

Prospects and challenges faced by NGO in enhancing universal primary education in India

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Abstract:

In the case of India, one has to keep in mind that the Government has a large responsibility when it comes to education, but as the background part of the paper points out, one should also remember the private sector, especially those unrecognised schools where the Government does not influence the education. It is important to remember the private sector, because the sector is large and it is impossible to improve the overall situation if one only takes Government schools into consideration. One also has to bear in mind that NGOs in India play an important role in the education sector, because the role of NGOs are being highlighted in different education policies. From this study one is able to see that the NGOs studied are fulfilling some of the responsibilities that are being stated in the SSA programme. Thus, in this case the studied NGOs cannot be criticised for their work, because they are listening to the suggestions made by the Government. The overall conclusions from the study are that NGOs have the potential to improve the educational situation through rising awareness of education issues, advocacy and through preparing children for their studies. But according to the studied NGOs the main responsibility lies with the Government, which right now does not do enough when it comes to primary education.

Keywords: *NGO, primary education, government,*

I. Introduction

NGO as a association includes groups and institutions with primary humanitarian and co-operative objectives rather than commercial objectives completely or widely independent from Government. NGOs are private agencies that can support development at local, national and international level by organising indigenous groups. NGOs as citizen groups raise awareness and influence policies and include independent cooperatives, community associations, societies, groups and various other associations. NGOs work for the betterment and upliftment of socio-economically and politically weaker sections of the community to improve their status in society so they can have equal rights and opportunities. Such organisations can contribute develop the society towards an improved and developed way of living and existence. As a community group and organisation. NGO provides and fulfills certain services, developdat oriented tasks and works with aims and objectives to bring about required positive changes in society, community, areas and situations.

Definition of NGO

Non Governmental Organisation (NGO) or Non Profit Organisation (NPO) is a group, an organisation, a non profit establishment or a non profit entrepreneurship of individuals, activists, voluntary and social persons. NGO or NPO is a social voluntary organisation of social activists, group of persons, community, persons, volunteers, civilians and citizens who are working or associated for social welfare and social development. If a group of people or a community wants to work for social change on certain issues, it can work as an NGO without getting registration. In other words, NGOs can be registered or be unregistered. NGOs are recognised in their registered form and can get all kinds of support, including financial support when they are registered by Government registration authorities. NGO can be run, managed and operated by other persons who are associated with it and work for social and ethical objects.

Financial stature of NGO

The government only provides information support and help to raise funds to the deserving and well recognised NGOs. The support means the support at information and eligibility process part. We do not provide any fund or contact to provide fund from any agency, authority or fund provider donors. After getting the basic information the for project documentation and projects NGO management directly have to contact to the funding agencies through their allowed process, including the Government ministries, Private Funding Agencies or Companies provide funds under Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR). NGO can prepare the projects at their part or can take consultancy service to prepare projects to get funds. The new NGOs and working NGOs which need financial support from the Government and private funding agencies so they can implement their

concepts through the applicable process. NGOs India team and resource centre have been helping and supporting such persons who wish to form NGOs and want economical and other support with the help of projects and other support. At the online resource centre information regarding Funding agencies, Funding Schemes, Funding projects, Funding and other resourceful material regarding running, managing and implementation of concepts of social change by achieving funding and support of Volunteers is available and being updated from time to time. Non Government Organisation (NGO) works as information resource centre who wish to or are practically involved individuals, groups and organisations for the social welfare and sustainable development. The main aim and objective of any NGO is same as the aim of Government for development of society. Governments have control on resources but the organisations formed and working for the welfare and development do not have resources so they have to arrange and manage resources. NGOs function for without any profit but can work with funds and financial resources in present system. So funding is the basic and main part to run and organise the programmes they use to work or want to work. So if any NGO wants to work with capacity it needs to get grants from various sources. NGOs can get grant from various sources, individual donors, foundations, corporations and Governments. Funding sources for NGO include membership fees, private donations, public donations, grants from local, national and foreign funding agencies, philanthropic foundations, Government funding schemes, sale of products and services and CSR funds from private corporate sector companies. NGO requires funds for the required resources for the Project implementation, operations, salaries and other overhead costs. Fundraising efforts are necessary for existence, operation of programmes and success in the aims of funding Schemes.

Role of NGO in Quality education

Since India is a vast country, both geographically and demographically, government alone cannot bring all children into the fold of education. Even today, 17.7 million children in India are out of school. The retention rate in schools is still abysmally low and a large number of children drop out even before completing class 8. The status of girl child education is even worse as the mindset that girls may not be educated as they are to be eventually married off still prevails in the Indian society. In such a scenario, the role of the civil society becomes all the more important in order to ensure that the benefits of education reach the lowest strata of the society. Several Non-governmental Organizations (NGOs) have been working at the sheer grass root levels to extend education to underprivileged children in India. Since independence, NGOs have been trying hard to strengthen the existing education system and network in the country so that more and more children get opportunities to go to school and remain there. The best thing about NGOs is that they work at the grass root level, connecting with the masses and spreading awareness on the importance of getting good education to march ahead in life.

