

Periodic Research

Critical Analysis Report on Rajasthan District Primary Education Project September 18, 2014

Abstract

In Rajasthan education of girl child is major challenging issues and even more for the Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes, and is being focused in any Education Policies. The motive of this paper is to reinforce any initiative which would be taken by government to improve the quality of education and educating every child, if those lacking points could be enriched by looking at these past slips. In this paper Education projects of state government were observed and government's initiatives towards improving primary education are mentioned and their influence on primary education. The system of education in Rajasthan needs some improvements to reach to everyone and provide quality education especially to the disadvantaged Groups.

Keywords: DPEP District Primary Education Project, SSA Sarva Siksha Abhiyan, CAS Country Assistance Strategy, ICDS Integrated Children Development Scheme, ECE Early Childhood Education, SPO State Project Office, BRC Block Resource Centers, CRC Cluster Resource Centers, AESR Annual Education Status Report, TAS Terminal Assessment Survey, BAS Baseline Assessment Survey, MAS Midterm Assessment Survey, SPD State Project Directors

**Anirudh Pratap Singh
Nathuramka**
Masters Student,
School of Global, Urban and
Social Studies,
R.M.I.T. University,
Melbourne VIC Australia

Introduction

Rajasthan state of India is categorized by a lot of variances by its living pattern, distributed system of living areas and social uniqueness. Agriculture and government jobs for educated people are the major bases of income and there are no noteworthy manufacturing industries or private sectors at the time when World Bank, Government of India and Government of Rajasthan started this project of District Primary Education program (DPEP). Income and resources were also mostly irregular. So mission of confirming primary education (5 years) to children of all sectors in the society is really challenging. The major challenge meeting education strategies in Rajasthan state is the education to children particularly amongst Scheduled Tribes and Scheduled Castes. And other major challenges were reducing the dropout rates and increasing enrollment and reducing gender gap especially in scheduled Casts and scheduled Tribes children.

Rajasthan state District Primary Education Program was started in year 1999 because of the less developed standing in literacy level among the other states of India, which was just 38.55% in 1991. But Rajasthan state had shown great interest towards improving the literacy level with the assistance and funding provided by the World Bank and following Country Assistance Strategy in year 1998. Supporting the social sector are elementary aims of the Country Assistance Strategy (CAS). Rajasthan's lowest female literacy rate of about 20.44% made it to get supported by the DPEP program which is a cautiously planned and well recognized program and IDA assured to fund II phase project of 19 districts divided in 10 district in phase I and 9 districts in phase II respectively.

Although project worked satisfactorily, by achieving many objectives through project's life but failed to achieve its 100% objectives. Which are presented in this paper and a few critical points are also mentioned in it. There were many factors which affected in proper execution of this project; Changing of government during the time of project and somehow weak policies made by the government is responsible for it.

Project's Data and Objectives

Some of the details of this project are as follows:

Name of project	Rajasthan District Primary Education Project
Project ID	P045050
Country	India
Region	South Asia Regional Office

Table 1: (Source: Document of World Bank. June 21, 2006)

Important Dates

Effective	30 September 1999
Mid-term review	04 April 2003
Original closing	31 December 2004
Revised closing	31 December 2005

Table 2: (Source: Document of World Bank. June 21, 2006)

Implementing Agency

Government of India/Ministry of Human Resource Development; Government of India & Government of Rajasthan

The vice president of this project was Praful C. Patel, Team leader was Prema Clarke and country director was Michael F. Carter. These were the staff members who were handling the project.

