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LITERACY AND ELEMENTARY EDUCATION STATUS IN JHARKHAND: CHALLENGES TO UNIVERSALISATION

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This paper examines the educational disparities in the state of Jharkhand, which is one of the worst performers in this domain along with Bihar. The widespread variations and differences in educational outcomes within the state, across districts, social groups and other inequities relating to schools, gender, learners' achievements are discussed here. Amidst some of the progress in elementary education even in Jharkhand, in terms of enrolment, access and availability of schools and other infrastructural facilities, many of the challenges remain, constraining the strides towards universalisation or education becoming a right for all children between the ages of 5 to 14 years. The Right of Children to Free and Compulsory education Act (RTE) reflects the determination and resolve of the government to entitle every child to elementary education, but in order for this to translate into reality recognizing and addressing the challenges becomes a priority. From the high pupil teacher ratios, the insignificant improvements in retention at schools for many students to the challenge for quality of education and filling the gaps in teaching personnel, the concerns for achieving universal elementary education are dealt with in this paper for the state of Jharkhand.

INTRODUCTION

Education is the key to overall human development and improving the educational scenario for Jharkhand is essential for its population and for India to inch towards the attainment of universal elementary education. Without addressing the challenges that keep some of the laggard states behind, India will not be able to meet the goals and benchmarks set out by Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) and Education for All (EFA). The Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan (SSA) since the turn of the new millennium spells the added emphasis laid on education for all children in the elementary stages, that is, eight years of schooling which was strengthened further by the Right of Children to Free and Compulsory Education Act 2009 (commonly referred to as RTE). In Jharkhand, the SSA gained momentum since 2005. Universalisation of Elementary Education (UEE) means that each and every child of the ages 5-14 years must be enrolled, must attend school and complete eight years of schooling without dropping out. In spite of some major improvements over the years, educational outcomes reveal the challenges for bridging the disparities and providing fair playing grounds for all sections of the population.

This paper examines the widespread variations and differences in educational outcomes within the state, across districts, social groups and other inequities relating to schools, gender, learners' achievements and some of the progress in elementary education in Jharkhand, in terms of enrolment, access and availability of schools and other infrastructural facilities. The first section provides the background and some of the characteristic features of Jharkhand. The status of literacy in the state is provided in the second section, along with the intra state variations. Section three deals with the other variations and inequities in the state, especially literacy rates across social groups. The progress in enrolment, school availability and facilities, together with the remaining challenges in terms of

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out of school children, deficits in teaching personnel and other quality concerns will be discussed in section four. Finally, the major constraints facing universalisation of elementary education in Jharkhand will be summarized in the concluding section.

BACKGROUND CONTEXT

The proportion of children in India's population is quite high and will continue to remain so for the years to come even with the declining fertility rates. Children below the age of 14 years account for over one-third of India's population. By 2016, India's child population below 14 years of age is expected to stabilize around 350 million (Census Population Projections, 2006). No other nation in the world including China is likely to enjoy the benefits of having such a large young population in the years to come. It is only by ensuring that India's children are well cared for, well protected and well supported that India can aspire to enter the league of developed nations. Even after nearly 60 years of independence, 55 years of development planning, India is far away from the goal of universalisation of elementary education (Tilak, 2008).

The challenge for universalisation of elementary education is most severe in the educationally backward states, especially among the tribal populations. The relatively new and small state of Jharkhand was created by bifurcation of the southern part of erstwhile Bihar in 2000. Rich in minerals and natural resources, the state is largely rural. The state records a per capita income that is less than half of the per capita income of Punjab, Maharashtra, Haryana or Gujarat. The poverty ratio in the state is second only to Orissa. This shows that the riches of the state have not percolated down to a large section of its population. The average per capita income is also associated with a high degree of income inequality and a rural-urban gap within the state as is evident from the high incidence of poverty in rural areas. Poverty in Jharkhand, like in the country as a whole, is concentrated among the Scheduled Castes (SC) and Scheduled Tribes (ST).

The tribals constitute one fourth of Jharkhand's population in 2011. The state's share of tribals is the second highest in the country after Odisha. The share of Scheduled Castes is lower at 12 per cent but records very high poverty levels among both the Scheduled Castes and Tribes. The SCs and STs dependence on agriculture is very high. While 84per cent of the STs are in agriculture, with a bulk of them as cultivators (53 per cent), for the SCs the share is 68 per cent, with a much lower share of cultivators (only 19 per cent) and a majority (47 per cent) of them as agricultural labourers. The agricultural labourers are the most vulnerable group of unorganized workers, who record the highest poverty proportions amongst different household occupational categories (NCEUS, 2008).

The poverty rate for the state is 37, much higher than the all India 22 in 2011-12. The rural areas record 41 per cent of the population below poverty line, while the urban areas reported one fourth of the population as poor. The per capita income (NDDP at constant 1999–2000 prices) for the year 2008–09 is Rs. 16,294 for Jharkhand. The intra state variations in the per annum per capita income ranges from Rs. 8951 in Garhwa to Rs. 24160 in Dhanbad. Income and education have a high correlation, with poverty being one of the major reported causes for poor educational attainments. Non–enrolment into schooling and even dropping out often tends to be linked or associated with income poverty.

