

**A COMPARATIVE STUDY OF ACADEMIC
ACHIEVEMENT OF SECONDARY STUDENTS IN URBAN
AND RURAL AREAS**

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Abstract

Education is a spindle to support life. Education is a way of igniting and enlightening the thought of an individual. Today students face more and stiffer competition than ever before. Qualification in higher education gives added advantage to face successful competition in job market. The present scenario of rural education condition in India has been still improving. However the rural schools have to face a lot off suffering. The schools in rural regions are very few at different far off places and children residing in one village don't prefer travelling, considering it as a waste of their money. Schools in rural areas are promoted to raise the level of education and literacy in rural India. This study will discuss the problems faced in rural and urban education and will highlight that rural – urban educational inequality exists in terms of means, ways, process and attainment.

Keywords: Secondary Education, Achievement, Human resources

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1. Introduction

“Education is not the filling of a bucket but the lightning of the fire”

The word education means to draw out that which is in has to be brought out. Education is about:

- Covering all standards of education
- Improving performance on tests on regular basis
- Meeting adequate yearly progress not only the human resources but also other population
- Producing a competitive workforce

Education, the fulcrum of sustainable development, holds the key to ‘social inclusion’. It is one of the necessary conditions for advancing quality of life and freedom. In other words, universal access to quality knowledge and skills ensures that everybody has an equal opportunity to play a full part in work and society. It is thus essential for integrating the marginalized and vulnerable in society into the development process. Promoting equity and active citizenship through a well-developed education and training system, therefore, needs to occupy the centre-stage of the development agenda in every society.

Education influences and determines qualitatively and quantitatively not only the human resources but also other population attributes like fertility, mortality, age of marriage and economic participation of the population aiming towards welfare of a society. Education is essential for eradicating poverty and mental isolation for cultivating peaceful and friendly international relations. It acts as an index to judge the socio-economic development of an area. (Pallav Mukhopadhyay - *Problem of Gender Inequality and Expansion of Education of Women in West Bengal*)

2. Background of the Study

2.1 Operational definition of the terms

Secondary education - It takes place in secondary schools and is the stage of education following primary education. In some countries, only primary or basic education is compulsory, but secondary education is included in compulsory education in most countries. If students go on to another stage of education, this is post-secondary or tertiary education and consists of higher education (college or university), or further education / continuing education.

Achievement - Something accomplished successfully, especially by means of exertion, skill, practice, or perseverance.

Human resources are the set of individuals who make up the workforce of an organization, business sector, or economy. "Human capital" is sometimes used synonymously with human resources, although human capital typically refers to a more narrow view (i.e., the knowledge the individuals embody and can contribute to an organization).

2.2 Indian Education System

India has made progress in terms of increasing the primary education attendance rate and expanding literacy to approximately three quarters of the population. India's improved education system is often cited as one of the main contributors to the economic rise of India. Much of the progress, especially in higher education and scientific research, has been credited to various public institutions. The private education market in India was 5% and in terms of value was estimated to be worth US\$40 billion in 2008 but had increased to US\$68–70 billion by 2012.

As per the Annual Status of Education Report (ASER) 2012, 96.5% of all rural children between the ages of 6-14 were enrolled in school. This is the fourth annual survey to report enrolment above 96%. 83% of all rural 15-16 year olds were enrolled in school. However, going forward, India will need to focus more on quality.

As per the latest (2013) report issued by the All India Council of Technical Education (AICTE), there are more than 3524 diploma and post-diploma offering institutions in the country with an annual intake capacity of over 1.2 million.

The AICTE also reported 3495 degree-granting engineering colleges in India with an annual student intake capacity of over 1.76 million with actual enrolment crossing 1.2 million.

Capacity for Management Education crossed 385000, and post graduate degree slots in Computer Science crossed 100,000. Pharmacy slots reached over 121,000.

Total annual intake capacity for technical diplomas and degrees exceeded 3.4 million in 2012.

