



CONTRIBUTION OF NGO TOWARDS INCLUSIVE EDUCATION

Dr. Sujata Adamuthe & Prof. Rashi Dubey Mishra

Principal, Arihant College of Education ,Pune

Assistant Professor Azam College of Education,Pune

Abstract

This paper focuses on the status of inclusive education in our country. It also elaborates on the role of the NGOs in the education of the underprivileged. The contribution of a Pune based NGO the Bharatiya Jain Sanghatana (BJS) is also remarkable in this field which needs to be understood is also highlighted. The Education system of a country does not function in isolation from the society of which it is a part. Hierarchies of castes, economic status, gender relations and cultural diversities as well as uneven economic development also deeply influence issues relating to access and equity in education. The Right to Education approach in schools favours the evolution from integrated education to inclusive education where the environment is adjusted according to the needs of the child. The school system of a country must be adjusted to meet the needs of all its children. Many Non government organisations are working at the grassroot level to improve the education standards and providing it to the underprivileged sector of our society. They are also generating awareness about the importance of education in the remote areas and the underprivileged section of the society. BJS an NGO running in Pune with a vision of holistic development of society has shown significant contribution in upliftment of the underprivileged children and is working to give them a brighter future through their disaster response strategies, women empowerment, minority education, formal education, Career guidance ,research etc.

Keywords- *Inclusive education ,NGO, underprivileged ,holistic development*



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INTRODUCTION

“Every society that values social justice and is anxious to improve the lot of the common man and cultivate all available talent must ensure progressive equality of opportunity to all sections of the population. This is the only guarantee for the building up of an egalitarian and human society in which the exploitation of the weak will be minimized” (The Education Commission, GOI, 1966. 108)

Indian Education System

The Education system of a country does not function in isolation from the society of which it is a part. Hierarchies of castes, economic status, gender relations and cultural diversities as well as uneven economic development also deeply influence issues relating to access and equity in education. Education was limited only to specific strata of society though India was a land of wisdom and knowledge. The caste system posed challenge to national development. Attempts were made by the social reformers to make education reach the underprivileged and the marginal groups. These concepts have found their way to frame the education policies through experience of special needs schools. The Right to Education approach in schools favours the evolution from integrated education to inclusive education where the environment is adjusted according to the needs of the child. Education has become more learner centric today. So to be inclusive it needs to be able to meet diverse needs of learners and circumstances of learners. It should give appropriate weight to the abilities, skills and knowledge they bring to the teaching and learning process.

Concept of Inclusive Education

All children and young people of the world, with their individual strengths and weaknesses, with their hopes and expectations, have the right to education. It is not our education systems that have a right to a certain type of children. Therefore, it is the school system of a country that must be adjusted to meet the needs of all its children.

BACKGROUND OF THE STUDY

- The Dakar framework(UNESCO,2000) states that inclusive education environment is essential to deliver high quality education.
- The children with disability and youth of other marginalized groups that maybe facing the danger of exclusion were the focus of the education plan as reflected in the Eleventh Five Year Plan (2007-2012) of India.
- With the universalization of elementary education .The state financing of secondary education has increased and the contribution of the NGO is also significant with official recognition.
- The need for a literate population was recognized as a crucial input for nation building and the National Literacy Mission (NLM) was set up by the Shri Rajiv Gandhi in 1988 to achieve this goal.

- The Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan (SSA) is the national program launched in 2001 to achieve universal primary education by 2007. This program has brought education to doorstep of millions of children even the first generation learners.
- The tenth plan focuses on bringing education the low income family children also to secondary education as the schools will have to enroll them also. This will reduce disparity in the society. This plan also emphasizes on vocationalization of education and increased use of ICT in education.
- At present, the Ministry of Human Resource Development has two departments, namely the Department of School Education and Literacy, and the Department of Higher Education after the year 2000.
- The total public expenditure on education needs to be increased from 3.6%. The Eleventh five year plan has kept “Inclusive Growth “as its focus.

NEED AND IMPORTANCE

- With the fast growing Indian economy there is greater requirement for improving the education of the minority, women and backward classes.
- The vision of inclusiveness is not restricted only to eradicate poverty but also social mobility of the weaker sections of the society that is people with special needs including the disabled it has to be focused on.
- Equal educational opportunities should be given to all for the betterment of our multicultural society. It presents a comprehensive strategy for strengthening the education sector covering all segments of the education pyramid (GOI, 2008).
- The need of the hour is to end the differences between words like special education, regular education, and inclusive education for this inclusion needs to be understood.
- The teacher education remains a very weak link with respect to equipping teachers to be prepared for an inclusive classroom environment.
- In the present scenario the participation of NGO in education of the marginalized sector in our society needs to be understood as their contribution is significant.
- BJS Pune an NGO has worked since decades for the underprivileged especially catered to their educational needs which should be highlighted to motivate others to work in this field.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

- A. To understand Inclusive education in relation to the underprivileged section of the Indian society.
- B. To explore the role of the NGOs in the education of the underprivileged children in our society.
- C. To investigate the contribution of the Bharatiya Jain Sanghatana an NGO in Pune towards the education of the underprivileged children in our society.

OBJECTIVE WISE DESCRIPTION

A. Inclusive Education in India

There are an estimated 25 million children out of school in India (MHRD 2003 statistics, cited in World Bank, 2004), many of whom are marginalized by factors such as poverty, gender, disability, caste, religion etc. The idea of inclusive education is certainly highly relevant to our current condition, where differences in religion, faith, gender, ethnicity and ability are often seen as a threat rather than a source of richness and diversity. Inclusive education stands for improvement of schools in all dimensions to address the educational needs of all children. Human resources potential aside, without education, marginalized children may not be able to fulfill their rights as citizens (Tomasevski, 2003) in the largest democracy of the world. Inclusive education thus needs to be implemented with full rigor in order to fulfill the mandate of Education for all as guaranteed by the Fundamental Right to education declared by the 86th Constitutional amendment act in 2002 and enacted as a law in the year 2009.