The impetus on education reinforced with the Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan has influenced enrolment to a substantial extent and is also reflected in the lowering child labour across the country over time.

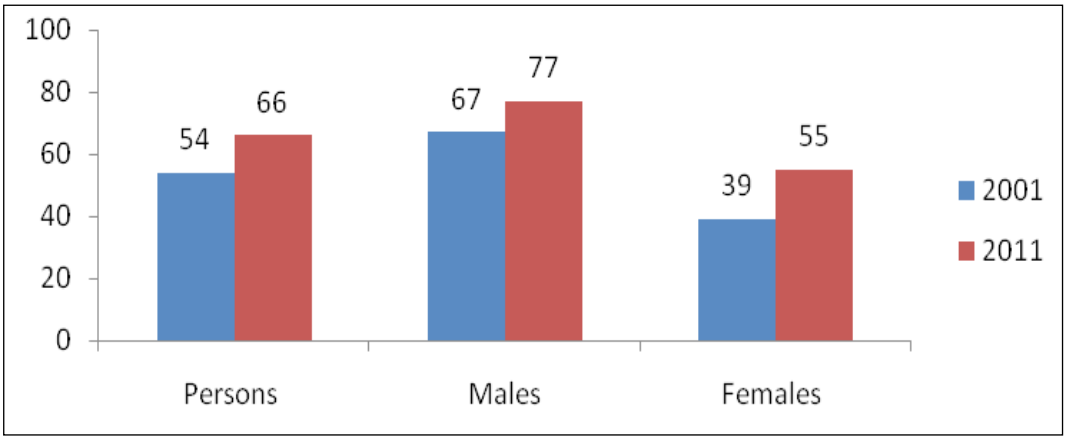
Jharkhand is also moving in the same direction. However, it continues to be among the worst states along with Bihar in terms of the educational development index (EDI) calculated by the NUEPA (DISE, 2011-12).The EDI comprises of 13 indicators for four subindices pertaining to access, infrastructure, teachers and outcomes. The infrastructure index improved especially for the primary schools while the teachers index presents the gains in this sphere at both primary and upper primary levels. Despite the index value improving for the upper primary level schools, the rank of the state remains at 34 - the second worst after Bihar.

LITERACY STATUS IN JHARKHAND

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. 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 (see Figure 1).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.

Figure 1: Literacy rates - 2001-2011



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 (see table 1).

The literacy rates among the social groups reveals the disparities in access to schooling, with the Scheduled Castes (SCs) and Scheduled Tribes (STs) recording a much lower rate. There appear little variations among the literacy rates for SCs and STs in Jharkhand when the overall average is

considered, but there are variations in the urban locations. The STs record a higher literacy rate in urban areas compared to the SCs, both among males and females. The gender gaps are much more in rural areas compared to the urban locations, both for the SCs and STs.

Table 1

Literacy Rates by Location and Social Groups (2011)

Literacy Rates - 2011	Persons	Males	Females
Rural	61	73	49
Urban	82	88	76
Scheduled Castes			
Total	56	67	44
Rural	53	64	41
Urban	67	77	57
Scheduled Tribes			
Total	57	68	46
Rural	55	67	44
Urban	75	83	68

Source: Calculated from Census of India, 2011.

The widespread variations among the different SC and ST communities in literacy rates are provided in table 2. The ST communities such as the Oraon, Kharia, Munda, Bhumij, Ho recorded a higher literacy rates than the SCs overall in 2001. Among the STs, the worse literacy levels are recorded for the Kharwar and Santhal tribes, while it is the Bhuiya, Bhogta, Turi and so on among the SCs who reported the lowest literacy levels. The Dhobi and Dusadh communities among the SCs have relatively better literacy rates.

Table 2

Literacy Rates for SC/STs in Jharkhand

Among Scheduled Castes			Among Scheduled Tribes		
	Total	Female		Total	Female
All SCs	37.6	22.5	All STs	40.7	27.2
Dhobi	56.4	39.0	Oraon	52.5	40.8
Dusadh	52.0	33.8	Kharia	51.0	42.2
Chamar	43.5	25.9	Munda	47.9	34.9
Baurri	37.6	22.2	Bhumij	41.5	24.0
Rajwas	34.7	18.2	Ho	39.2	23.9
Turi	28.7	14.6	Lohra	38.9	25.0
Bhogta	23.4	11.6	Santhal	33.4	19.5
Bhuriya	20.7	10.5	Kharwar	29.6	13.9

Source: Census 2001.

The level of education among the different communities varies tremendously as can be seen in the analysis here. Census of India[1] provided community wise information which allows for such analysis.