According to the University Grants Commission (UGC) total enrolment in Science, Medicine, Agriculture and Engineering crossed 6.5 million in 2010.

In the India education system, a significant number of seats are reserved under affirmative action policies for the historically disadvantaged Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes and Other Backward Classes. In universities/colleges/institutions affiliated to the federal government there is a minimum 50% of reservations applicable to these disadvantaged groups, at the state level it

can vary. Andhra Pradesh had 83.33% reservation in 2012, which is the highest percentage of reservations in India.

2.3 Secondary Education

Secondary school is an important channel through which young people acquire skills that improve opportunities for good jobs. High quality secondary education that caters for the widest possible range of abilities, interests and backgrounds is vital not just to set young people on the path to the world of work, but also to give countries the educated workforce they need to compete in today's technologically driven world. Lower secondary school extends and consolidates the basic skills learned in primary school; upper secondary school deepens general education and adds technical and vocational skills. Neither is possible, however, without ensuring that all children complete a good quality primary education as the first priority in building the skills that individual, society and economies need.

2.4 Dropout at Secondary Level

Considerable research has been undertaken to define the characteristics of dropouts and to develop tools to identify children "at risk" of dropping out of school. It has been repeatedly observed that low-achievers and students from low socio-economic backgrounds are at much higher risk of dropping out which could be due to several reasons such as inadequate parenting, inability to afford the educational expenditure, poor schooling infrastructure, de-motivated teachers, pressures to augment family income, accompanied by a view that schooling has limited economic returns; peers with low aspirations; poor nutrition and health; and too few role models in the community. (Sunita Chugh :*Dropout In Secondary Education: A Study Of Children Living In Slums Of Delhi*, February 2011)

2.5 The Importance of Secondary Education

Distribution and availability of secondary education act as vital factor in regional as well as human resource development it also plays a fundamental but complex role in preparing young people for the labour market, especially for people who leave secondary education for a job.

According to Ngozi Okonjo-Iweala, Managing Director World Bank, the complexity in such cases is that an increasing number of young people in secondary education mean increasingly diverse talents, diverse job interests and job opportunities. But an additional complexity in a shifting needs of employers, which are changing rapidly. Young people need to have the tools and knowledge to adapt to the change.

Iweala is of the opinion that Govts. are increasingly paying attention to secondary education for three main reasons. First, the expansion of secondary education is putting increasing pressure on the secondary school system by their sheer number. Second, the link between secondary education and economic growth evidence suggests that having a critical mass of people with secondary education is key to shifting the basis of economic growth from a labour-intensive to a more knowledge centric activity. The third reason Iweala said, “is beyond economic benefits-it is required for young women.”

2.6 Rural Education vs. Urban education.

- There are many schools in cities and towns whereas there are very few schools in villages and rural areas.
- There are transportation facilities like bus pick and drop in urban schools whereas children in rural areas have to walk miles to reach their schools.
- Basic amenities like no drinking water are provided in some of the schools in villages.
- Level of education in urban schools is far advanced as compared to the basic level taught in rural schools.
- Computer education is given high importance in urban areas whereas very few schools in villages give computer education
- Group classes are taken by using video conferencing and audio conferencing in urban schools whereas no such facilities are provided for students in rural schools.
- School infrastructure in case of cities and urban areas is much more advanced as compared to that in schools in rural areas whereas sometimes children are made to sit on the floor due to non- availability of furniture.
- The teachers are given tools like laptop, printers, projectors etc to provide notes and other important notices to the children in urban schools while there are no such facilities in rural schools.
- School education in urban areas is more advanced especially because there is lot of computer aided teaching.
- Apart from the course curriculum, rural schools are not able to involve children in other activities like sports, co-curricular activities and competitions. Such events and activities tend to help in the overall development of the children.

Thus rural and urban educational inequality exists in terms of means, ways process and attainment. This inequality depends upon the legal system, degree of stability, geographical characteristics etc.