The main objective of the Rajasthan District Primary Education Project (DPEP) was to support Government of Rajasthan to develop and make strong state and its districts and sub districts of be able to provide good primary education to the underprivileged people like Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes and from Other Backward Communities, children with disabilities and working children and female as well. This project is designed on the basis of three major components and their sub components. Three components are:

Main Components

- (a) Expanding access to primary education especially for disadvantaged groups (US\$20.2) :
1. Opening new primary schools and alternative schools, constructing additional classrooms and repairing the existing classrooms.
 2. Positioning para-teachers in new primary schools, alternative schools and existing regular primary schools to meet the demand of increased enrollment.
 3. Strengthening Integrated Child Development Scheme (ICDS) centers and selectively establishing Early Childhood Education (ECE) centers in villages that are not eligible for opening centers under the ICDS.
- (b) Increasing retention and improving learning achievement in primary schools (US\$42.6 million):
1. Promoting community awareness, mobilizing community involvement in school mapping, micro-planning and school improvement and establishing School Management Committees (SMCs) for each school.
 2. Constructing toilets (separate for girls) where water is available or alternative arrangements (dry toilets) where water is scarce and providing drinking water facilities in schools that do not have such facilities.
 3. Developing instructional material involving

greater participation of teachers and ensuring their timely distribution to students.

4. Instituting continuous in-service training for and on-site professional support to teachers.

(c) Improving state and district capacity to manage primary education (US\$38.5 million) :

1. Establishing and strengthening the State Project Office (SPO) and District Project Offices (DPOs) at the state and district levels.
2. Establishing and staffing Block Resource Centers (BRCs) and Cluster Resource Centers (CRCs) to train and provide on-site professional support to teachers and to facilitate community mobilization.

Table 3: (Source: Document of World Bank. June 21, 2006)

Critical Points

There are some critical perspectives which affected the targets of the Rajasthan DPEP project, which shows both positive as well as weakness of project.

Positive things of project were like it was started by robust government policies of DPEP instructions and from past other projects experiences. But few of the main points in which it was lacking were teacher deployment and decentralization and implementation speed and many staffing problems. These were due to the poor judgment and weak policies made by Government of Rajasthan in assessing the exact population data and for providing good quality primary education which ultimately lead to implementation problems. And even after a virtuous start in beginning, this project categorized as a "problem project" in 2002 (Document of World Bank. June 21, 2006).

Gender Ratio

One of the objective of the DPEP project is to narrow the gender gap in primary education. However, this project managed to reduce the gender gap in enrollment of girls from all categories of Scheduled Castes, Scheduled Tribes, Other Backward Caste and General. But it failed to achieve their target of reducing their Gross Enrollment Ratio of boys and girls below five percent. The girl's ratio at the start of project in 1999-2000 was 42.3% and which rose to 46.9% till the end of project in 2005-2006. That exemplifies the decrease in the gender gap to just 14.8% at the time of completion of project, which earlier was 21.4 % in the beginning (Document of World Bank. June 21, 2006). And this project overachieved the target in reducing the gender gap between SC and ST categories by reducing their gender gap below one percent. But the data's of OBC and children with disabilities were not received. In the case of gender gap, compared to 42.3 per cent in 1999-2000, the girls accounted for 46.9 per cent of the total enrolment in 2006 (The Hindu.4 January 2006.DPEP outcome unsatisfactory, says World Bank report.).

And according to the Annual Status of Education Report 2006 boys and girls who were out of school never enrolled and dropout of age group 7-10 were:

%Children Out Of School	
Age:7-10 Boys	5.7%
Age:7-10 Girls	11.0%

Table 4: (Source: ASER.2006)

Enrollment and Dropout

There was significant improvement observed in enrollment and dropout ration till the end of the project though it was mostly satisfactory but as the target was not achieved to their expectations. The enrollment rose to 2.9 million till 2005-2006 which was 2.2 million in 1999-2000. Showing increment of 31.6% with Gross Enrollment Ratio increased to 118% in 2004-2005 from 106% in 1999-2000 and Net Enrollment Ratio raised from 83% to 92% during the project. Most impressive improvement was seen in the increase of enrollment of Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribe groups which increased more than General people (47.7% SC & ST and 31.6 General). But the dropout rate did not show much improvement as it was 54.28% in 2003-2004 and reduced a bit to 44.89% in 2005-2006.