Table 3

Levels of Education among SCs and STs

Level of Education	SC	ST
Literate without Education level	3.1	3
Below Primary	34.1	30.6
Primary	28.9	28.6
Middle	15.7	17.7
Secondary/Higher Secondary	14.9	16.5
Technical/Non-Technical	0.1	0.1
Graduates & above	3	3.5

Source: Census 2001.

Among the major SCs, Dhobi and Dusadh have a matriculate among every 5th literate whereas among Chamars every 6th literate is a matriculate. Bhogta, Bhuiya and Turi have only 7.3 – 8.4 per cent of secondary level literates. The Dhobi community has registered the highest proportion of graduates followed by Dusadh and Chamar.

Among the STs, while Kharia, Oraon and Ho have the highest proportion of matriculates i.e. every fifth literate of these tribes are matriculates closely followed by Munda who have every sixth literate a matriculate. Kharwar have the lowest percentage of matriculates, preceded by Bhumij, Lohra and Santhal. While Oraon and Kharia have the highest percentage of graduates, Bhumij have the lowest proportion of degree holders, preceded by Kharwar, Lohra and Santhal.

Districtwise Variations in Literacy Rates

The literacy rates across the districts of Jharkhand range from a low of 49 per cent in Pakur to 76 per cent in Ranchi, the capital of Jharkhand. See table 4 for the district wise literacy rates. The literacy rates among males are higher than that of females in all districts across locations. The gap in literacy rates among males and females ranges from a low of 16 points in Simdega, which is one of the Scheduled Tribes inhabited district (with 71 per cent STs) to 28 points in Giridih, which has a relatively smaller proportion of Scheduled Tribe population (only 10 per cent) and 13 per cent Scheduled Caste population.

Literacy rates of females range from a low of 40 in Pakur to 67 in Ranchi, while male literacy rates range from 57 to 84 in the same districts. The gender gaps both at the low and the high end are the same – 17 points. A more dramatic variation is experienced in literacy rates across urban and rural areas. The same is true also for the gender gaps, with the rural areas recording a relatively higher gap of 24 points while the urban areas have a much lower gender gap of 12 points for Jharkhand. Across the districts, it is noted that female literacy rates in urban areas range from 61 in Pakur to 83 in Gumla. The rural female literacy rates however are much lower, with barely one half of all

Table 4

District wise Proportion of SC, ST Population, Literacy Rates and Gender Gaps - 2011

DISTRICTS	Population		Literacy	Rates	Gender Gap in Literacy rates		
	% SC	% ST	Total Literacy Rates	Female Literacy Rates	Total	Rural	Urban
Pakur	3	42	49	41	17	17	10
Sahibganj	6	27	52	43	17	17	13
Godda	9	21	56	44	24	24	12
Pashchimi Singhbhum	4	67	59	46	25	27	14
Latehar	21	46	60	49	21	22	14
Chatra	33	4	60	50	20	20	13
Garhwa	24	16	60	48	25	25	17
Dumka	6	43	61	49	24	25	12
Giridih	13	10	63	49	28	29	13
Palamu	28	9	64	52	22	23	14
Khunti	5	73	64	54	20	21	11
Jamtara	9	30	65	52	24	25	14
Deoghar	13	12	65	52	25	28	13
Gumla	3	69	66	56	20	20	9
Kodarma	15	1	67	53	27	29	18
Lohardaga	3	57	68	58	20	21	9
Saraikela-Kharsawan	5	35	68	56	23	26	13
Simdega	7	71	68	60	16	17	8
Hazaribagh	17	7	70	59	21	23	11
Bokaro	15	12	72	61	22	27	16
Ramgarh	11	21	73	63	19	24	11
Dhanbad	16	9	75	64	20	26	15
Purbi Singhbhum	5	29	75	67	17	23	15
Ranchi	5	36	76	67	17	22	10
JHARKHAND	12	26	66	55	21	24	13

Source: Calculated from Census of India, 2011.

females being literate. Only 39 per cent females in Sahibganj were recorded as literate in 2011, while Simdega reported 58 per cent. The rural male literacy rates range from 56 in Pakur to 81 in Dhanbad (see table 4).

PROGRESS OF ELEMENTARY EDUCATION IN JHARKHAND

The impetus with Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan could only result in desired outcomes of universal elementary education for all children in the state if adequate schools were available with appropriate facilities as well as teachers. Also, it required that all children in the ages of 6 to 14 years were enrolled and continued in schools for the requisite period of eight years. A brief overview on the provisioning of schools and also the outcome factors at the elementary level in Jharkhand is discussed in the following sections.

Access and Availability of Schools

As per the Seventh All India Education Survey (AIES), 61 per cent of the habitations in the state did not have primary schools within them (as against 47 per cent for all India). However, 77 per cent of the habitations had access to schools within the prescribed norm of one km (compared to 87 per cent for all India). Similarly, 61 per cent of the habitations had an upper primary school facility within 3 km in the state in 2002 as against 78 per cent for all India. The survey conducted by the Jharkhand Education Project Council (JEPC) under the SSA program in 2005 suggests that the state still has around 8,000 habitations that are eligible for primary schools. However, there are around 14,000 EGS and 9,500 Alternative Learning Centers (ALCs) and bridge courses in the state, which provide access to education facilities in those habitations that do not have primary schools. However, EGS and ALCs are basically transitional arrangements and, hence, unless converted to regular schools, are not sustainable substitutes for schools in the long run.