3. Methodology

3.1 Statement of the problem

India being a democratic country does not provide equal opportunities for both rural and urban areas. This study will be an endeavour to find the paths to overcome and bridge up the difference between rural and urban areas.

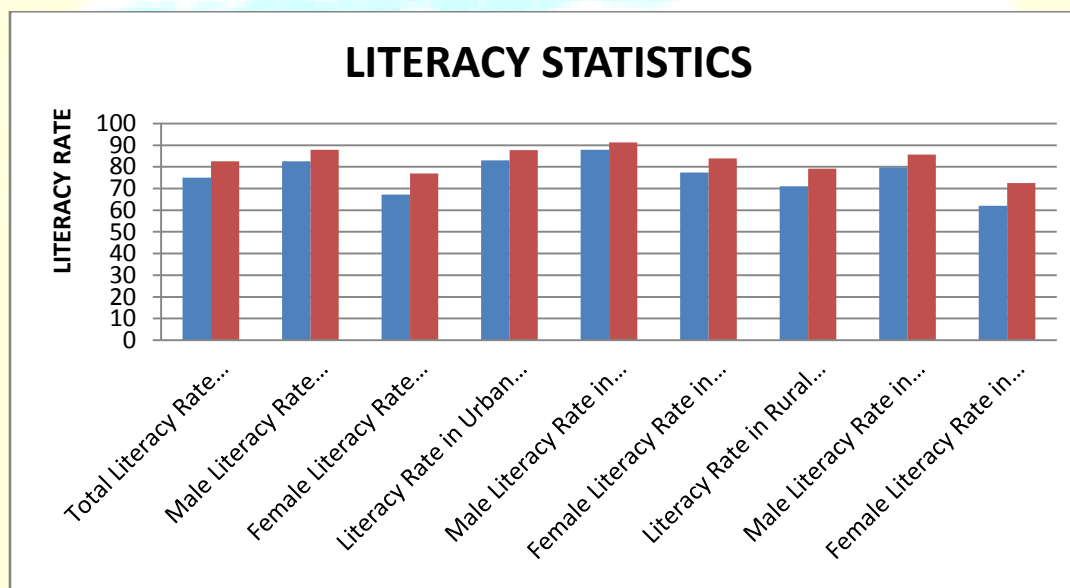
Hooghly district in West Bengal, India is the economically developed district has an unyielding foundation of education since the dawn of History. In ancient times, Sanskrit was the most prominent subject to teach the language once there was a profusion of “tolls”. In primitive age when there was no well built school building, students came to the tolls to have their education.

Hooghly District		
Total Area	3,149 Sq. KM	
Total Population	50,41,976	55,20,389
Male Population	25,89,625	28,19,100
Female Population	24,52,351	27,01,289
Decennial Growth Rate %	15.77	9.49
Population Density Per Sq. KM	1,601	1,753
Sex Ratio (No of Females per 1000 Males)	947	958
Total 0-6 Population	-	5,04,660
Male 0-6 Population	-	2,59,277
Female 0-6 Population	-	2,45,383
0-6 Population % Compared to Total Population	11.96	9.14

Table 1: Population statistics of Hooghly district

Literacy Statistics	2001	2011
Total Literacy Rate (excluding 0-6 population)	75.11	82.55
Male Literacy Rate (excluding 0-6 population)	82.59	87.93
Female Literacy Rate (excluding 0-6 population)	67.21	76.95
Literacy Rate in Urban Areas	82.95	87.75
Male Literacy Rate in Urban Areas	87.84	91.34
Female Literacy Rate in Urban Areas	77.46	83.95
Literacy Rate in Rural Areas	71.02	79.22
Male Literacy Rate in Rural Areas	79.73	85.71
Female Literacy Rate in Rural Areas	62.09	72.50

Table 2: Literacy statistics of Hooghly district



Note: the blue shade represents the year 2001 & the red shade represents the year 2011

Figure 2: Bar- graph showing literacy statistics of Hooghly district

Average literacy rate of Hooghly in 2011 were 81.80 compared to 75.11 of 2001. If things are looked out at gender wise, male and female literacy were 87.03 and 76.36 respectively. For 2001 census, same figures stood at 82.59 and 67.21 in Hooghly District. Total literate in Hooghly District were 4,078,388 of which male and female were 2,211,777 and 1,866,611 respectively. In 2001, Hooghly District had 3,333,988 in its district.

