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Educational Status of Children in Rural Rajasthan: A Study of Government Schools

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ABSTRACT :

This study examines the educational landscape for children studying in government schools in rural Rajasthan, with a focus on both the challenges they face and the opportunities available to them. Using a descriptive research design, the study explores critical barriers such as poverty, parental illiteracy, limited infrastructure, cultural constraints, early marriage, and lack of transportation. At the same time, it highlights enabling factors like the Mid-Day Meal Scheme, scholarships, library access, and co-curricular activities as government-provided supports. The research was conducted in selected villages from Ajmer and Jaipur districts using a multistage random sampling technique. Data was collected from three government schools—one each in Ladera, Ganeshpura, and Buharu villages—through interviews with 45 students, 45 parents, and three headmasters. Both primary and secondary data sources were used, including census data, ASER reports, and village profiles. Interview schedules covered themes such as school access, gender norms around education, academic support, and awareness of welfare schemes. Data analysis was carried out using SPSS and MS Word to generate tables and interpret trends. The findings reflect a complex educational scenario in rural Rajasthan, marked by persistent structural impediments but also shaped by meaningful state-led interventions. The study underscores the need for targeted policy actions that address both socio-cultural and infrastructural challenges while strengthening existing educational support mechanisms.

Key Words: Rural Children, Education, ASER Report and Gender Discrimination

Introduction

As reflected in the Census of India 2011, illiteracy continues to be a critical socio-educational concern in Rajasthan, with the problem exacerbated in rural regions. These rural areas suffer from chronic underdevelopment, limited infrastructure, and socio-cultural constraints, all of which collectively hinder educational progress (Miller, 2007). A variety of interlinked structural and socio-economic issues such as lack of transportation, parental illiteracy, low awareness levels, and inadequate school facilities contribute to a learning environment that is neither accessible nor supportive for many children. The result is that a significant proportion of rural children remain excluded from formal education systems, reinforcing cycles of poverty and social inequality. Agriculture, being the primary source of livelihood, is deeply influenced by seasonal and climatic changes. Given that farming in Rajasthan is largely rain-fed and vulnerable to drought, families often face economic instability. During such periods of unemployment or low agricultural yield, children are expected to contribute to household incomes. This compulsion leads to child labor, either in the form of assisting with agricultural work or engaging in wage labor in informal sectors. These economic pressures force children, especially those from marginalised communities, to drop out of school at an early age, severely disrupting their educational continuity and development.

Although the government of Rajasthan has introduced several welfare schemes—including the Mid-Day Meal Scheme, scholarships for marginalised groups, distribution of free uniforms and textbooks, and enrolment drives—the implementation and effectiveness of these programs often fall short. In many cases, these schemes fail to reach the most disadvantaged due to lack of information, bureaucratic hurdles, and logistical issues. Furthermore, infrastructural deficiencies such as shortage of qualified teachers, inadequate classrooms, poor sanitation facilities (especially for girls), and absence of libraries and laboratories weaken the foundation of learning (Singh, 2021).

Statistical data underscores the depth of the problem. The literacy rate in urban Ajmer district is 83.88%, while the rural literacy rate stands at just 59.13%. In Jaipur district, the contrast is similar, with urban literacy at 82.47% and rural literacy at 67.62%. These figures highlight a stark rural-urban educational divide, rooted not only in economic disparities but also in deeply ingrained social practices. One of the most troubling aspects of this divide is gender-based educational exclusion. In villages like Ganeshpura, where the Jat community predominates, female literacy remains alarmingly low. Traditional gender roles, restrictive social norms, and early marriage customs prevent girls from pursuing education beyond a basic level. Many families view education for girls as unnecessary, particularly when their eventual role is perceived to be that of a homemaker. Child marriage, still prevalent in several parts of rural Rajasthan, leads to an abrupt end to girls' schooling. In such contexts, educating daughters is often seen as an economic burden rather than a long-term investment (Sahoo, 2016).

Gender discrimination, both overt and subtle, remains a persistent impediment. The dropout rates for girls tend to increase significantly as they reach adolescence. The two primary factors behind this trend are economic utility and early marriage. As girls grow older, families often prioritize their

contribution to household chores or income over education. Additionally, the belief that girls will marry and leave the family home discourages investment in their schooling. Thus, families tend to focus resources on boys' education, perpetuating a cycle of gender inequality. Despite these challenges, there are pockets of progress and emerging opportunities. Some government programs are beginning to make an impact, especially where there is strong local leadership, better monitoring, and community engagement. Programs that provide bicycles for girls, hostel facilities, or awareness campaigns for parents have shown promise. Yet, the scale and sustainability of these interventions remain limited (Devendra, 1995).