With regard to schooling facilities in the state, there is an increase in the availability of schools. The numbers of upper primary schools have increased substantially. Bulk of the 45760 elementary schools in the state is of the department of education (40177). The private schools are a minuscule of 3913 schools in 2012-13 - less than 9 per cent.

Table 5

Increase in Number of Schools in Jharkhand

Category	2010-11	2011-12	2012-13
Primary Schools	26740	27070	27539
Primary with Upper Primary Schools	14825	14874	18221

Source: DISE State Report Cards, various years.

Enrollment and Gross Enrolment Ratio (GER)

The enrolment of children at the elementary education levels are increasing over time, with more girls gaining inching towards bridging the gender gaps. Similarly, the children belonging to SCs and STs are also improving.

An analysis of educational outcome indicators reveals improvements in enrollment levels in the state. In 2010-11 (DISE, 2011-12), the Gross Enrollment Ratio (GER) at the primary level stood at 155.81 per cent as compared to 152.28 per cent in 2008-09. At the upper primary level also the GER has shown a rise to 84.39 per cent in 2010-11 from 66.19 per cent in 2008-09. The state GER at the primary and secondary levels are improving and they are recorded higher than the national average GER of 118.62 per cent and 81.15 per cent for primary and upper primary respectively. The Net Enrollment Ratio (NER) for the elementary level (69.7 per cent) is also greater than the national figure of 61.8 per cent.

A management wise ratio of enrollment indicates that proportion of enrollment is high in the government management schools (80.61 per cent) in comparison to 4.65 per cent in private aided management schools, 8.10 per cent in private unaided management schools and 12.74 per cent in private management schools. In spite of the improvements in enrollment rates, there is an urgent need to look into the enrollment rates in relation to Pupil Teacher Ratio (PTR) as well as Student Class Ratio (SCR) components. Jharkhand portrays a dismal picture with a bulk of 65.3 per cent of enrollment in primary schools with Pupil Teacher Ratio greater than 30 which is worse than for the country as a whole (40.8 per cent). A similar situation is witnessed at the upper primary level with an enrollment ratio of 62.9 per cent in schools with PTR greater than 35 in comparison to 31 per cent at the national level. At the primary level the enrollment rates with SCR greater than 30 is 44.2 above the all India average of 37.2 per cent. At the upper primary level enrollment rates with SCR greater than 35 is 45.3 per cent whereas at the national level it is only 30.5 per cent. The enrollment rates in the single teacher schools at the primary level is 15 per cent and for all elementary schools 5.2 per cent, which is much higher than the all India figures (DISE, 2011-12).

Table 6

Gender Parity Index (GPI) at Elementary level of Education in Jharkhand

GPI	PRIMARY			UPPER PRIMARY		
	SC	ST	All	SC	ST	All
Jharkhand	0.97	0.95	1	0.76	0.74	0.71
India	0.99	0.96	0.98	0.95	0.87	0.91

Source: SES, 2007-08.

A cross section analysis of enrollment by caste indicates that in comparison to Scheduled Tribes (29.0 per cent), the Scheduled Castes children exhibit poor enrollment rates (14.7 per cent) at the elementary level (DISE, 2011-12). A district wise analysis of enrollment ratio at the elementary level (Appendix – 1) shows Hazaribagh (78.80 per cent) has the lowest enrollment ratio followed by Garhwa (82 per cent). Poor enrollment ratios are recorded for the girls of Garhwa (75.5 per cent) district and for the boys (77 per cent) in Hazaribagh district.

Gender Parity Index (GPI)

Gender disparities are prevalent at various levels of education. At the primary level, the ratio of girls enrollment is 49.01 per cent and at the upper primary level it is 49.77 per cent. While the ratio of girls to boys enrollment at the all India level is 0.98 at primary level and 0.91 at the upper primary level, the situation for Jharkhand with the increasing enrolment of girls over the years is much better.

Although, the gender parity index (GPI) among the SCs and STs is lower (see Table 6). Within the backward castes gender disparities are visible from the enrollment indicators. At the primary level the enrollment rates among SC girls is 48.68 per cent and that of ST girls is 48.70 per cent. At the upper primary level, the SC girl's enrollment stood at 48.2 per cent where as for the ST girls it is 49.68 per cent (DISE, 2011-12). Overall, the gender parity index at the upper primary levels is much lower for Jharkhand as a whole, although as noted earlier also the relative levels of gender parity among the SCs and STs are better.

Out of School Children

The following table shows age wise, gender wise and year wise status of Out of School Children in the state. Though there is a declining trend in the number of out of School children over the years, the total number of out of school children is 1.43 lakh against the child population of 68.85 lakhs of eligible age group i.e. 6-14 years.

Table 7

Out of School Children in Jharkhand

Age in years	In 2006-07			In 2007-08			In 2008-09		
	Boys	Girls	Total	Boys	Girls	Total	Boys	Girls	Total
6-10 Years	89382	109699	199081	55367	64023	119390	41722	41436	83158
11-14 Years	77889	89528	167417	42964	47308	90272	29338	30647	59985

Source Annual Work Plan and Budget 2008-09.

According to the Annual Survey of Education Report, the proportion of Out of School Children has declined from 9.8 per cent in 2006 to 4.4 per cent in 2012. The gender wise classification of out of school children in the age group 7-10 indicates that 3.2 per cent of boys and 3.1 per cent of girls are not in school in the state. For the age group 11-14, 6.4 per cent of boys and 6.3 per cent of girls are out of school in the state.

The Report by World Bank (2007) reflects that poverty appears to be the most compelling factor for leaving the children out of school. Household work (25 per cent), earning compulsions (23 per cent), lack of interest (14 per cent), migration (9 per cent) and lack of access (8 per cent) left many children Out of School. According to the ASER Report (2012) a major proportion of out of school children in the state are concentrated in the district of Pakur (12.7 per cent) and Sahibganj (12.1 per cent) followed by Simdega, Dumka and Chatra (Appendix -2). Divisional estimate of ASER 2012 report points that the Santhal Pargana region comprising of Deoghar, Pakur, Dumka, Sahibganj, Jamtara and Godda districts account for 7.8 per cent of out of school children.

Drop-Out Rate and Completion Rate

The dropout rates in Jharkhand are very high compared to the national average. At the primary level, the average drop out ratio in Jharkhand has decreased from 15.79 per cent to 12.62 per cent (DISE, 2011-12).The average drop out ratio at primary level among the boys (13 per cent) is higher than for the girls (12.23 per cent) in the state. The dropout rates at the primary level is worse the for

the country as a whole where only 6.92 per cent of boys and 6.07 per cent of girls drop out at primary level. At the upper primary level, the average drop out ratio of boys stood at 7.48 per cent and for girls 5.26 per cent. The dropout rates at the upper primary level are also worse in comparison to All India average where the average dropout rates are 7.01 per cent for boys and 6.08 per cent for girls (DISE, 2011-12). Probing into the reasons for the high dropout rates in the state it was found that there is a necessity to focus more on the medium of instruction in the state. To quote UNICEF chief in Jharkhand, "This is relevant in Jharkhand because here 28 per cent students enrolled in schools are Scheduled Tribes who speak in tribal language. As per ASER 2011 for about 61 per cent students in Jharkhand the medium of communication in schools is different from their mother tongue. Good foundation in mother tongue would help learning other languages in a better way.

According to the FMIS report (2006-07) as seen in Appendix -3, almost three –fourth of the children (68 per cent) in the state drop out before completing their elementary level of education. Close to one half of the enrolled children (45 per cent) drop out at the primary level. Dropout rates are high among the SC girls, where, only one fourth of them are retained at the elementary level. Dropout rates at the primary level are high in the district of Simdega (59.4 per cent) followed by Deoghar (57 per cent). A gender wise analysis proved that dropout rates among the girls at the primary level is very high in Simdega (64 per cent) while among the boys it is in Deoghar (58.10 per cent). Among the social groups, SC girls have a high dropout rate in Simdega (78.68 per cent) district followed by Chatra (70 per cent) compared to those of ST girls. Among the SC boys dropout rate is high in Simdega (76.10 per cent) followed by West Singhbhum (66.30 per cent). Dropout rates among the ST's is high in Simdega (73.5 per cent) followed by Bokaro (68.4 per cent).

At the elementary level, dropout rates are high in West Singhbhum (86.83 per cent) followed by Chatra (84 per cent). Compared to drop outs at the primary level, gender differences are marginal at the elementary level. However among the social groups of SC's and ST's, SC girls of Chatra district (94 per cent), exhibit a dropout rate which is 26 points more than the state average. SC boys (91 per cent) also have a high dropout rate in the Chatra district even though the dropout rates are slightly lower than those of the girls of the same community. ST's have a high dropout rate in Godda district (88.53 per cent) followed by Bokaro (88.36 per cent). ST girls (90.84 per cent) in Godda district is also the worst hit being deprived of an opportunity to complete their elementary education.

At the primary level, the retention rate in Jharkhand has declined further from 53.06 per cent in 2009-10 to 51.47 per cent in 2011-12 which is much lower than the national average of 75.94 per cent (DISE, 2011-12).

