



## RESEARCH ARTICLE

# EDUCATION STANDARD AMONGST MINORITIES OF JHARKHAND: PROBLEMS AND REMEDIES

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### ARTICLE INFO

#### Article History:

Received 02<sup>nd</sup> May, 2017  
Received in revised form  
26<sup>th</sup> June, 2017  
Accepted 19<sup>th</sup> July, 2017  
Published online 30<sup>th</sup> August, 2017

#### Keywords:

Minorities, Educational level,  
Industry.

### ABSTRACT

The state of Jharkhand emerged from the Southern area of Bihar as the 28<sup>th</sup> state in the year 2000. The state is rich in Mines, Infrastructure materials and other resources. The Hindus form the majority class of the state and the Muslims (14.5%) and Christianity (4.3%) come under the category of minorities. Education level of any society reflects the prosperity of the state as well. In India, few state are leading in the education system while some still lag behind. The data of Education status of Jharkhand, reflects, that as regards to percentage, the Muslims, are in a quite good position. But when a comparative study of other minorities is done, the Muslims lag behind to some extent. The paper aims to study, in detail, the problems related to educational structure of minorities in Jharkhand with special reference to Muslims. The study will be based on Census data and other Primary data available of state.

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## INTRODUCTION

The state of Jharkhand was carved out of the state of Bihar in 2000. Ranchi is the capital of Jharkhand a state that is more famous for the various political happenings than its developments. Based on the census data 2011, the Population of Jharkhand is 32 million<sup>1</sup>, which makes it the 13th most populated state in India. The state makes up about 3.5% of the country's population a figure which was about 3% during the last census in 2001. The state is spread over an area of about 79000 sq. km. one of the smaller states in the country in terms of area. The density of population per sq. Km. is about 414, which is above the national average by a good 30 points. The state has a growth rate of about 22% which slightly exceeds the national growth rate of about 17%. The population of the state is rising considerably more due to the lack of education and lack of understanding about family planning. Education level of any society reflects the prosperity of the state as well. In India, few state are leading in the education system while some still lag behind. The data of Education status of Jharkhand, reflects, that as regards to percentage, the Muslims, are in a quite good position. But when a comparative study of other minorities is done, the Muslims lag behind to some extent.

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<sup>1</sup> Source : Census Report 2011

## MATERIALS AND METHODS

The paper aims to throw light on the educational standards of Jharkhand with reference to educational conditions amongst minorities. The study is basically primary sources oriented whereby the data from various Government and other agencies have been relied upon to portray a clear picture. The paper also intends an indepth study of implementation of Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan (SSA) and its importance in minorities of Jharkhand. Study of Right to Education (RTE), 2009 will also be done to evaluate the emphasis of such acts on minorities education standards.

### Education Standards of minorities at National Level

In the case of children from Muslim minorities the percentage of out-of-school children reduced from 10% to 7.7% in the same period. This reflects a positive trend of increased awareness among parents towards accessing education, despite economic and social constraints, as also validating the effort by the State to make schools available to SC, ST and Muslim minority children. States' own estimation of out of school children was 17.24 lakh in 2014-15 as per PAB meeting 2014-15. A third independent study has been commissioned by the Ministry on estimation of out of school children. Current efforts to promote elementary education among children from disadvantaged groups and weaker sections have been a mix of both general and specific/targeted. General efforts include: expanding infrastructure for physical access, incentives like

uniforms/ books/ cycles, tracking disaggregated data to reflect social groups and gender dimensions, provision of mid day meals etc. Many specific/ targeted programmes like uniforms, books that were originally special provisions for SC, ST children have been expanded to cover all children. Hostels and scholarships under the Ministry of Social Welfare are examples of specific/targeted programmes for SC children<sup>2</sup>.

### **Some important Problems of Education in Minorities of Jharkhand**

Various causes have been highlighted which may lead to deteriorate the education standards in minorities. From time to time, various committees have been formed to recommend steps for increasing the education percentage. The committees found some issues which were primarily responsible for the poor conditions in some areas.