In spite of these improvements this project did not achieve desired targets of 100% enrollment given by Comptroller and Audit General (The Indian Express. 5 April 2007, 01:38 hrs. Rajasthan Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan short of target: CAG). Dropout rate still remains to 44.9% in 2005 with lowest in Sikar at 32%. And challenges will be faced in completing Millennium Development Goals because out of 22,054 habitations 4.6% did not even have any school facilities till the year 2005 (The Hindu. 4 January, 2008.DPEP outcome unsatisfactory, says World Bank report)

Annual Status of Education Report (ASER) report shows the data of children not going anywhere including dropouts in 2006 of age group three to six years.

Age (Years)	% Children not going anywhere including dropouts
3	36.7%
4	31.1%
5	23.0%
6	10.9%

Table 5: (Source: ASER.2006)

Retention and Learning Achievements

The objective of the project was to improve learning level by 25% and it did well in some districts but overall it was unsatisfactory. There were some surveys made which reveals the learning level of students. But Terminal Assessment survey (TAS) was only made in Tonk and Sirohi district, whereas Baseline assessment Survey (BAS) and Midterm Assessment Survey (MAS) performed everywhere else shown some progress expect Sirohi, Tonk and Bhilwara districts. Here also picture is below par, as the learning achievement is below standard and inconstant in different districts. These were mostly due to teacher unavailability or lack in teaching quality as many teachers are not trained well in training programs of BRC and CRC.

Though the capacity of institutions in few districts was fortified but institutions like Block Resource Centre (BRC) and Cluster Resource Centre (CRC) remained below average in their performance. As learning in classrooms was not improved (The Hindu.4 January 2008.DPEP outcome unsatisfactory, says World Bank report)

Some results of tests performed by ASER in 2006 are given below:

Reading: % Children Who Can Read			
Std.	Nothing	Letter	Word
I	66.5	23.5	8.2
II	25.7	34.9	26.1
III	9.6	19.5	32.5
IV	3.4	8.5	19.8
V	2.1	4.7	10.7

Table 6: (Source: ASER 2006)

Arithmetic: % Children Who Can				
Std.	Nothing	Recognizes Numbers	Subtract	Divide
I	72.5	25.2	1.4	0.8
II	32.9	52.8	9.4	4.8
III	13.6	46.4	24.6	15.4
IV	5.7	25.7	33.5	35.1
V	3.7	15.6	26.7	54.1

Table 7: (Source: ASER 2006)

Writing: % Children Who Can Correctly Write	
Std.	One Simple Dedicated Sentence
I	3.3
II	15.8
III	40.0
IV	67.9
V	80.8

Table 8: (Source: ASER 2006)

Implementation of DPEP Project

The government policies regarding the project implementation were weak. Because institutional structure recognized implementation and supervision of project was not abundantly operational in conveying the strategic facilities. Due to the continuous change of State Project Directors (SPD) a total of 11 SPD's during the project affected implementation. General elections in 2002 also affected the project leading to slow implementation. And there was a lot understaffing problem during the project and weak recruitment policies of para-teachers was also add on to implementation problem. Teacher absenteeism was also a major problem due to improper policies of government.

For this project para-teachers were recruited on contract basis, means they were not government teachers exactly and among them most of the teachers were untrained. So after their recruitment they were provided training of just one month which is not qualitative. And even these teachers were recruited by Sarpanch of panchayat who might be uneducated and politicians himself and these Sarpanch's mostly recruited their known persons as they are only the higher authority to instruct these para-teacher as they are not government teachers

and no government education departments were responsible for them. And they were paid just 1200 rupees per month (Approx.20\$ US in current price) from the fund of Sarpanch which is for construction and maintenance of village's roads and houses (Mrs. Anita Dhaka.6 July 2001. Prashant Jyoti. Development of Country is registered in mast roll (daily wage labor) of illiterate Sarpanch).

Decentralization

Decentralization and Community participation is began and increased by school administrations in DPEP project and with that decentralised governance also started in 1990. This was to support the school management and Panchayati Raj Institutions to spread primary education in outer or rural areas. This way opening school's in villages with less population help children to study as commuting long distances was not possible to attend school. Schools were even started at the villages with 200 populations. And the 73rd and 74th Amendment of constitution provided base to the decentralisation in education as it provides compulsory education to children till 14 years of age.

