

PARTICIPATION OF NON GOVERNMENTAL ORGANISATIONS IN ELEMENTARY EDUCATION: A STUDY IN RURAL HOWRAH, WEST BENGAL

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Abstract

Universalizaion of Elementary Education is the main concern of the recent educational policies. Education for All is the prime motto of the government. With a view to establish the goal and achieve the aim, government is sincerely working and is moving forward to reach the light of elementary education in the every family of the country. The necessity of primary education is well known to everyone who is working in the field of education. Across the country NGOs play a very essential and important role in the education sector. Many of the NGOs work in specific area in the field of primary education. They organize programmes and activities for the development of primary education by supplementing government efforts. The present study is an effort to probe into the expansion, contribution, impact and sustainability of the NGOs in the development of elementary education. The study is assigned to the eight NGOs operating in the primary education sector in rural Howrah in west Bengal. In order to accomplish the objectives of the present study the Descriptive survey method will be adopted. The researcher will use a comprehensive self-prepared close ended questionnaire for collecting views of teachers. A structured interview will be conducted to collect the views of members of NGOs. The study starts with an introduction, where the need and significance of the study, statement of the study, operational definitions, research questions, objectives of the study, delimitation of the study are presented. Following this, previously conducted research is presented. These are being followed by the methodological part. Then it continues with the findings of the study and ends with a concluding discussion and references.

Introduction

Elementary education is the foundation of all learning. For the upliftment of the society and the nation, educational development is a must. Primary education plays a crucial for the all around development of a child. Our country is in a constant effort to fulfill the criteria of free and compulsory elementary education as cited in the Article 21-A and the RTE Act, 1 April 2010. Government and local authorities are alert to provide and ensure admission, attendance and completion of elementary education by all children in the 6-14 age groups. The most important function that elementary education plays is by training the individuals to make the right choices in their lives and also in future. Elementary education is the only weapon that can wipe out the context of illiteracy from the country. Across the globe education is therefore being regarded as a fundamental right and necessary for the exercise of all human rights. Every child should be entitled to education.

NGOs work in the grass root level and here lie their strengths and reliability. They have efficient and participatory service delivery systems. NGOs also prefer a role that is markedly different from that of the government. Most of them have focused on areas neglected by the latter. This is especially so in the marginalized communities. The non-governmental organizations efforts are often with a view of sealing any lapses that are available within the governmental funded public education system. Within the elementary education sector, the non-governmental organizations play a significant role in the provision of the learning materials and as infrastructural support. There are international, national and local NGOs. Works and activities of international and national NGOs are globally spread and multidimensional such as education delivery, healthcare, literacy, poverty alleviation through sustainable development, rehabilitation, women and child care, human development, environmental protection, HIV/AIDs support programmes, agriculture extension services, etc. Whereas the local NGOs are promoting and supporting, to some extent, single dimensional such as women welfare, rural health and hygiene, development of primary education and so on.

There are several NGOs in rural Howrah. They are making voluntary actions to improve the demand for elementary education. Some of them are sincere for creating a facilitative environment for learning by promoting awareness, development for the Universalization of Elementary Education. The study is limited to rural Howrah. The aim of this study is to examine the main issues identified of the NGOs with regard to education, the goals set by the "Education for All" campaign in the view of the NGOs, the main recommendations of the NGOs, and whether or not NGOs have the potential to improve primary education.

Need and Significance of the Study

India will have to fulfill its constitutional pledge for providing free and compulsory education for all children up to the age of 14. It is felt that to achieve the goals of UEE the government should seek cooperation of voluntary organizations, the community and NGOs, especially in the areas of access, retention and achievement. Rural areas are prone to dropout and child marriage, for there is the lack of awareness among the parents. Even the involvement of children in cottage industries and agricultural activities are the hindrances to fulfill the goals of UEE in rural areas. NGO initiatives, campaigns and programmes are being held to spread awareness amongst people about the importance of literacy. NGO helps to create the awareness among the people about the benefits of the education and tell them ways to get the free education. NGO also helps the people to enroll their children in special

schemes for the better future of their children. So here is this, the study will help the government and policy makers in recognizing the role of NGOs in achieving UEE with special importance to rural areas. The NGOs which have developed a kind of credibility will be involved in the study.

Statement of the Study

The study will look into the status, functioning, financing, impact and such other parameters of NGOs, especially in rural Howrah, working in the field of elementary education.

Operational Definitions

- **NGOs:** Non-governmental organizations refer to specific type of organizations working independent from the government and should operate on a non-profit basis. They are contributing on the education sector especially primary education and are registered under the Act.
- **UEE:** Universalization of elementary education means universal access, enrolment, retention, and qualitative education up to the age of 14. The provisions contained in the Constitution of India.
- **Elementary Education:** It includes primary (Class I-V) and upper primary (Class VI-VII) of school education means as specified in the RTE Act. It includes the children of 6 to 14 years of age.
- **Voluntary Actions:** This refers to the self-initiated actions by individuals or organizations for any social cause.

Research Questions

1. What are the roles of NGOs in imparting elementary education in context to RTE?
2. What are the types of facilities provided by NGOs to facilitate UEE?
3. What are limitations or hindrances being faced by the NGOs in providing elementary education?
4. What are the future prospects of NGOs for enhancing quality education?

Objectives of the Study

1. To study the role of NGOs in imparting elementary education in context to RTE.
2. To study the types of facilities provided by NGOs to facilitate UEE.
3. To study limitations or hindrances being faced by the NGOs in providing elementary education.
4. To study the future prospects of NGOs for enhancing quality education.

