Role of Education in the Economic Development of Rural Area

Dr. Namita Khotele
Asst.Prof.(Education), Durga College, Raipur

Abstract: Education is the doorway to the wider world and an exposition on rural infrastructure is incomplete without an assessment of the extent to which we have been able to open this door for the children of rural India. Free education policy in the country is implemented at a high cost to its quality. Despite universal free education policies of the government, households also invest considerable resources on education. This shows that, parents are willing to pay a higher price to ensure good quality education. The only group that actually benefits from the universal free education policy is the poorest of the poor. By actually trying to provide such service to the whole population without any discrimination, with a dire budget constrain, the quality of such education has suffers, effectively demoting the economic growth of rural area.

Relevant, locally-controlled educational programs play key roles in rural development in developing nations. Education has a desirable controlling influence over development of the rural individual, family, community, and society, leading to reduced poverty, income equity, and controlled unemployment. The failure of trickle-down development and recognition of the importance of rural areas and rural people to the economic emancipation of developing countries has given education a key role in rural systems of supply, production, marketing, personnel maintenance, education, health care, and governance. Functions of education include imparting social change, improving individual social position and standard of living, activating participation in rural and cultural development, increasing critical abilities of rural people to diagnose their needs, assert their rights, and take greater control of decisions affecting their lives, providing trained manpower in rural areas, linking rural and urban sectors, providing employment and income opportunities, increasing labor force productivity, and developing leadership. Education oriented to urban rather than rural needs may do more harm than good by accelerating rural to urban migration, generating youth unemployment, and leaving students ill-equipped to succeed in a rural environment. Education contributing to rural development must be locally controlled, practical, applied, problem-posing, and focused on functional specialization.

While it is generally true that post-high school education is a critical factor in determining the economic well-being of workers and communities, the characteristics of place also matter in determining the relationships between education and economic outcomes. Overall, rural areas lag urban areas in educational attainment. Many rural communities experience population loss as their young people leave for college and never return (Carr and Kefalas, 2009; and Artz, 2003). The rural wage structure rewards educational attainment differently, too, offering lower wages for given levels of educational attainment than urban areas and many rural jobs have lower skill requirements. As a consequence, many rural areas can appear less attractive to the college educated than urban areas, where the economic returns on their educational investments are higher.

In the rural context, many of the relationships between educational attainment and economic outcomes that hold true nationally also exist, but to a lesser degree. The positive relationship between economic returns and post-high school education are evident for those who reside in rural areas. Rural people with
schooling beyond a high school diploma do better across the full range of economic outcomes: they have lower poverty rates, higher wages, and a higher chance of being employed compared with rural workers who do not have those qualifications. However, earnings for rural workers at all levels of educational attainment are generally lower compared to urban workers and poverty rates are higher (Marré, 2012). Education in all its forms has the potential to empower rural people, by increasing their self confidence, their capacity to improve their livelihoods and their participation in wider processes of social and economic change (FAO & UNESCO, 2003). Rural areas are a space where human settlement and infrastructure occupy only a small share of the landscape; a place where activities are affected by a high transaction cost, associated with long distance from cities and poor infrastructures (Atchoarena & Gasperini, 2003).

There continues to be considerable discussion regarding the vital roles that good schools and a well-educated population play in promoting sound, local economic and community development activities. Certainly, it is commonsense that quality schools produce good citizens and skilled workers, and that employers are attracted to places having highly-educated labor. Recent federal and state efforts designed to tighten learning standards in our public schools are emblematic of the strong links that are believed to exist between education and a healthy local economy.

Today's rural leaders are becoming increasingly attuned to the fact that high achieving schools and related human capital investment strategies are key ingredients in the promotion of sustainable development at the local level. But, serious challenges often await rural areas that seek to pursue such efforts. As a case in point, if rural schools are successful in producing well-educated students, they run the risk of accelerating the exodus of talented youth to the larger cities that offer higher salaries and other important amenities. Certainly, rural areas can attempt to retain these talented individuals by expanding the availability of better paying, higher quality jobs in the locality. But, in far too many rural places, the necessary infrastructure and fiscal resources needed to create or attract such jobs are simply limited.

Rural development implies both the economic betterment of people as well as greater social transformation. The basic objective of all rural development endeavors / programmes has been the welfare of the millions. In order to achieve this, planned attempts have been made to eliminate poverty, ignorance and inequality of opportunities. A wide spectrum of programmes has been undertaken so far, to alleviate rural poverty and ensure improved quality of life for the rural population especially those below the poverty line. In the initial phase of planned rural development, the concentration was on sectors of agriculture industry, communication, education and health.