Therefore the development of education in the district is not a sudden outcome. Presently the district shares a prominent place in the field of education in the state. The secondary

education serves as a bridge between primary and higher education. It facilitates occupational mobility and social mobility as well. It is the stage of education that is being considered as a minimum level of attainment of people in modern technological world. For each generation of individuals, it is a decision making area. In the country like India 75% of its population resides in rural areas, a secondary school along with its infrastructural aspects indicates the village status and a proud possession of the village. (Shovan Ghosh and Susmita Sengupta (2012) *Spatial Problems Of Secondary Education In Hooghly District. Geo-analyst Vol.2, No. 2*)

Despite its great value in development process, many children in urban and rural areas are out of schools. Children, who fail to access or complete a basic education cycle, do not constitute a homogenous group. For some children, physical access to school is difficult; others fail to access to school due to socio-economic reasons. Some join school but are silently excluded and rarely and rarely participate in the educational process. Increase in dropout rate, decrease in attainment rate, lack of infra structural facilities, indifferent attitude of teachers towards students, high pupil- teacher ratio, ineffective curriculum and vague understanding of the benefits of education among the parents of children are some of the major ills plaguing secondary educational scenario in India.

In urban areas schools tend to be viewed as vehicles for bringing about societal change however in rural areas schools are seen as mechanisms for community cohesion and continuity.

3.2 Research questions

- 1) What are the reactions of students (urban and rural areas) regarding school teaching?
- 2) What are the reactions of students (urban and rural areas) regarding the encouragement to study they get from parents and elder members of the house?
- 3) What are the reactions of students (urban and rural areas) regarding the application of modern technology by schools for making learning more interesting?

3.3 Objectives of the study

The following objectives are formulated for the proposed study:

- a) To study the achievement of the students in Secondary examination observing the result of the students from the target population.
- b) To find out the area from where the students are scoring good marks and showing satisfactory achievement.

- c) To find out the advantages and disadvantages students of urban and non-urban areas receive.
- d) To curve out the path, so that all facilities will be received by all students of the target population of the study.

3.4 Research Design

The aim of the study is to find out the relationship existing between variable as the performance of the students in secondary examination. The relevant data for this study were obtained from the secondary examination 2013. The district was stratified into four subdivisions ten schools from rural areas of Hooghly district and ten schools from urban area of Hooghly were randomly selected making a total of 20 schools.

3.5 Population

The population of the study is the students of class X, academic session 2012-2013 of all the secondary schools affiliated to West Bengal Council for Secondary Examination in Hooghly District.

3.6 Tools for data collection

A questionnaire will be developed to collect students' feedback (both from rural and urban areas) on secondary education they receive from school. The questionnaire will have two sections. The first section regarding the academic session and the second section regarding the infrastructural facilities they received from school. The questions will be both open ended and close ended.

3.7 Procedure of data collection

Data pertaining to students' feedback on secondary education will be collected through questionnaires. The questionnaires will be sent to students through e-mail/ surface mail and will be received back within a week. Data pertaining to students performance in secondary examination.

3.8 Procedure of data analysis

The data to be obtained from the students will be analyzed with the help of quantitative technique. The study will also be on the collection of students' feedback on secondary education through a questionnaire.

Question Number	Questions	Urban		Rural	
		YES	NO	YES	NO

		(Values in %)			
Q1	Do you go to school regularly?	100	0	80	20
Q2	Is your class divided in sections?	90	10	80	20
Q3	Is the strength of your class more than 60?	20	80	20	80
Q4	Do the teachers help you?	100	0	100	0
Q5	Does the teacher use chalk dusters as teaching aids?	100	0	100	0
Q6	Does the teacher use models, charts, audio-visual medium as teaching aids?	30	70	20	80
Q7	Do you have remedial classes?	20	80	60	40
Q8	Do you have tutorial classes?	20	80	20	80
Q9	Do you have enough books in the library for reference?	70	30	50	50
Q10	Do the teachers call the guardian for your poor attendance?	60	40	70	30
Q11	Are you encouraged with gifts and certificates for scoring highest mark in a subject?	90	10	90	10
Q12	Does the institute organize awareness campaign on the importance of education?	50	50	60	40
Q13	Does the Institute have Science laboratory?	80	20	70	30
Q14	Do you think the time you spend in the school is used properly?	100	0	70	30
Q15	Are you satisfied with the infrastructural facilities of the school/institution?	80	20	70	30

Table 3: Analysis of questionnaire in percentage

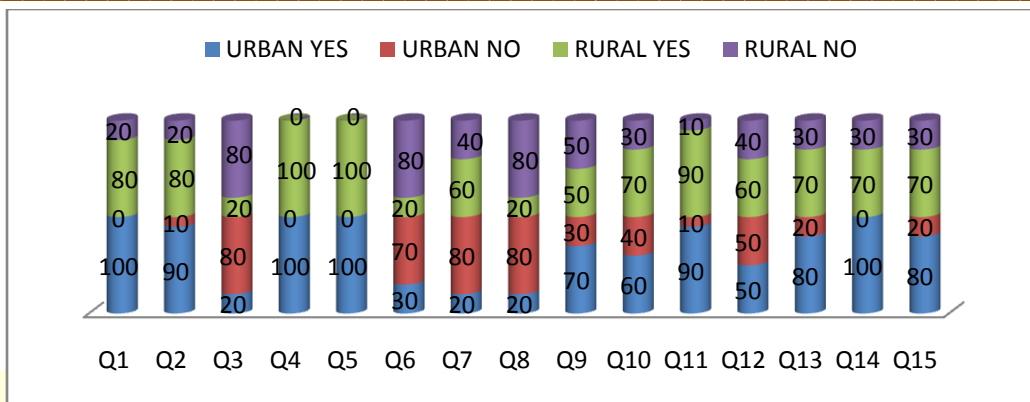


Figure 3: Bar-graph of the analysis of questionnaire.

The pen picture of the analysis of the questionnaires is 100% of the students in the urban areas go to school daily but in rural areas 80% of the students visit school regularly .90% of the students in urban areas agree that the class is divided in sections but in rural areas 80% students say that their class is divided in sections but it is to be observed that in both rural and urban areas 80% of the students say that the strength of the class is more than 60.

100 percent students gladly admit that the teachers are very helpful and they also use chalk and dusters as teaching aids in both urban and rural areas but 30 % schools in urban areas use audio-visual medium as teaching aids whereas in case of rural area he percentage is 20%.

Quite amazing,

- ✓ 20% of the schools in urban areas have remedial classes but in case of rural areas it is 80%.
- ✓ 20% of the schools in both rural and urban areas have tutorial classes.
- ✓ 70% of the schools in urban areas have libraries with enough books whereas in rural areas 50% of the schools have a proper library.
- ✓ 60% of the schools in urban areas call PTM whereas 70% of the schools in rural areas call PTM to aware the parents regarding their children's attendance.
- ✓ 90% of the schools both rural and urban areas encourage the students with gifts for scoring good marks in exams.
- ✓ 50% of the schools in urban areas organize education awareness campaigns whereas 60% of the schools in rural areas organize it.
- ✓ 80% schools in urban areas have science laboratories whereas 705 schools in rural areas have science laboratory.

- ✓ 100% students agree that the time they spend in school is fruitful whereas 70% students agree that the time they spend in school is used properly. 80% students in urban areas are satisfied with the infrastructure whereas 70% students in rural areas are satisfied with the infrastructure.

3.9 Analysis

To find out whether the level of academic performance in secondary examination of students in urban areas and rural areas in the district of Hooghly was high or low, the mean, standard deviation and coefficient of variation (c.v.) from the observed schools highest raw score from schools of both rural and urban areas are found. The result is given in Table 4:

	URBAN	RURAL	FORMULA USED FOR CALCULATION
MEAN	652.8	635.3	$(\bar{x}) = \sum_{i=1}^n x_i$
S.D.	12.51	25.77	$s.d. = \sqrt{\sum_{i=1}^n \frac{1}{n} (x_i - \bar{x})}$
C.V.	1.92	4.06	$c.v. = \frac{s.d.}{mean} \times 100$

Table 4: s.d, mean, and c.v

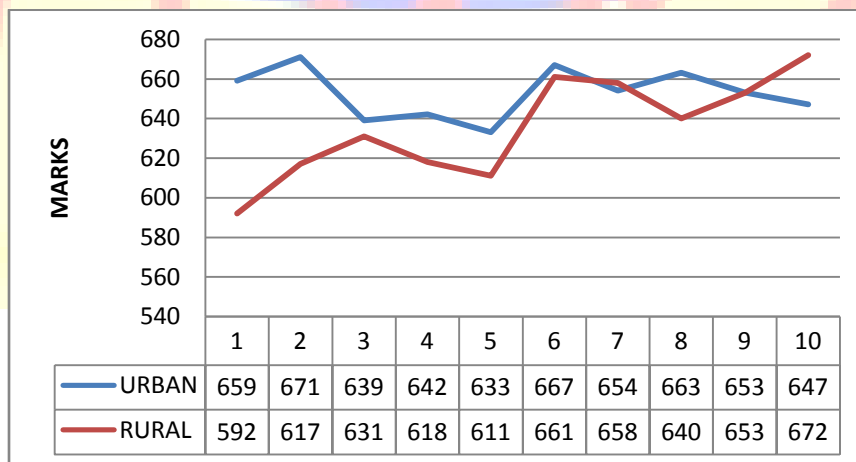


Figure 4: Graph comparing marks

The Table 4 shows that the means of the two series differ although given in the same unit, it will be inappropriate to employ standard deviation for comparing the variability. The coefficient of variation will be more logical here.

Since the coefficient of variation for marks of rural schools is larger, marks of rural schools is more variable than that of urban schools. That is students of urban schools are more consistent in their performances.

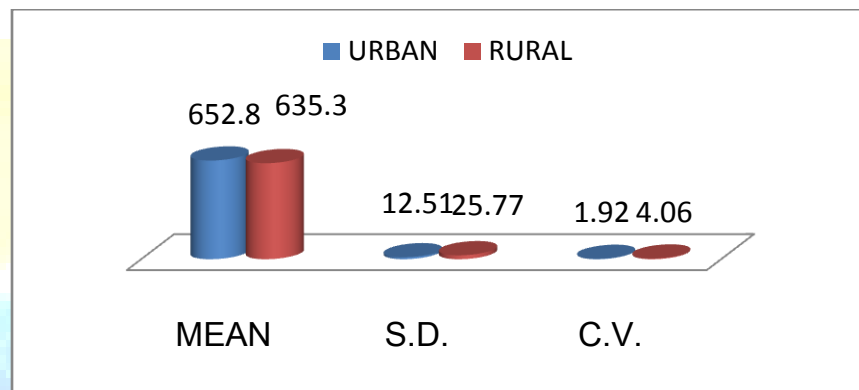


Figure 5: Comparison of dispersion

3.10 Major findings of the Study

The findings of the study showed in Table 4 and the corresponding Figure 5 with respect to the secondary examination result say, since the coefficient of variation for marks of rural schools is larger, marks of rural schools is more variable than that of urban schools. That is students of urban schools are more consistent in their performances. The students of urban schools show better/and consistent performance than the rural schools. Table 3 says the students of urban areas get more facilities and openings the reasons are , the schools are better staffed, with better facilities, students are exposed to good study habits, are highly motivated to study with conducive learning , hence these factors encourage the students from urban schools to perform better than those from rural schools. The students of the urban areas of the target population are provided with technologically rich schools with a rich infrastructure, coaching centres with highly experienced mentors, enriched libraries not only in schools but also in their neighbourhood, consultants which lead to best education for the urban people.

In case of rural students, they even do not get schools with proper infrastructures, any toilets, electricity and water. Students have to travel long distance to reach schools which is discouraging to them, lack of support from family especially to the female students. Financial strengths also play a great role which acts as a pillar.

As India is a democratic country, the opportunities and facilities received by the students of urban areas should also be enjoyed by the students of rural areas. The ministry of education should look in words to make improvement of the rural education systems.

4. Conclusion

4.1 Discussion of the Results

Social inequality has a major impact on the kind of schooling children receive and poses a significant challenge to providing equal learning opportunities. This itself is one of the basic factor which make a huge gap between rural and urban people. Urban people can access the best education.

In the rural areas fields are everything. People go for work on the field due to no food in the home. In rural areas, the education is for name sake only. There are few schools, which are run by government. The condition of these schools is also not good. Irregular, irresponsible teacher, broken blackboard, less chinks and books etc. are the common things in the rural schools. If anyone wants to pursue college or any higher degree then he/she have to leave village and move to big cities, which leads to brain drain. Most important, there is no electricity available in the many rural areas for working and studying. This makes their lives dark from sunset to the next sun-rise. Since, students can't study, they fail to compete with their urban counterparts and remain there forever.

4.2 Implication and Conclusions of the Study

From the above discussion it is clear that secondary education in Hooghly district is at critical juncture. Due to rapid and uncontrolled expansion of education, school education in India displays heterogeneity in every aspect. The present growth of civilization featured by globalization and modernization brings about significant changes in quantitative and qualitative dimensions of secondary education in rural and urban areas. Emergence of Globalization, Liberalization, Modernization, Standardization push down the rural education as many believes towards marginalization. Globalization steadily widens the rural-urban dichotomy in educational realm in general and infrastructural. Rural school education is sailing like a boat without a rudder.

At the functional level, critical areas of reform in secondary education relate to teacher management; better school infrastructure; textbooks and teaching materials; progressive

technology and examination reforms; and school based management and leadership development.

To conclude, reforming secondary education in India from an elite system to an inclusive one is a huge challenge. Needless to mention, the context of schooling is changing; so does the framework for bringing about sustainable educational change. While dealing with educational change, the emphasis need to shift from strategic planning to strategic thinking; from the management model of 'control and command' to networking and invite and participate; from planned strategy to preparing people for change (i.e. building sustainable capacity); and from transforming people to transferring opportunity. Making secondary schools and their teaching settings effective in India, therefore, would require creating the momentum for change through analyses of school culture--whether teaching-learning is taking place as part of a reaction and/or compliance, and whether the school is operating in isolation. There is then a need for shifting the school culture from reaction to defining clear purpose and focus; compliance to engagement of students, teachers and other immediate stakeholders; and from an environment of isolation to collaboration. This would require a new framework for articulating change in the secondary education sub-sector; a framework that connects the culture (of classrooms and schools) to conditions (of learning and teaching), and to 21st century competencies.

4.3 Suggestion for further research

This study had a limitation regarding the population. Further research should be done taking more population covering a large section urban and rural area. The findings will shed extra light on the enhancement of achievement level of the so called underachiever. The further study can also be on the achievements of the students confronting the subjects – finding the area, scoring highest mark in different subjects.

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