Delimitation of the Study

The present study will be delimited to the following conditions-

1. The study will be delimited to rural areas of Howrah, West Bengal.
2. The study will be delimited to the elementary education of rural Areas of Howrah.
3. The study will be delimited to NGOs that are playing some active role in the development of elementary education.

Methodology of the Study

The methodology of study comprises method of research, population, sample, tool, procedure of data collection, and procedure of data analysis.

Research Method

In order to accomplish the objectives of the present study the Descriptive survey method will be adopted.

Population

The entire aggregation of items from which sample can be drawn is known as population. It consists of all aspects of individual of their attributes that can be described as having as unique type characteristics or qualities. For the present study all the NGOs of rural Howrah in West Bengal that are playing some active role in the development of elementary education will be regarded as population.

Sample

A representative proportion of population is called sample. As only those NGOs working in the field of elementary education will be considered, purposive sampling will be used to select the NGOs. It will be proposed to draw 40 members from 8 NGOs (5 Members from each NGO).

SL.NO	NAME OF NGO'S	ADDRESS
1.	Ranmahal Nabajagan Society	Vill - Ranmahal, P.O.- Baganda, P.S – Uluberia, Pin - 711315
2.	Jagadishpur Mather Merina Society	Vill - Jagadishpur, P.O.- Jagadishpur, P.S – Uluberia, Pin - 711315
3.	Aishyabanu Mohishali Education Society	Vill - Mohishali, P.O.- Bahira, P.S – Uluberia, Pin - 711315
4.	Bagnan Human Rural Development Society	Vill - Beral, P.O.-Chitnan, P.S – Bagnan, Pin – 711303
5.	Kamina Social Welfare Society	Vill - Kamina, P.O.- Sumda, P.S – Bagnan, Pin - 711303
6.	Ananada Niketan Society	Vill - Barunda, P.O.- Bagnan, P.S – Bagnan, Pin – 711303

7.	Belari Samaj Kalyan Samity Society	Vill - Belari, P.O.- Belari, P.S. - Shyampur, Pin - 711315
8.	Asha Bhaban Centre	Vill -kathila, P.O.- Banitabla, P.S - Uluberia, Pin - 711315

Variables

- The independent variable: Role and activities of NGOs.
- The dependent variable: Development of elementary education. By dint of effective activities and proper functioning, universalization of elementary education can be facilitated.
- The controlled variables are: NGO chosen, age group of students, questionnaire.

Tools and Techniques Used

- **Questionnaire:** The researcher will use a comprehensive self-prepared close ended questionnaire for collecting views of teachers. The questions were in printed form and were to be answered by the individuals. The forms had questions with four options against each question. There were blank spaces in which the answers can be ticked. Sets of such forms were distributed to teachers and the answers were collected relating to the research topic.
- **Interview:** A structured interview will be conducted to collect the views of members of NGOs covering NGO involvement on different interventions in elementary education.

Procedure for Data Collection

The investigator will follow all the precautions and procedure of data collection. The NGOs will be visited. Teachers and members will be met at the suitable hour. The teachers' opinion sheet will be collected and a generalization will be formed out of the opinions. The members may have to maintain a tight schedule. So the interview will not last more than 15 minutes. On a continuous basis, a numerical value will be allocated to all the issues in order to understand which ones are repeated by the NGOs. This will give value to the study in terms of statistical evidence and can give a clear picture of which roles, facilities, hindrances and future prospects are being addressed by the local NGOs in providing elementary education.

Major Findings

After the interpretation of data collected through questionnaire it is found that the NGOs, though not all of them, are making possible to needy peoples to get enrolled their students. They are having sufficient, to some extent, human and material resources for school. So it is concluded that NGOs are playing effective role in imparting elementary education in the context to RTE.

The data that are collected through interview are then interpreted. On studying the data, it is observed that majority of the NGOs are providing many educational enriched programmes. So it is concluded that NGOs are effectively playing their role in the enrichment of educational programmes for elementary education.

The study also further reveals that the NGOs are giving different counseling and educative programmes and arranging awareness seminars to the students about the importance of education. Some of the NGOs are even providing free education in the villages and all the expenses were taken by them only.

The study reveals that all the 8 NGOs have already made their future agendas towards the education sector. They have plans to enlarge their contribution throughout the district. The study further reveals that most of the Ngo's are in process of running their own schools.

The study reveals that there are various types of limitations faced by the NGOs. But lack of financial resources or funds is the major problem being faced by the majority of the NGOs. Those who are running their own schools may sometime face shortage of funds. Sometimes the hindrances are that the schools activities and educational programmes are to be arranged in rented accommodation. To get a place or land and good sponsor with good funding is not always and stands as a hurdle.

Conclusion

From this study one is able to see that the NGOs studied are fulfilling some of the responsibilities in universalizing the elementary education. Thus, in this case the studied NGOs cannot be criticized 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.

It can be observed that there are problems with the work NGOs perform. A common theme among the NGOs studied is that they regard their work as important even though some of the NGOs are self-critical, yet it is an advantage that they are aware of the fact that there might be problems with their work.

NGOs have potential to change the situation because as two of the interviewees mentioned it is important that the mentality of people should be changed and people have to know their own rights in order to make use of them. In addition to this some of the studied NGOs are providing non-formal schooling and one of them is providing formal schooling.

The government should encourage private sectors and NGOs to provide basic education. Opportunities may be provided to all teachers working in NGO schools to get both short and long term regular training. Policies should be taken that can make a large scope for the NGOs to enlarge their activities and programmes. Again, in case of funding, NGOs should be stood by good sponsor. Government should open a clear vista so that NGOs can work with the government jointly that will usher the goal of UEE.

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