School Facilities and Infrastructure

Children are constantly interacting with the physical environment of their schools during structured and unstructured time, consciously and unconsciously. On an average, teachers and children spend around 6 hours a day and over 1000 hours a year in school. For this, the school must have minimum facilities that include basic amenities (NCF, 2005). Unfortunately the present education system in India exhibit wide variation in the provisioning of school infrastructure which acts as a deterrent to retaining the child in the system. As per the DISE statistics (2011-12), while most schools have drinking water facility (90 per cent), only very few schools in Jharkhand have boundary walls (7 per cent), computers (8 per cent), ramp (37 per cent), medical check ups (17 per cent) and play grounds (30 per cent). Schools with common toilet facilities account only for 78 per

cent of the total schools in the state, while those with girl's toilet facilities amount to 68.2 per cent. The non availability of girl's toilet especially at the secondary level exposes the pathetic situation of schools in the state. Next to Bihar (4.6 per cent), Jharkhand is the state which has the least number of schools (10.39 per cent) with electricity connection.

Class size is an important factor that influences the choice of desirable methods and practices that the teacher uses in the process of curriculum transaction. Way back in 1966, the Kothari Commission Report had warned that large classes would do serious damage to the quality of teaching and that in crowded class rooms, all talk of creative teaching ceases to have any significance (Kothari Commission Report (1966): p233-234 as quoted in NCF, 2005). Jharkhand is one among the states having a high average student class room ratio of 33 which is well above the national average of 30 (DISE 2011-12). The average number of class rooms in primary schools for 2011-12 is only 2.6 as compared to 3.1 at national level. At the elementary level too the average number of class rooms is lower (4.5 per cent) that for national average (4.7 per cent). The average number of classrooms in the government schools increased from 3.1 per cent (2009-10) to 4 per cent in 2011-12 it is lower than for the country as a whole (7.8 per cent). Jharkhand stands next to UP and Bihar with the maximum number of districts (16) having Student Classroom Ratio (SCR) greater than 30 (DISE 200-12).

Teachers: Quantity and Quality Issues

Apart from adequate physical facilities which include the school infrastructure, another challenge of quality in education is the existence of adequate teachers of requisite quality. An enabling environment is necessary for children to feel secure, where there is absence of fear and which is governed by relationships of equality and equity (NPE, 1986; NCF, 2005).

The percentage of teachers in government schools of Jharkhand have declined from 89.69 per cent in 2009-10 to 75.93 per cent in 2011-12. In the aided schools the decline in the proportion of teachers was from 4.78 per cent to 3.98 per cent in 2011-12. However, the state witnessed an increase in the proportion of teachers in unaided schools from 5.53 per cent in 2009-10 to 10.47 per cent in 2011-12.The DISE statistics (2011-12) report that average number of teachers in schools (3.7 per cent) is lower than the national average of 4.7 per cent. The pupil teacher ratio (PTR) has declined from 44 per cent (2009-10) to 40 per cent (2011-12). About 65.29 per cent of schools at primary level have PTR greater than 30 at the primary level where as at the national level it is 40.84 per cent. At the upper primary level, 62.94 per cent of schools have PTR greater than 35 where as at the national level it is only 30.77 per cent. The proportion of professionally trained regular teachers in the state has declined from 76.75 per cent (2010-11) to73.03 (2011-12) where as the proportion of professionally trained contractual teachers have increased from 46.17 per cent (2010-11) to 52.94 per cent in 2011-12. Though there is a general decline in the proportion of contractual teachers at the elementary level, government schools in Jharkhand exhibit an increase in the same proportion from 59.65 per cent in 2010-11 to 62.30 per cent in 2011-12.

The percentage of single teacher schools in the state has increased from 8.02 per cent (2009-10) to 12.43 per cent (2011-12). The proportion of single teacher schools with 15 or more students at primary level has increased from 11.10 per cent (2009-10) to 18.76 per cent in 2011-12. At the elementary level the proportionate increase was from 7.91 per cent (2009-10) to 12.18 per cent in 2011-12. As the numbers of schools increase without adequate intake of teachers leading to a lot more single teacher schools. The presence of female teachers accounts to a great extent for the

education of a girl child. The percentage distribution of female teachers is also as low as 31.66 per cent as compared to all India average of 46.27 per cent.

The professional growth of teachers through in- service education not only helps them to gain the confidence by engaging with their practices and re- affirming their experiences but also provides opportunities to engage with other teachers professionally and to update knowledge (NCF, 2005). A state wise analysis (DISE, 2011-12) proves that only 50 per cent of female teachers in the state of Jharkhand have undergone in- service training.

Learners' Achievement Level

The Annual Status of Education Report (ASER, 2012) which is based on independent assessment by Pratham, has also reported that the learning levels are not at all satisfactory in the state and they require focused and concerted efforts to improve the same. A comparative analysis of state figures with national figures reveals that the performance of children at all levels of elementary education is much poorer.