The present study is motivated by the desire to critically examine the realities of education in rural Rajasthan. It seeks to identify the core impediments that obstruct children—especially girls—from accessing quality education, and to explore the existing opportunities that could be scaled or improved. The study also aims to assess parental attitudes toward schooling, understanding how socio-economic status, caste, and cultural values shape educational aspirations (Mangla, 2022). By engaging with students, parents, and school personnel across select villages in Ajmer and Jaipur districts, this research attempts to present a comprehensive and grounded understanding of the educational landscape in rural Rajasthan. Ultimately, the goal is to contribute to informed policy recommendations and grassroots-level interventions that can bridge the gap between government intent and on-the-ground realities, ensuring that every child, regardless of gender, caste, or location, has the opportunity to receive a meaningful education.

Relevance of the Study

This study was describing the educational impediments and opportunities for children of rural Rajasthan. Through this study the policy makers will understand about the educational status of the Rural of Rajasthan. The study was conducted in three villages of rural Rajasthan & it was assumed to have following implications:-

- This study relevant for knowing the various kinds of programmes or policies running by the govt. for the betterment of the education.
- This study also through light on the facilities/ services provided by the govt. school in the rural villages.
- This study relevant for knowing various kinds of educational impediments facing by the rural areas children.
- This study can focus on the various kinds of issues in the Rajasthan state like: - Gender discrimination in education, Child Marriage etc.
- This study relevant for knowing the teacher students ratio in the rural villages school in the Rajasthan.
- Through this study we can know about the parent's attitude about their children studies.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Objective of the Study:

- To reflect on the educational status of the children of Rural Rajasthan
- To identify the educational impediments for children studying in Govt. schools of Rural Rajasthan.
- To identify the educational opportunities for children studying in Govt. schools of Rural Rajasthan.

Research Design

Descriptive research design: Present work is descriptive in nature as it is describing the educational impediments and opportunities for children studying in Govt. schools of Rural Rajasthan like:- Non availability of the school, Poverty, Parental illiteracy, lack of awareness, non availability of the transportation, family Burdon, child marriages, cultural, problem etc. and this research also describing the educational opportunities for the children studying in the govt. school like:- Mid Day Meal, Scholarship, Library, Co curriculum activity etc.

Universe of the study

The study was based on villages situated in Ajmer and Jaipur district.

Sampling technique

For the study multistage Random Sampling technique was used. At first stage, the researcher randomly selected two district of the Rajasthan (Ajmer and Jaipur). Secondly researcher randomly selected two Block in these district one from the Jaipur district and one from the Ajmer district. Thirdly researcher made a list of villages who are poor in educational status, out of them 3 villages were randomly selected, one from the Dudu block (Ladera village) and two from the Silora block (Ganeshpura and Buharu villages). After that researcher randomly selected one govt. school in each village and after that researcher randomly were selected 15 students in each school and 15 parents and one school headmaster in each village for better understanding of the educational impediments and opportunities for the children of the rural Rajasthan who are going in the Govt. schools and also through the parents researcher understand about their perception about the education and about their education status also researcher understand basic services available in the schools through the schools teacher.

Tools for data collection

In the research, researcher has been selected interview schedule for the data collection. In the interview schedule question has been based on the educational impediments and opportunities for the children of Rural Rajasthan who are going in the govt. schools. In the interview schedule these type

of question has been selected like:- Distance of school, In your family does women were allow for education in earlier times, You have any problem in the subjects, . Does your school provide mid day meal, Does your school provide to you scholarship etc.

Data analysis

In this research, researcher did data analysis with the help of the SPSS software and also through the MS Word, because through the MS word researcher made various type of table for the data analysis.

ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION

Researcher selected two district near by the university Ajmer and Jaipur. Ajmer is 48 km near by the CURAJ and Jaipur is 96 km. In the Jaipur district out of 13 block researcher selected one block Dudu block and in this block researcher selected one village this was Ladera. In the Ajmer district out of 8 block researcher selected one block this was Silora and in this block researcher Selected two villages Ganeshpura and Buharu village these villages details are given below:- Ladera village total population was 1313. Male population was 680 and female population was 630 and in this village total literacy was 52.88%. Male literacy was 74.115 and female literacy was 50.23%. Ganeshpura village total population was 359. Male population was 193 and female population was 166 and in this village total literacy was 47.33%. Male literacy was 62.55% and female literacy was 36.12%. Buharu village total population was 1572. Male population was 822 and female population was 750 and in this village total literacy was 56.55%. Male literacy was 76.89% and female literacy was 50.66%. In the present work, researcher selected three types of Respondents 1st was Students Respondents 2nd was Parents respondents and 3rd was Teacher respondents for understanding various type of Educational impediments and opportunity for the children of Rural Rajasthan. Through the students, researcher understand about the impediments they are facing for going the schools and through the parents, researcher understand about their perception about the education and about their education status also researcher understand basic services and available in the schools through the schools teacher.

