

Poor facilities no constraint for good schools in Jaunpur-Abu Zafar

Jaunpur (Uttar Pradesh), Jan 9 (IANS) Broken roads and power cuts have failed to deter people in their drive for education in this eastern Uttar Pradesh district. They have set up more than 30 schools and technical institutes for youth of the area.

If you drive between Imran Ganj to Guraini in the Shahganj sub-division of the district -- a distance of some 10 km -- you can count about 40 schools and technical institutes. Only about 10 of them are government run or aided.

The area covers some 60 villages, with a population of over 100,000.

From primary schools to degree colleges, Islamic madrassas to computer and mobile phone repairing centres, the area offers a wide choice to parents anxious about their children's education.

Ramdhani Rajbhar, a farmer of Amilo Pashurampur village, was confused about which school to choose for his son Sanjay.

'When my son finished Class 5, it was very difficult for me to choose a school, as I felt that all schools are providing the best possible facilities,' says Rajbhar.

Mirza Azfar Baig, manager of the Mirza Anwar Baig Educational Society, remembers that earlier it was too hard to even open a school.

'When we started, there was nothing but forest and some barren land. It was hard to run a school as there was lack of transportation and educational awareness,' Azfar told IANS.

'Even now I am not much satisfied with the status of education but at least the children are going to schools,' he added.

The Mirza Anwar Baig Educational Society was established in 1962 and at present runs three institutes - Abdul Aziz Ansari Degree College, Mirza Anwar Baig Intermediate College and Maulana Azad Taleemi Markaz (Islamic madrassa), where about 5,000 students are enrolled.

Geeta Maurya, headmistress of R.K. Convent School in Khetasarai town, thinks that it is a sign of progress that people are now eager to give their kids good education.

'This is a good thing that there are enough schools. If we have more schools then the student-teacher ratio will be better,' says Maurya.

Raghunath Yadav, a 65-year-old tea maker of Khetasaria, says that unlike earlier, he can now spot many vehicles ferrying kids to schools.

'There are more school vehicles in the mornings and evenings than local transport. You can see a series of at least 50 yellow- and white-coloured buses and vans here daily,' he said.

Not only this, girls of the area are ahead of boys when it comes to education.

'Awareness and interest towards education is more common among girls. We provide education to both and in the graduation level, girls' ratio is 60 percent more than boys,' Azfar explains.

'Girl students are more interested and enthusiastic about education. It is a new trend in our rural belt and definitely guarantor of a better future.

'Educated girls can solve lots of problems like health and hygiene and they may also help their children to have a bright future,' added Maurya.

Farhan Ahmad, trainer of mobile operating classes in Faizan Mobile Centre, says that there is only need to encourage the youngsters.

'This area has enough talent and students are very fond of technical education but we lag behind because of the scarcity of proper facilities.

'We have electricity only for 10 hours a day with a very low voltage, which badly affects the machines. The problem was so acute in October and November last year that I had to stay back many nights so that I could recharge the batteries,' Ahmad said.

Mohammed Arif, headmaster of Furqaniya Higher Secondary School at Badshahi Talab, 20 km from Jaunpur city, states that the credit should go to the people.

'It is a good sign for the future, but it is because of people and not due to government,' he said.

(Abu Zafar can be contacted at abuzafar@journalist.com)

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