#### **School Facilities and Infrastructure**

The conditions of schools/educational institutes played vital role in attracting the children, especially from poor minority community. Few districts lagged behind in proper infrastructure and other basic amenities.

#### **Quality Education**

It was observed that at some schools, post of teachers were vacant and in some the teachers were not taking the classes regularly. This demotivates the minority students, particularly in rural areas, where such students were dropped out from schools and were diverted to their professional assignments.

#### **Irregularity in classes**

Some institutes were found to be although in good infrastructural condition yet the classes were not held regularly due to some administrative assignments to the teachers viz election duty, polio drops etc.

### **Education System in Jharkhand: An Analysis in reference to minorities**

The literacy rates in Jharkhand are increasing over time as is the case with most parts of the country. The gains experienced by girls and tribals, the groups which have recorded relatively lower literacy rates in the state are substantial. Nevertheless the gender differences remain and this is more among the socially disadvantaged sections. There are also variations across districts of the state. The literacy rates increased from 54 per cent to 66 per cent over the decade 2001-2011<sup>3</sup>. While the female literacy rates went up to 55 per cent by 2011 from a low of 39 per cent in 2001, the male literacy rates increased only by 10 points from 67 per cent to 77 per cent over the same period. The gender gap is gradually declining from 28 points to 22 points. This is occurring with the literacy rates among females improving, largely due to the younger girls being in schools. However, the rural-urban gaps are wide. The rural literacy rates are at 61 per cent, while urban areas record 82 per cent literates. The difference in the educational outcomes in urban

areas are striking, with both male and female literacy rates being much higher - a reflection of better educational facilities and increasing demand for schooling. The noteworthy point is regarding the female literacy rates in urban areas which are higher than the rural male literacy rates. A large number of children in the state do not go to schools<sup>4</sup>. As per the data of the Jharkhand Education Project Council (JEPC) till April 2012, six lakh children in the age group of 6-14 don't go to school. Of the children who are enrolled, as per the Annual Status Education Report (ASER) 2011, only 59% attend schools in the state, whereas the national average is 71%. Thus, the state's position is fifth with Bihar having 50% students attending schools, Madhya Pradesh 55%, Manipur 52% and Uttar Pradesh 57%. The quality of learning is also very poor and the quality of teaching has also declined in the last few years. Shortage of teachers at the primary level is the main reason behind this poor education status. As per the ASER 2011, there is a shortage of 43,000 teachers in 40,000 schools here in the state. That apart, the teachers who are attending schools are not very well qualified. Their number is 43,000 (ASER 2011).

### **Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan and Minorities**

Abhiyan (SSA) is Government of India's flagship programme for achievement of Universalisation of Elementary Education (UEE) in a time-bound manner, as mandated by the 86th amendment to the Constitution of India making free and compulsory education for children in 6-14 years age group a Fundamental Right. The Jharkhand Education Project Council (JEPC) is the implementing agency for Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan in the state. The main aspects included:

#### **Opening of Schools**

Universal access to schooling facilities is being added by upgradation of Education Guarantee Scheme Centres, establishment of new primary schools and upgradation of new primary schools.

#### **An Intervention for Out-of-School Children**

An effort to provide access to 'out of school' children and ensure their regular participation and completion of elementary education with satisfactory levels of learning is a part of Universal Elementary Education. Planning was in a comprehensive manner to cover all children (6-14 years age group) through schools or alternative schooling arrangements. Emphasis is also laid on child-centred multi-level teaching strategies, running non-residential/residential bridge courses and innovative education centres. Drop-in centres and residential rehabilitation centres for hardcore wage-earning children have been also opened and apart from education, the focus here is on co-curricular activities, counselling and health check-ups.