NGOs like Save the Children have been spearheading the movement to provide quality education to the most marginalized and deprived children of India. With programmes in the most remote and marginalized areas of India, the NGO ensures that the benefits of the Right to Education Act reach the most deprived children. The idea is to ensure that all children, irrespective of their origin, are able to go to school, play, interact and learn with other children of their age so that they secure for them a life of dignity and contribute to the betterment of the economy.

1. Most important aspect to boost the spread of education is to spread awareness amongst the parents and the communities and every child needs education. The message needs to spread far and wide and getting quality education is the legitimate right of all children, no matter which social or economic background they come from. Save the Children connects with the most backward communities, where there are several instances of children squandering their childhood in fields and factories or dropping out of school, and counsels parents and elders on the importance of sending children to school.

2. Another important aspect to improve the penetration of quality education among the most deprived children is to make learning a fun experience. Child education NGOs like Save the Children train teachers to impart learning using child-friendly and interactive teaching-learning methods. The NGO sets libraries and infrastructure right, conducts computer and English classes, promotes and facilitates extra-curricular activities and sports.

3. The NGOs engage heavily with the local communities to form Children Groups (CGs) and School Management Committees (SMCs) and work with them to ensure that they take accountability of the development of the children in their community. Massive enrolment drives are conducted in which out-of-school and vulnerable children are mapped and enrolled into formal schools in age-appropriate classes.

4. Group learning has proved to be one learning methodology which helps children learn better and fast and also promotes healthy competition. In classrooms, Save the Children encourages and helps children to undertake learning activities in groups.

5. Metros such as Kolkata and Delhi are home to a large number of urban poor who live in slum or slum-like areas. Children in these communities are often involved in child labour and have very little or no access to education. Save the Children runs learning centres for street children and child labourers coming from socially-

excluded communities where they are provided learning and/or after-school support. The idea is to groom these children and help them take the leap to formal schooling.

Purpose of study

The primary educational situation in India is in need of improvements and both the Government of India and NGOs are needed to make those improvements. There is however a wide range of problems associated with NGOs; hence the purpose of this study is to: • Examine whether or not NGOs have the potential to improve primary education, by looking at their own contribution to primary education and by looking at their opinion of the contribution made by the Government of India 10

Research Questions

The research has been based on the following research questions:

- What are NGOs doing to provide or/and improve primary education?
- How do NGOs look at their own role to provide or/and improve primary education?
- What opinions do NGOs have on the effort made by the Government of India to provide or/and improve primary education?
- What are the overall analysis of the NGOs studied and their possibilities to provide or/and improve primary education?

II. Literature Review

Jagannathan has conducted a study on the contribution of a few NGOs, which are operating in the primary education sector in India. The researcher points out that NGOs play an important role in assisting the Government of India in providing primary education, because the Government alone will not be able to provide primary education for all children. Those NGOs that the researcher was studying also played an important role in implementing programmes that the Government has launched (Jagannathan 2001:9,29). Another interesting finding from the study was that community involvement has a positive impact on the quality of education and if the parents were involved in the child's education, it also increased the attendance level (Jagannathan 2001:32). Rose has conducted research on the importance of NGOs in providing education for children that for some reasons are not enrolled in schools in India, Bangladesh, Ethiopia and Ghana. (Rose 2009:219-220). Common features among NGOs are that they come up with alternative schooling and an important question is whether these children receive the same education as those children who attend government schools. A second question raised in the paper is whether government schools or schools run by NGOs provide better education? She concludes with the fact that there is not sufficient evidence whether or not the education provided by NGOs is beneficial (Rose 2009:221,231). Mundy and Murphy have been looking at how the emerge of transnational advocacy networks and the increase in the number of NGOs have affected the educational climate throughout the world (Mundy and Murphy 2001:86,90). They highlight the change from NGOs mainly providing education (until the 1970s) on the basis of improving adult literacy. These had little impact on national education policy-to NGOs that have been concerned with the Education For All (EFA) initiative (Mundy and Murphy 2001:96-97). They also pinpoint that in the late 1990s it became important with strengthening local NGOs, so that they are better able to participate in national education policies. This meant that the collaboration between NGOs in different developing countries became more important than before, because the aim was to put pressure on Governments to provide education for everyone. They conclude that NGOs have played a role in advocacy, i.e. connecting educational problems to issues like human rights and global equity instead of just being service providers (Mundy and Murphy 2001:110-112,125).

III. Suggestions for Further Studies

Based on this, a suggestion for further research is to look more closely at how effective the programmes and education that is being provided by NGOs actually are, because this would give a better understanding of whether or not it is an advantage that NGOs are playing such a big role in the education sector in India. Another suggestion is to examine the topic more in depth by studying what the Government, private schools and the civil society are doing in order to improve the situation, this would provide a more comprehensive understanding of the whole situation.

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