Table 8

Learning Achievement of Students in Jharkhand

State	% children (standard 1-2)	% children (standard 1-2)	% children (standard 3-5)	% children (standard 3-5)	% children (6-8) who can read English sentences	% children (standard 6-8) who can do division
Jharkhand	66.06	68.29	44.8	36.23	36.6	46.8
National	67.5	71.4	54.1	40.7	38.8	40.6

Source: Annual Survey of Education Report (ASER), 2012

A district level analysis (Appendix 4) of Jharkhand by Pratham (2012) highlights that Pakur district (40.7 per cent) followed by Deoghar (40.9 per cent) and Chaibasa (42.7 per cent) has the lowest proportion of children (standard 1-2) who can read letters and words. Pakur (50 per cent) and Deoghar (50.4 per cent) has the lowest proportion who can recognize numbers 1-9 or more. With respect to learning levels at standard 3-5, only 11.2 per cent of children in Pakur and 23 per cent in Chaibasa and 29.5 per cent in Deoghar can read level 1 (standard 1) text in own language. The districts of Pakur (7.8 per cent), Simdega (20.2 per cent) and Deoghar (21.2 per cent) have lowest proportions who can do simple arithmetic calculation of subtraction.

CONCLUDING OBSERVATIONS

There are widespread variations across the state and among locations, especially among socially disadvantaged groups in Jharkhand. Overall, the literacy rates and educational indicators are still pretty low, however, there are some improvements which are reflected in the increasing enrolment levels. Enrolment of girls, and even among children belonging to the backward communities, especially at the primary school level are remarkable. However, the dropout rates remain high and continuation at the upper primary levels declines. Also the quality of schooling, availability of adequate and trained teachers, and other facilities affect the learners achievements adversely.

In general the situation of rural Jharkhand, which comprises a bulk of the population with only 22 per cent urbanization, is particularly backward in terms of most educational indicators. This is so remarkable that even the urban girls are better than the rural boys in an otherwise gender disparate society. Apart from the rural–urban differences the social disparities are also stark. This paper also reveals the intra social group disparities across different castes and tribes. Although male literacy rates are quite high among some of the SCs such as Dhobis and Dusadhs, as also among the Oraons, Kharias, Mundas among the STs, the extent of gender gap remains substantial. In order to explain these aspects more detailed field survey based studies will have to be undertaken to understand whether it is historical, political or socio–economic dynamics that cause or lead to the prevalence of this in the state.

Apart from the social group variations, differences across the districts of this educationally backward state are also striking. The districts which have low literacy rates are also those with lower enrolments and retention, higher dropouts and out of school children as well as poor learner achievement levels. The inadequacy of teachers especially trained teachers are one of the major factors that constrains improvements in the quality of education. The recent efforts to enroll all children in the elementary school going ages has shot up the enrolment rates and also increased literacy rates in the few years' time. But this has not as yet substantially changed the scenario among rural children, with many of them studying in classes with very high numbers of students and the pupil teacher ratios being way beyond the designated acceptable ratio as per the RTE.

While these factors act as a deterrent in improving educational attainment levels, research studies (Galab, et al., 2009) have also highlighted other factors such as household characteristics, including extreme poverty, illiteracy, poor nutrition and the inability of children's access to or retention in schools. The home environment together with poor nutrition and economic conditions affects children of poor, illiterate households, especially the historically disadvantaged communities such as the Scheduled Castes and Tribes, adversely. Even incentive schemes to encourage children in such circumstances are often inadequate and have a poor outreach. The learning achievement levels reflect these poor outcomes.

In sum, while primary education has witnessed tremendous improvements, the challenges for upper primary schooling are still huge. There remain manifold challenges for the state to inch towards universalising even elementary education, before reaping the demographic dividend.

APPENDICES

Appendix 1: District wise Gross Enrollment Ratio at Elementary Level in Jharkhand

District	Elementary Level		
	GER		
	Boys	Girls	Total
Bokaro	99.93	99.35	99.66
Chatra	100.06	96.59	98.43
Deoghar	96.41	94.18	95.38
Dhanbad	95.45	92.99	94.26
Dumka	100.06	105.60	102.58
East Singhbhum	98.16	96.83	97.53
Garhwa	87.56	75.54	82.00
Giridih	106.49	104.20	105.41
Godda	108.36	92.92	101.02
Gumla	95.91	94.64	95.30
Hazaribagh	76.99	80.75	78.80
Jamtara	97.18	85.76	91.59
Koderma	94.90	99.10	96.87
Latehar	97.24	88.78	93.31
Lohardaga	95.48	99.47	97.40
Pakur	96.63	91.57	94.25
Palamu	123.25	110.79	117.42
Ranchi	104.27	119.55	111.67
Sahebganj	97.23	94.25	95.83
Saraikela	86.32	91.90	88.82
Simdega	88.71	85.88	87.33
West Singhbhum	96.10	81.26	88.70
Total	98.13	96.36	97.29

Source: FMIS, 2006-07

Appendix 2: District wise Out of School Children

District wise Out of School Children	
Districts	% of Out of School Children
Garhwa	4.1
Palamu	3.3
Chatra	5.3
Hazaribagh	1.1
Kodarma	1.1
Giridh	3.2
Deoghar	4.8
Godda	7.5
Sahibganj	12.1
Pakur	12.7
Dumka	5.4
Dhanbad	1.8
Bokaro	1.6
Lohardaga	4.3
Gumla	4.5
Chaibasa	8.9
PurbiSingbhum	3.4
Jamtara	4.8
Simdega	5.5
Saraikela	3.5
Khunti	5.1
Ranchi	2.1
Total	4.4

Source: Pratham, 2012.