B. NGO contribution for The Underprivileged

A non-governmental organization (NGO) is a citizen-based association that operates independently of government, usually to deliver resources or serve some social or political purpose.

Nature of NGO (Non Government Organization)

India is a vast country so in order to provide quality education they need support of other agencies for it. They are important element of contemporary Indian society. They are considered third sector, non profit, voluntary sector etc. They are supported by government but do not fall under any government policy. They have got important status among their clientele that is the deprived section due to their active contribution in that area. They work in those areas where the government initiatives are limited or lacking.

Status in India

Millions of children are still out of school and the retention rate in schools is very low. Many students drop out even before completing standard 8. The status of girl child education is still low in India due to the orthodox mindset of people. Many Non government organisations are working at the grassroot level to improve the education standards and providing it to the underprivileged sector of our society. They are also generating awareness about the importance of education in the remote areas and the underprivileged section of the society. They have been working hard since Independence in strengthening the education system in India so that more children reach school and remain there.

Few renowned NGOs in India which are working for this cause are Teach for India, Make a Difference, Barefoot College India, Cry etc with their team of volunteers and professionals are working for the upliftment of the weaker section of the society with the tool that is education. They believe that every child should get a chance to get educated.

C. Bharatiya Jain Sanghatana ,Pune

The Bharatiya Jain Sanghatana (BJS) is a voluntary organization (NGO) operating in the Social Development and Disaster Response space across the country. Envisioned and founded by Mr. Shantilal Muttha, a Social Entrepreneur, BJS started its journey in the year 1985 in Pune, Maharashtra, and gradually built up its nation wide organization and network of volunteers dedicated towards addressing the various national concerns.

Vision

To collectively contribute towards Nation Building through Holistic Development of Society

Mission

BJS endeavors and strives to identify the major concerns of relevance to the society at large, and to come up with effective and deliverable solutions. (Vision & Mission, n.d.)

I) Social Activities of Bhartiya Jain Sanghatana in Educational Context

Social Development Strategy-BJS endeavors to identify socially relevant concerns affecting a large segment of society and it analyses the issue and its various facets and develops interventions.

1.1) Disaster Response Programmes at WERC(Wagholi Rehabilitation Centre)

BJS has the enviable legacy of responding to Natural calamities and disasters of gigantic magnitude in an ever alert, and effective manner. It has participated and carried out large scale relief and rehabilitation operations in almost every major natural disaster that the country has faced since Latur earthquake 1993, Nepal Earthquake 2015, Maharashtra Draught 2013

,Kashmir Earthquake, 2005,Tsunami 2004 – Tamil Nadu,Gujarat Earthquake, 2001,Latur Earthquake, 1993,Andaman & Nicobar Islands

Latest Initiative : Rehabilitation of children of farmers who committed suicide due to drought

The efforts made by Bharatiya Jain Sangathan is a turning point in the upliftment of the whole community of these farmers.BJS rehabilitated the children of these farmers in their Wagholi Rehabilitation centre in Pune(WERC) to provide complete education to them.

1. 2) Empowerment of Girls

Empowerment of Girls would mean equipping them to be economically independent, self-reliant, possess positive esteem to enable them to face, cope, and stand up to any difficult situations.

1.3) Minority

With a view to ascertain the areas of benefits of the minority status, research and studies were conducted within a month of the community falling under the umbrella of minority status.They are working towards the education of their community as well.

1.4) Pioneering Social Projects-

Tribal Project

It Focused on children in classes 5th to 8th standards.351 students from malnutrition affected tribal villages were selected and taken to Pune.Complete responsibility of food, clothing, medical attendance and learning aids taken by BJS up to Graduation.2008 onwards, every year, children from malnutrition tribal areas of class 5th are identified for their education and complete care from standard 5th till 12th is taken to facilitate their further higher education.

II)Educational Activities of Bharatiya Jain Sanghatana

1)Students Assessment Program – (SAP IV)

BJS with its experience of working with children for over twenty five years felt the need to develop a tool for assessment which can fulfill the need for the child as well as the parents and teachers

2) Career Guidance-

The career guidance process helps the students to identify their strengths and needs and builds a plan based on their personal profiles.

3)Ensuring Quality in Education

Experts have suggested meaningful interventions to rectify the imbalance and bring in quality improvement. One such meaningful intervention has been the Assessment and Accreditation

process as a means of evaluating compliance to a set of standards and ensuring school quality. (Activities/Programmes, n.d)

4) Research development-

Various research activities for educational advancement and innovation are carried out at its head office in Pune for the holistic growth of the society as education is the main tool for social development.

CONCLUSION AND DISCUSSION

The idea of inclusive education is certainly highly relevant to our current condition, where differences in religion, faith, gender, ethnicity and ability are often seen as a threat rather than a source of richness and diversity. Inclusive education stands for improvement of schools in all dimensions to address the educational needs of all children. The role of NGOs is significant in this field in order to bring education to the marginalized section of the society and improving their living standards. BJS an NGO running in Pune with a vision of holistic development of society has shown significant contribution in upliftment of the underprivileged children and is working to give them a brighter future. Such contributions need to be understood by all the citizens so that they understand inclusion and participate in nation building.

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