Socio demographic profile

Indicator	Frequency	Percent
Boys	24	53.3
Girls	21	46.7
Hindu	38	84.4
Muslim	7	15.6
General	3	6.7
OBC	38	84.4
SC	4	8.9
Married	16	35.6
Unmarried	29	64.4

The socio-demographic data of the respondents reveals a fairly balanced gender distribution, with 53.3% boys (24) and 46.7% girls (21). This indicates a relatively equitable representation of male and female students in the sample. In terms of religion, the majority of the respondents (84.4% or 38 students) identify as Hindu, while a smaller proportion (15.6% or 7 students) are Muslim. This reflects the broader demographic pattern of rural Rajasthan, where Hinduism is the predominant religion. Caste-wise, the data shows that the Other Backward Classes (OBC) form the largest group, comprising 84.4% (38) of the sample. Scheduled Castes (SC) make up 8.9% (4), and only 6.7% (3) belong to the General category. This suggests that a significant portion of the respondents come from historically marginalised or socially disadvantaged groups. Regarding marital status, the majority of the respondents are unmarried (64.4% or 29), while 35.6% (16) are married. The presence of married respondents, despite the young school-going age, may point to the prevalence of early or child marriages in the study areas—an important socio-cultural factor impacting education. Overall, the socio-demographic profile reflects the complex interplay of gender, caste, religion, and marital status that shapes the educational experiences and challenges of children in rural Rajasthan.

Educational impediments for the children

Distance of the school from the house of students

Distance	Total Respondents	Percentage (%)
Below 2 Km	39	86.7
2 km to 4 km	4	8.9
4km to 6 km	2	4.4
Total	45	100.0

Table elaborate that 86.7% respondents going in their own village and school distance in the village was below 2 km and 8.9% were children going to school within the area of 2 km to 4 km of the village and 4.4% children were going school 4 km to 6 km for the education. Because in this three villages Sr. secondary school not available and students need to move for other villages for the higher education.

Parents consent towards sending their children to other village for higher education

Parents consent	Total Respondents	Percent
Consented send	36	80
Not consented	9	20

Total	45	100
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Table elaborate that 80% parents were allow their children for other village for the higher education and 20% parents don't allow their children other village for the higher education because of some problem in their family detail given in next table for how to go the children in the other village for the study and reason behind not sending of children in other village for the higher education. So this table shows that 20% students drop out after completing the secondary education. This table also shows that about the gender discrimination because were 20 boys allowed for the other villages for the higher education and were only 16 girls allowed.

Student respondents accompanying person for further study in different village

Accompanying person	Total Respondents	Percent
Alone	16	35.6
Parents	5	11.1
Friends	4	8.9
Brother	11	24.4
Not Applicable	9	20.0
Total	45	100.0

Table elaborate that 35.6% student want to go other village without any help they want to go alone, 24.4% student want to go other village for study with brother and they told that without their brother they don't able to go other village for study, 11.1% student want to go other village for study with the parents in this percentage mostly girls (3%) want to go with the parents, 8.9% student told that they want to go other village for the study with their friends and peer group in this ratio all were girls respondents. 20% student don't allow for the other village for the study.

Problems in front of continuing higher education

Type of problem	Total Respondents	Percent
Financial problem	2	4.4
Transport related problem	4	8.9
Any other	3	6.7
No problem	36	80.0
Total	45	100.0

Table elaborate that but 4.4% student was financial problem so they don't able to go other village for study and they want to do work for the earnings and 8.9% told that they have transport problem, because in their family vehicle is not available so they don't able to go other village for study, 6.7% student have any other problem like lack of awareness, earnings, parental job etc, so they don't want to go other village for study, 80% student was no problem for go other village for the study.

