result of these measures, the State has been able to break this impasse and put a halt to the ever increasing trajectory of gender gap for the first time during the decade 2001-2011 when the gender gap got reduced to 20.25%. This was possible only due to higher rate of increase in the female literacy viz; by 15.01% as against 11.66% recorded for males during 2001-11.

Gender Gap in Literacy 1961-2011

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>S.No</th>
<th>Census year</th>
<th>Males</th>
<th>Females</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Male literacy rate</td>
<td>Increase in literacy %age over the preceding census year</td>
<td>Female literacy rate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>1961</td>
<td>16.97</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>1971</td>
<td>26.75</td>
<td>9.78</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>1981</td>
<td>36.29</td>
<td>9.54</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>2001</td>
<td>66.60</td>
<td>30.31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>2011(Provisional)</td>
<td>78.26</td>
<td>11.66</td>
</tr>
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Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan

The Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan (SSA) is implemented as India’s main programme for universalization of elementary education (UEE). Its overall goals include universal access and retention, bridging of gender and social gaps in enrolment levels and enhancement of learning levels of all children. The SSA has merged components of the National Programme for Education of Girls at Elementary Level (NPEGEL) and the residential school scheme, Kasturba Gandhi Balika Vidyalaya (KGBV), that have focus on girl’s education. The SSA is primarily a flagship programme aimed at achieving universalization of elementary education, enrollment of all out of School Children (OoSC) in Schools by 2012, retention of all OoSC Upper Primary stage by 2012, thrust on quality education and bridging gender and social category gaps in enrolment, retention and learning besides development of school infrastructure. To achieve the goal of above mentioned interventions, a survey to identify OoSC has been conducted throughout the State and is nearing completion. The data is being compiled and analyzed so as to ascertain a clear picture of the exact number of OoSC. This will help in devising strategies for covering these children under various levels of special training.

To enhance quality education, funds to all the UPS of the state are being provided for “wall mounts learning display” where all the creative work of the children will be displayed. During the next Financial Year urban deprived and under privileged children belonging to slums will be focused upon. Effective strategies for their access and enrolment will be formulated.
Initiatives for Girl Education

For accomplishment of the goal of bridging gender gap in literacy, National Programme for education of girls at elementary level (NPEGEL) is a focused intervention aimed at enhancing girl education. This intervention provides for development of “Model School” in every cluster with more emphasis on girl enrollment especially dropouts and never enrolled once. It provides need based incentives like stationary, books, sports equipments etc for girls in the identified schools. So far 326 Model Schools have been established under this intervention.

Kasturba Gandhi Balika Vidyalaya (KGBV)
KGBV is yet another initiative for enhancing girl education. It is a scheme for setting up residential schools at upper primary level for adolescent girls belonging to SC, ST and OBC community. Under this intervention the enrolled girl students are provided with free boarding and lodging facility including the day to day expenses. So far 99 KGBVs have been established.

The State Government rolled out “Beti Anmol” scheme during 2011-12 with a view to arrest post matric dropout rate of girl students belonging to Below Poverty Line (BPL) and enhancing their employment prospects. Under the scheme, an amount of ` 5000/- is to be given as incentive to the girl students of Educationally Backward Blocks, who pass their matriculation examination and get themselves enrolled in the 11th class. The incentive is given in the shape of a bank deposit the amount of which is en-cashable only after the students pass their 12th class examination. Beti Anmol scheme is presently catering to the girl students hailing from 97 educationally backward blocks of the State. The ultimate objective of this new initiative is to encourage the education of the girl students in the State. The Scheme is operative from academic session 2011-12 both for winter and summer zones and 2560 girls students were provided incentive during the said year. During 2012-13, against the target coverage of 6439 beneficiaries, the achievement ending December 2012 is 2760.

Rashtriya Madhyamik Shishkshiya Abhiyaan (RMSA)

The challenge to ensure education for all requires concerted efforts to strengthen the education system at all levels. The Sarva Shiksha Abhiyaan program set up by the government to bring elementary education to millions of children has been successful to a large extent, and has thus created a need for strengthening secondary education infrastructure across the country. Accordingly, the HRD Ministry GOI devised a secondary education scheme called Rashtriya Madhyamik Shiksha Abhiyaan (RMSA) during 11th FYP at a total cost of ` 20,120 crore. 34.20 Rashtriya Madhyamik Shiksha Abhiyaan (RSMA) is aimed at expanding and improving the standards of secondary education — classes VIII to X. The RMSA would also take secondary education to every corner of the country by ensuring a secondary school (up to class X) within a radius of 5km for every neighborhood.

Rashtriya Madhyamik Shiksha Abhiyaan (RMSA)
Is the most recent initiative of Government of India to achieve the goal of universalization of secondary education (USE).

The vision/Objectives of RMSA are:

a) The vision for secondary education is to make good quality education available, accessible and affordable to all young persons in the age group of 14-18 years.

b) To provide secondary school within a reasonable distance of any habitation, which should be 5 Kms. for secondary schools and 7-10 Kms. for higher secondary schools.

c) To remove gender, socio-economic and disability barriers.

d) To ensure universal access of secondary education by 2017 (GER of 100%) and Universal retention by 2020.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>S.No</th>
<th>Item</th>
<th>Achievements</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Middle Schools upgraded to High School level</td>
<td>725</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Funds for construction of upgraded Middle Schools released during 2009-10 and 2010-11</td>
<td>239</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>High Schools approved for strengthening</td>
<td>252</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>High Schools provided with drinking water and Toilet facilities.</td>
<td>281</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Annual School grant @ ` 50,000/- provided to High Schools and Higher Secondary Schools having secondary sections.</td>
<td>2014</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Minor repair grant @ ₹25000/- provided to High Schools having their own building 1611