But it didn't go well as very few enrolments were made in many schools and in some schools teacher-student ratio was more than the set criteria of 1:40. In Alwar district it was found 1:43 in a random survey and even ratio of 1:106 was found in Udaipur district. And enrolment figures were also unreliable which were given by government (The Indian Express.06 April 2007.Rajasthan Sarva Siksha Abhiyan short of target: CAG). And teacher absenteeism was also a big problem. Once investigators from Public Report on Basic Education (PROBE) went to Jotri Peepal primary school in Bharatpur District in after noon and there two teachers were absconding out of three and the one present there was too irregular according to the villagers (Pritchett,Pande.2006. Making Primary Education Work for India's Rural Poor. PROBE team 1999). And decentralization experience has remained unbalanced in education but political decentralization made advances in Rajasthan.

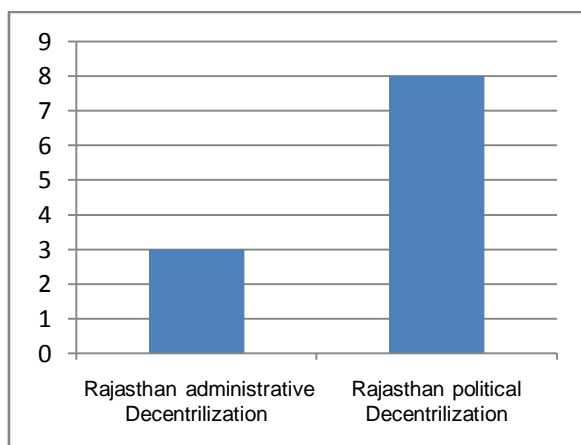


Chart 1: (Source: Pritchett, Pande.2006. Making Primary Education Work for India's Rural Poor. World Bank 1999)

Conclusion

To achieve universalisation the DPEP project was started in 1999 and finished in 2005, World Bank sanctioned US\$ 101.30 million. Though this project made great improvement in primary education in Rajasthan's 19 districts where it was implemented like it raised enrolments and decreased dropout's to some level, reduced gender gap and did significant development in providing education to underprivileged group, for the children from Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes. But failed to reduce inequality in different groups to less than 5%. And after all this progress, in the end the overall performance of this project remained unsatisfactory due to many reasons aroused during the project. It was going through many other problems too; some were like government policies, deficiency of basic facilities (drinking water, separate toilets for girls, electricity and building), and recruitment of Parra-teachers on low qualification and low quality training provided to them.

"DPEP projects outcome was unsatisfactory; however enrolment at primary school level has improved, Learning in classrooms has not improved." "The achievements were below target." (Implementation Completion Report 2008. The World Bank in India. World Bank 2008)

References

1. The Indian Express. 6 April 2007. Rajasthan Sarva Siksha Abhiyan short of target: CAG.
2. Rajasthan Council of Elementary Education. 2014. Gender Education.
3. Mrs. Anita Dhaka.6 July 2001. Prashant Jyoti. Development of Country is registered in mast roll (daily wage labor) of illiterate Sarpanch).
4. Christopher and Anuradha. 2013. The Emergence & Evolution of Sarva Siksha Abhiyan: A New Approach to Elementary Education Provision in India.
5. Ed. CIL (India) Limited (A government of India Enterprise). Progress Overview of Research: Sarva Siksha Abhiyan.
6. Lant and Varad. June 2006. Making Primary Education Work for India's Poor: A proposal for Effective Decentralization.
7. Azim Premji University. Chapter IV- Primary Education in Rajasthan.
8. THE HINDU. 04 January 2008. DPEP outcome unsatisfactory, says World Bank report.
9. Suman et al. October 2011. Inside Primary Schools: a study of teaching and learning in rural India.
10. Annual Status of Education Report (ASER). 2006. Rajasthan Rural 2006 report.
11. Roy et al. 2003. Education for All in India: going up the down staircase.
12. Centre for Community Economics and Development Consultants Society. August 2008. Status of Mainstreaming of Education in Rajasthan Case Study.