Discussion

The findings of this research reinforce the observations and trends previously noted in the review of literature, while also highlighting several context-specific barriers unique to the studied villages in Rajasthan. Most of the impediments identified in this study—such as poor infrastructure, gender discrimination, parental illiteracy, and economic hardship—are consistent with existing scholarly discussions on rural education challenges (Shah, 2011). However, some locally specific barriers emerged from fieldwork that have received less attention in past literature, offering fresh insights into the lived experiences of students in these regions. One of the most critical challenges identified is the lack of adequate transport facilities (Miller, 2016). Many villages in Rajasthan are not connected by proper roads, which severely restricts mobility, especially for students who wish to pursue education beyond the primary level. In the absence of reliable road infrastructure, government and private buses do not operate in these areas, isolating students from neighboring villages where secondary or senior secondary schools are located. This infrastructural gap acts as a major deterrent to continuity in education, particularly for girls and economically disadvantaged children.

Parental illiteracy emerged as another significant barrier. In households where parents themselves are uneducated or lack basic awareness about the value of education, children receive little academic encouragement or support. These parents often fail to prioritize schooling, and in many cases, expect their children to contribute to household or income-generating activities instead (Naik, 1987). This is compounded by the widespread gender discrimination observed in the region. Many families hold the belief that girls should remain at home to care for siblings or assist in domestic chores. As a result, female students often lack familial support and are discouraged or even prevented from pursuing education. Child labor, particularly in agriculture, remains prevalent in the studied villages. Due to seasonal and economic pressures, children are often required to assist their families in farming activities from a young age. This diverts them from their educational path and results in irregular attendance or complete withdrawal from school. Another deeply entrenched cultural issue is child marriage, which prematurely ends educational pursuits for both girls and boys. Once married, students typically shift their focus to earning a livelihood and taking on adult responsibilities, thereby forgoing opportunities for higher education and career advancement (Jain, Agarwal, Billaiya & Devi, 2017).

The study also revealed that low teacher motivation is a critical yet often overlooked factor in rural educational outcomes. In many rural schools, teachers demonstrate a lack of enthusiasm and engagement, which significantly affects students who are heavily dependent on them due to a lack of academic support at home (Ahamad & Narayana, 2015). This demotivates students, leading to disinterest, poor performance, and increased dropout rates.

A child's home environment plays a vital role in educational success. Families where at least one member is literate tend to foster a more positive and supportive atmosphere for learning. However, in the absence of such influences, the home environment often becomes another site of neglect for education (Ramanai, et., al., 2018). Poverty was found to be a pervasive impediment, restricting students' access to essential educational materials and

services. When parents are unable to meet basic needs such as uniforms, books, or transportation costs, children are more likely to disengage from school (Nayak & Kumar, 2022).

The research further highlights severe shortcomings in school infrastructure and staffing. In all three studied villages, government schools were found to have poor student-teacher ratios, and a lack of subject-specific teachers. For subjects like Mathematics and English, schools were found to combine classes or rely on underqualified staff, undermining the quality of instruction. Additionally, the physical condition of school buildings was inadequate—many lacked proper classrooms, sanitation facilities, or learning resources. These deficiencies diminish student motivation and contribute to poor academic engagement. This study paints a comprehensive picture of the multi-dimensional challenges faced by students in rural Rajasthan. While some issues mirror broader national trends, others—like the acute transport problem and local sociocultural norms—demand targeted policy interventions. Addressing these educational barriers requires a holistic approach that combines infrastructural development, community sensitization, improved teacher training, and inclusive policy implementation.

Conclusion

In many villages of Rajasthan, families have been compelled to migrate to urban areas primarily due to the lack of adequate educational facilities in rural regions. These families seek better opportunities and access to higher education for their children—opportunities that are often unavailable in their native villages. This pattern of migration highlights the urgent need for the government to strengthen the rural education infrastructure and services. Two government initiatives—scholarships and the Mid-Day Meal Scheme—have played a significant role in improving school attendance and educational outcomes among rural children. The majority of students in the surveyed areas have benefitted from these schemes, which serve both as incentives for enrollment and support mechanisms for economically weaker families.

However, these efforts alone are not sufficient. The government must introduce and effectively implement comprehensive educational programs and schemes that address the unique needs and aspirations of rural students. There is a growing demand among these children for enhanced learning opportunities, including access to co-curricular activities, digital resources, vocational training, and guidance for higher education. A critical area requiring immediate attention is the student-teacher ratio in government schools. Many schools in rural Rajasthan suffer from acute shortages of qualified teachers, particularly for key subjects like Mathematics, Science, and English. Ensuring that schools are adequately staffed is essential for delivering quality education and for bridging the urban-rural education divide. By prioritizing these areas, the government can significantly contribute to the empowerment and educational advancement of children in rural Rajasthan.

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