Appendix 3: Drop Out Rates[2] at the Elementary Level in Jharkhand

Districts	I-VIII								
	All			SC			ST		
	Boys	Girls	Total	Boys	Girls	Total	Boys	Girls	Total
Bokaro	80.38	82.71	81.48	82.44	86.26	84.21	87.87	88.99	88.36
Chatra	83.00	86.00	84.00	91.00	94.00	92.00	79.00	78.00	79.00
Deoghar	71.70	73.60	72.60	74.50	75.90	75.20	79.30	83.20	81.20
Dhanbad	63.94	68.80	66.26	68.19	72.58	70.27	73.80	77.95	75.87
Dumka	72.88	76.26	74.48	80.14	82.35	81.16	79.14	81.35	80.16
East Singhbhum	44.31	40.88	42.76	39.72	39.35	39.54	27.65	41.64	35.09
Garhwa	79.87	80.21	79.24	78.68	78.09	78.41	83.02	83.27	83.16
Giridih	20.50	20.94	20.72	37.80	41.30	39.55	42.41	44.36	43.38
Godda	58.21	64.02	62.57	83.32	90.00	85.94	86.92	90.84	88.53
Gumla	78.91	79.44	79.18	77.69	77.49	77.59	84.62	83.22	83.92
Hazaribag	85.78	85.13	85.46	86.23	85.24	85.74	82.74	77.56	80.15
Jamtara	75.40	80.20	77.80	81.60	84.13	82.77	78.85	72.15	75.86
Kodarma	33.93	37.72	35.82	36.37	38.34	37.35	35.90	39.81	37.85
Latehar	67.47	67.92	67.64	71.38	77.39	73.81	63.71	64.38	63.96
Lohardaga	72.84	47.66	62.51	67.84	66.66	59.51	75.84	72.66	67.51
Pakur	75.27	77.55	76.36	70.13	70.56	70.39	78.66	82.67	80.45
Palamu	67.00	70.75	68.60	73.57	75.51	74.32	66.97	70.92	68.53
Ranchi	80.98	82.39	81.64	81.26	81.91	81.70	86.33	87.01	86.79
Sahibganj	58.50	68.50	63.39	67.65	75.70	71.70	64.55	72.30	68.50
Saraikela	61.73	60.99	61.35	61.32	68.46	64.89	71.30	76.90	74.10
Simdega	73.81	73.81	73.83	86.97	88.43	87.70	86.80	87.79	87.30
West Singhbhum	87.00	86.66	86.83	90.62	89.96	90.29	87.82	88.28	88.05
Total	67.88	68.73	68.39	72.20	74.53	72.91	72.87	74.78	73.53

Source: FMIS, 2006-07

Appendix 4

District wise Learning Achievement Levels In Jharkhand				
Districts	% of children who can read letters, words or more	% of children who can recognise numbers 1-9 or more	% of children who can read Std I text or more	% of children who can do subtraction or more
Garhwa	59.1	59.6	40.2	33.3
Palamu	70	62.6	40.2	32.9
Chatra	65.4	67.2	36.9	26.7
Hazaribagh	84.3	88.2	61.7	47.2
Kodarma	77.3	79.2	71.4	69.7
Giridh	70.4	68.7	47.1	40.4
Deoghar	40.9	50.4	29.5	21.2
Godda	58	61.3	37.9	40.4
Sahibganj	67.7	68	46.3	38.5
Pakur	40.7	50	11.2	7.8
Dumka	59.4	63.9	31.7	30.1
Dhanbad	79.8	84.4	58.1	37.5
Bokaro	74	75.4	53.4	47.5
Lohardaga	66.5	65.4	47.7	36.5
Gumla	61.5	67.2	39.6	24.4
Chaibasa	42.7	48.3	23	54.4
Purbi Singbhum	73.6	70.8	50.3	42.5
Jamtara	63.4	69.1	41.8	38.2
Simdega	64.6	69.1	30.6	20.2
Saraikela	84	83.3	57.9	43
Khunti	66.2	75	58.2	44.4
Ranchi	74.5	77.7	55.2	46.3
Total	66.1	68.3	48.8	36.2

Source: ASER, 2012

References / Notes

1 The 2011 Census of India has not yet provided such information, hence the community wise discussion pertains to the 2001 census information. Even though the numbers may have improved a bit the variations across communities may not be very distinctly different from the analysis here.

2 Drop Out Rate = 100- (Completion Rate + Average Retention Rate).

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