The developing countries want to accelerate their rate of growth but the requirements for growth acceleration are manifold. In particular, it involves reducing the level of under-employment, notably by converting the available manpower into a productive investment, a higher rate of savings, a policy of investment priorities directed to exploring and harnessing the country’s human and material resources, and a twin process of building up knowledge and capital resources.

Education in rural areas takes place at many different levels. In many countries economic development have been organized by providing not only basic education, but also specific training to improve techniques employed in the rural economy. Furthermore, recent work on social capital shows that knowledge constitutes a key element for strengthening rural communities and facilitating their
adaptation to change (Atchoarena & Gasperini, 2003). Education in rural development processes can support and uphold local culture, tradition, knowledge and skill, and create pride in community heritage (Lacy et al., 2001). Education has been shown to have an impact on individual workforce outcomes such as a higher income, but the impact is greater than that. Literacy and formal schooling are linked with reduced fertility rates, improved health and sanitation practices and an increased ability to access information and participate in various social and economic processes (UNESCO, 2002).

Education that contributes to rural development includes basic education, rural adult education, vocational education and higher education (UNESCO, 2002). Education and food security influence each other, they are closely interrelated. Education—especially education for girls—is a key meeting the basic needs of millions of people throughout the developing world. Education is crucial in helping people to achieve sustainable food security and to reduce malnutrition. Without an adequate education, the next generation will never be able to break the cycle of hunger and poverty (UNESCO, 2002).

Let us start this discussion of the costs and financing of rural education infrastructure by reminding ourselves of the enrolments at each level of education in the rural areas. As discussed already, these statistics provide only a partial picture. Even setting aside questions about the accuracy of these figures, they do not, for instance, tell us how many students actually attend classes each day and give no indication of educational outcomes;

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Levels of Education</th>
<th>Gross Enrolment Rates* (%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Pre-Primary</td>
<td>34</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Elementary</td>
<td>91</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Secondary</td>
<td>49</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tertiary</td>
<td>6.4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*These are the national GER (urban and rural); it is likely that the rural GER is much lower.


We would like to have enrolment rates that approach 100 per cent, certainly at the levels of pre-primary, elementary, and secondary education, and at least 50 per cent at the tertiary level. Indeed, the Government of India itself is compelled by legislation and the courts to have enrolment rates that approach 100 per cent at the elementary level. As Katarina Tomasevski (2003) has observed, however, the question is not really about the value of having all the children in school, or the rights of children to a good quality basic education, but rather the cost of making this provision available. Krishna Kumar (2006) has recently observed:

‘there is no obvious reason why every child cannot be put into a school for eight years as the Constitution desires. We have the resources; we have the expertise to plan. The draft bill that would have led to legislation to facilitate the implementation of the Constitutional amendment was discussed by the CABE last year. The MHRD has calculated the cost and for a while it seemed as if the draft would move towards presentation in Parliament. That, it now appears, will not happen, and the reason one gathers is that the required financial expenditure is deemed to be unaffordable.

Education also benefits rural communities. Studies have found a positive relationship between the average educational attainment in a county and per capita income (Goetz and Rupasingha, 2004; and Henry, Barkley, and Li, 2004). Therefore, improving access to and the quality of education is often seen
as an effective development strategy to reduce poverty rates and boost economic growth. In a recent theme issue of this magazine, Higher Education’s Roles in Supporting a Rural Renaissance, a series of articles explored the role of land grant universities and the cooperative extension service in creating a rural renaissance. Rural areas run the risk of improving educational attainment only to have the most educated leave for cities and the higher wages offered there. Yet by offering natural and recreational amenities or a higher quality of life in other ways, rural places can retain or attract the highly educated (McGranahan, Wojan, and Lambert, 2011).

The effectiveness of education as a rural development strategy—especially for more specialized degrees beyond a high school diploma—also depends on the demand for those skills by employers in rural areas. If rural communities are able to find ways to support the creation of high-skilled jobs, then they can reap the economic benefits of retaining and drawing in college-educated people. In other words, analyzing changes in the supply and demand for college-educated adults in the rural workforce is critical to a better understanding of the role of the college educated in the post-recession rural economy.

REFERENCE: