

Community Participated Initiatives At Ameliorating The Deprived Children And Adolescent

Gautam Ghosh

Bikash Bharati Welfare Society, Kolkata, India

INTRODUCTION

Bikash Bharati Welfare Society is a recognized national level NGO in India operating from Kolkata Headquarters with outposts in the rural areas of Jhargram, Tarkaeswar(West Bengal), Ghatsila(Jharkhand) and the city slums of Baranagore, Cossipore(Kolkata) and Ranibagh(New Delhi). The Society has developed over a period of last three decades, and effective community participated Educational Programme for the deprived sector in rural areas and the city slums in north Kolkata. The educational programme, run for different segment of population, as Early Childhood Education for pre-school children, Institutional education for School drop-out children (both children at work and those not at work), Adult education for concerned adults, Continuing Education for neo-literates, are all community mobilised programmes.

In consideration of the limited resources available, the Society set priorities for different form of education for different segment of the deprived population ,with an emphasis on the education of female children and girls/women. For developing community participation, the Society mobilised a complete spectrum of community – workers, non-workers, housewives, business people, teacher community, students community, elderly people and others. Also stress was given on involving small community – localised and the members interactive with each other, youth groups and CBOs.

MEHODOLOGY

The Society is successfully implementing the following educational programmes in rural tribal area in Jhargram under Midnapore and Baranagore slums in Kolkata.

Institutional Education: Through running of one recognized vernacular High School for imparting education to tribal girls and boys in a remote area in Jhargram in Midnapur, West Bengal. And another recognized English Medium School for children of transferable job holders in Jhargram. These schools provide education together with education in life skills and Entrepreneurship .

Non-formal & Vocational Education: The Society runs 10 NFEs for Street and Working Children, 1 Computer Education centre for poor Adolescent and Youth and 1 Handicraft training centre for young women in Baranagore slums of North Kolkata. This is a collaborative venture with the local youth clubs and technical institutes.

Adult & Continuing Education: Run under Special Adult Literacy Drive (SLAD) of National Literacy Mission in the villages in Jhargram by the Students of Higher Secondary Classes enables imparting functional literacy to village adult male and female.

Open Basic Education: The Society is an accredited center of the National Institute of Open Schooling, India . The Society runs a project known as Shikshalaya Prakalpa (to provide open basic education to the deprived urban children and adolescent in Kolkata) is run through 60 SP centre covering 875 boys and girls. The Society acts as the Resource Centre. Currently the Society has embarked on the Government of India sponsored SARVA SHIKSHA ABHIYAN (Education for All) – and running centers to provide education to the deprived and out-of-school children in the north Kolkata areas.

Mainstreaming into formal system of education: A collaborative programme, involving participation of about 62 NGOs of Kolkata and Howrah Municipal Corporation areas and the Government Agencies, is run to provide financial support to deprived poor children of non-formal education set-ups in getting admission into formal schools.

RESULTS

- Annually around 500 tribal and other deprived children are benefited through the institutional education programme.
- Annually 300 street and working children and about 200 youth are benefitted through the NFE and Vocational education Programme.

- Around 100 village adult male and female participants are beneficiaries of the SLAD.
- Annually 1000 children are provided support for admission into formal system of education through the Mainstreaming project . Besides the Project has enabled working together of the Government and Non-Government sectors, as well as other stakeholder groups for the cause of mainstreaming street, working and deprived children into formal system of education.

LESSONS LEARNED

- Education facility need to be located with only an active cooperation and help of local people including target group and the same should meet a felt need to be sustainable.
- For educational programme, motivation being extended to all layers of the pupils' Society to have a multiplier effect.
- Once a basic programme is in place, spin-off activities could be launched with beneficial results.
- The deprived children are not homogeneous group and they need to be addressed with diverse programmes for diverse segments. And there should be follow-up programme that focus on deprived children to make them graduate to normal conditions.