Subject experts @ 2 per subject for 07 subjects per districts trained. 308

Subject specific teachers covered under in-service teacher training. 7090

Students covered under local excursion 70077

Incentive @ ₹3000/- approved for SC/ST girls. 10247

Construction of Model School Scheme in EBBs assigned to JKPCC 19

Construction of Girls Hostel in EBBs assigned to JKPCC 19

Mid-Day-Meal Scheme (MDMS)
In keeping with the constitutional provisions to raise the level of nutrition of children and enable them to develop in a healthy manner, the Government of India launched the scheme “National Programme of Nutritional Support to Education (NPNSPE)”, commonly known as Mid-Day-Meal Scheme (MDMS) during the year 1995. MDMS was expected to enhance enrolment, retention, attendance of children in schools apart from improving their nutritional levels. This was extended to upper primary (classes VI to VIII) children at the national level in 3479 EBBs in 2007 and then universalized at the elementary level in the year 2008. DMS is primarily managed and implemented by School Management/Village Education Committees.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>S. No</th>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Central Assistance</th>
<th>(Excl. cost of food grains)</th>
<th>supplied</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td>2011-12</td>
<td>9387.531</td>
<td>2694.57</td>
<td>70.90</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.</td>
<td>2012-13</td>
<td>7175.39</td>
<td>1846.86</td>
<td>64.52</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Saakshar Bharat Mission Programme
A new initiative for Adult Literacy has been taken at the national level and 20 Districts of J&K, having less than 50% Literacy Rate as per Census 2001, were approved under Saakshar Bharat Mission Programme. This is another major flagship scheme and focuses on the female adult literacy in the age group of 15 years and above across the state excepting erstwhile Jammu/Samba District.

“J&K Adult Literacy Society” has been registered. State Literacy Mission Authority, Zilla Shiksha Samitis’, and Panchayat Shiksha Samitis’ have been constituted for effective implementation of the programme. These committees are required to achieve a target of increasing literacy rate by 10%. The scheme is anchored with Panchayati Raj Institutions and local self-government bodies and adopts a targeted approach with focus on women. Moreover, it is being monitored at the national level on-line. Saakshar Bharat is being revamped at the national level and will give special focus on young adults and OoS adolescents (15–19 years).

Challenges for Quality Education

Although the state has made substantial expansion in schooling facilities and equalization of educational opportunities during the past few decades due to introduction of various new programme interventions like SSA / RMSA and other flagship programmes/schemes, yet the quality parameters could not be maintained in serving the requirements of the community to the desired extent. To overcome this concern, the state has adopted the norm of 1 km distance for the purpose of establishment of a primary school. As a result, the state has been able to provide primary school within the easy reach of students. Similarly, with regard to the up-gradation of schools, the policy framework has been liberalized. The state is now performing better in the field of education as compared to many other states of the country, despite many constraints. Besides, focus on Teacher Education by incurring the budgetary provisions under SSA/ RMSA and State Sector, exposure visits of teachers to other states has been the latest initiative in getting the Teachers acquainted about the strides made by other states in quality education.

Notable achievements 2011-12 and 2012-13
The following achievements have been made by the Department of School Education during 2011-12 and 2012-13 under state plan;

1. Additional Accommodation to 81 High/Higher Secondary schools constructed and 215 more are at different stages of construction under State Sector.
2. 122 Multi-purpose science labs constructed under Special Plan Assistance and 44 no. of labs are under construction.
3. 179 toilet blocks constructed at various High/Higher Secondary Schools under SPA and 136 Toilet blocks are under progress.
4. 495 School buildings constructed under District Sector.
5. 93 no. of works (Strengthening/Compound wall/Renovation) have been completed and 24 no. of works are under progress during current financial year.
6. 5909 girls students of 11th class covered under Beti Anmol scheme.
7. Construction of 06 DIET complexes at Samba, Banihal, Kupwara, Ganderbal, Pulwama and Kulgam taken in hand.
8. Const. of 02 Auditorium & 02 Teacher Bhawan has been taken up under DistrictPlan.

Conclusion

1. Significant progress has been made during 2011-12 and 2012-13 under SSA. 1136 seasonal centres for children of nomadic population have been opened in the state covering 31256 children. Easy access of education has been made available to 25349 habitations of the state by opening 22702 Primary and 10059 Upper Primary Schools. 97 Special residential schools under KGBV for girls students have been opened in economically and educationally backward areas. 34.14 A pilot programme named “Learning enhancement through active Pedagogy (LEAP)” has been launched in all the upper primary schools of the state. Under this programme, learning corners in science, Mathematics, Social science and languages were established during the year 2011-12 in 9673 UPS of the state. For real success of these initiatives, it is very important that the sphere of violence which has continued in Jammu and Kashmir in the past 24 years should end.

2. A three-tier effort is needed which should include individuals, society and the state who need to coordinate, organize and implement relevant programs for the betterment of the women and children. There should also be the involvement of grassroots functionaries and non-governmental organizations in a big way which can help and shape a community approach to tackle the problems.

3. The focus needs to be also on the elimination of violence against juveniles. The absence of requisite social defence available resulted in many deprivations and subjected even at times to abuse including their being picked up merely on slightest suspicions, even remaining out of school for a large number of days, especially during the period of promulgation of Armed Forces (Special Powers) Act, 1958 (AFSPA) extended to J&K w.e.f July, 1990, allowing the central security forces to arrest, detain, search & seize irrespective of the age of an entity. Coupled with the absence of a proper Juvenile Justice System and the absence of a State Commission for Protection of Child Rights.

4. The District level task force on child labour is dysfunctional and there is serious lack of awareness among the officials about child rights and there is need for regular sensitization programme.