



Mains Practice Question

Q. Decentralisation in school management and governance is the key for fixing and reviving the broken governance system of rural education in India. Discuss. (250 words)

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Approach

- Highlight some challenges in rural education related to governance and management. Link them to larger issues faced in the schooling system.
- Explain how de-centralization could help solve these challenges with some case studies.

Introduction

Since independence rural education outlook has improved significantly in India like rise in literacy rates, accessibility to education especially to depressed communities, the declining gender gap in education etc. But when seen from the prism of achieving SDG 4, rural education still faces many challenges, mainly in the realm of management and governance.

Main Body

- Majority of rural schools have fewer than 50 students, as per NITI Aayog.
- Shortage of professional, qualified teachers, teacher absenteeism.
- Infrastructure Gaps: malfunctioning or non-functional toilets, no electricity, library, computers, clean water.
- Laggard implementation of social schemes like Mid-Day Meal.

All this has resulted in lower quality of education in rural areas as highlighted by ASER, National Achievement Survey, lack of employable skills, increasing dropout, especially at secondary and higher secondary levels. These can be improved upon by de-centralising school management and governance system.

- Local bodies like Panchayat has crucial role in developing, managing and maintaining school infrastructure. They can mobilise local communities in taking ownership and contributing physically, financially towards expansion and maintenance of infrastructure on a regular basis.
- SHGs can be used in management after training, capacity building programme. They are already playing a crucial role in implementing DAY-NRLM, financial inclusion programme.
- State government can give 5 or more schools to different SHGs to bring about improvement in overall quality via. Management by giving clear mandate, financial as well as manpower support for a fixed time on pilot basis. Local bodies can review their progress and consequently move towards course correction.
- Such a system could be effective in resolving issues like quality of food given in Mid-Day Meals, monitoring Teacher's presence, school's working capital and infrastructure etc.

Conclusion

Thus, the quality of education is intricately linked to how well is governance and management. People's

involvement at the grassroots level can exploit this link in rapidly, resource efficiently and creatively reach SDG 4.

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