#### **Institutional Reforms**

As part of Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan (SSA), the central and the state governments are undertaking reforms in order to improve efficiency of the delivery system. The state will soon make an

<sup>2</sup> Annual Report, 2015, Department of Higher Education, MHRD

<sup>3</sup> Source : Census Report 2011

<sup>4</sup> Report : Jharkhand Education Project Council (JEPC)

objective assessment of its prevalent education system including educational administration, achievement levels in schools, financial issues, decentralisation and community ownership, review of State Education Act, rationalisation of teachers' deployment and recruitment, monitoring and evaluation, status of education of girls, reservations for SC/ST and disadvantaged groups, and policies for private schools and early childhood care and education (ECCE). Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan, Jharkhand

### Community Ownership

The programme calls for community ownership of school-based interventions through effective decentralisation. This has been augmented by involvement of women's groups, VEC members and members of Panchayati Raj institutions.

### Accountability to Community

SSA envisages cooperation between teachers, parents and PRIs, as well as accountability and transparency to the community.

### Community-Based Monitoring with Full Transparency

The programme has a community-based monitoring system. The Educational Management Information System (EMIS) correlate school-level data with community-based information from micro planning and surveys.

### Focus on Special Groups

Focus on the inclusion and participation of children from SC/ST, minority groups, urban deprived children disadvantaged groups and children with special needs in the educational reform process constitute a significant aspect.

### Educationally Backward Block (EBB)

The Ministry of Human Resource Development has identified 201 blocks in Jharkhand as educationally backward blocks where the focus, under SSA, is on implementing various schemes such as Model Schools, construction of girls' hostels, and setting up of Kasturba Gandhi Balika Vidyalaya (KGBV). These blocks are identified on the basis of:

- Female literacy rate – below the national average of 46.13%
- Gender gap in literacy – above national average of 21.59%

**Clause VII** of the above, reflects that Government has taken sincere efforts to enhance the education level of the minorities, especially in rural areas.

### Right to Education (RTE), 2009

In a plea of Central Government before the Supreme Court that the Right to Education Act (RTE)<sup>5</sup> applied to private unaided schools, including minority schools and it did not violate any rulings of the top court. "The provisions...

regarding grant of admission by private unaided schools, to the extent of at least 25% of the strength of class-I to children belonging to weaker section and disadvantaged group in the neighbourhood and provide free and compulsory elementary education till its completion, in no way curtails the right or autonomy of the private unaided institutions," the HRD ministry said in an affidavit. The affidavit has been filed in response to a petition filed by Independent Schools' Federation of India challenging the Constitutional validity of inclusion of unaided schools in RTE on the ground that it violated their right to practise any profession, or to carry on any occupation, trade or business under Article 19(1)(g). Minority schools are also opposing their inclusion in the Act on the ground that it violated their right to establish and administer educational institutions under Article 30 of the Constitution. "The Act is anchored in the belief that values of equality, social justice and democracy and the creation of a just society can be achieved only through provision of inclusive elementary education to all," the affidavit sworn by department of school education and literacy Director said. The government said even before the enactment of the RTE, unaided schools had been providing free education to children belonging to economically weaker section. It gave the example of Delhi, where all unaided schools were required to admit 15% children from the economically weaker section and provide them free education.

### Recent steps of Central Government

- In order to ensure better and secured future for the students in Jharkhand, Union Minister Smriti Irani, on Monday, announced the opening of five composite schools, which will provide complete education from "Class 1 till post-graduation in one campus".
- After announcing the essential changes in the education sector in the state, the minister introduced some reforms like "inclusion of parents in the management of the institutions".
- Moreover, the Chief Minister of state Raghubar Das said, "the state government was planning to involve panchayats in school management to ensure proper running and monitoring of schools."
- Pointing over lack of furniture in schools, he requested the Union HRD Minister to provide the necessary material 30,000 schools and asked "people's representatives to develop one model school in their respective constituencies"

### Conclusion

The study shows that although there has been a considerable growth in the quality of education in recent years. Yet, as compared to national data, the education system, of minority in Jharkhand needs to be revamped. Religious taboo, including not sending girl child to schools/madrasas may be removed. The improvement in the condition can be done more through religious and social factors as compared to legislation or ordinances. Central as well as Jharkhand State Government have initiated various schemes for upliftment of education standards. These schemes and legislations, if implemented in a genuine way may definitely enhance the educational standards of Minorities in Jharkhand.

<sup>5</sup> Source : Hindustan Times report