

Policies and Programmes for Education of Disadvantaged Groups

The theme for this issue is 'Education of Disadvantaged Groups: Policies and Initiatives'. Member institutions were requested to contribute articles based on the experiences of their respective countries. The response was positive. We are happy to inform that Australian Council For Educational Research, Australia has joined the ANTRIEP family. We welcome the new member institution. In this issue, we have included articles from KEDI, Korea, NUEPA, India, AKESP, Pakistan and BRAC, Bangladesh.

The articles from KEDI and BRAC reflect on the education of socio-economically disadvantaged population, the other two papers from India and Pakistan examine the

policies, programmes and issues related to inclusive education for the children and youth with disabilities. The paper from KEDI presents a new approach which primarily talks about education welfare policy in South Korea. Realising that the educational problems in low income group areas can not be solved by school alone, a programme called 'Education Welfare Action Zone' was initially launched as a pilot project and subsequently it was expanded in other areas. The present paper highlights the characteristics and approach of Education Welfare Action Zone project and further presents preliminary findings of the project activities. This project aims the schools to interact with local cultural and welfare organisations to prevent and rehabilitate educational handicap of children by way of networking home, school and local community. These institutions are required to address all the socio-economic, educational as well psychological problems faced by the children coming from low income families. The paper also examines the effects of the project interventions in terms of teachers' better understanding of individual student circumstances, increased support and interest by teachers resulting in students overall academic performance. The paper also discusses some of the limitations of the project and makes recommendations to bring about qualitative improvement in the project activities.

The paper from Bangladesh discusses programmes and initiatives which aim at providing educational opportunities for the children of poorer sections of the society. BRAC runs different models of schools in order to cater to educational needs of poor, girls, rural and indigenous people. BRAC follows flexibility in age range, contact hours, relevance of curriculum, class size and pedagogy with a view to meeting the diverse needs of students by following government prescribed competencies. Special schools are provided to indigenous ethnic groups through mother tongue as

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medium of instruction. Further, BRAC also provides continuing education through Reading Centres where girls are educated in essential issues which are not dealt in the formal schools. Recent research studies evidently prove that students in BRAC schools are significantly better in their learning competencies compared to formal primary schools. Girls constitute majority among students covered by BRAC schools and mostly the students are first generation learners.

The paper from NUEPA expounds various policy initiatives and programmes for educating disabled children in India. The paper traces evolution of policies and programmes in providing educational opportunities to disabled children. The recent policy being inclusive in character, the current approach aims at integration of diverse educational needs of children. The paper describes different Acts enacted by the Government for providing equal opportunities to persons with

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The National University of Educational Planning and Administration (NUEPA), a premier institution of higher learning is engaged in research and capacity building in educational planning and administration and related areas of education not only in India but also in South Asia. The University has its origin dating back to 1962 when it was established by UNESCO as Asian Regional Centre for Educational Planners, Administrators and Supervisors. Since then it has undergone various transformations. In recognition of the pioneering work done by the organisation in the field of educational planning and administration, the Ministry of Human Resource Development, Government of India has upgraded it to the level of National University in the year 2006. Like any Central University, the National University is fully maintained by the Government of India. Besides organizing both national and international capacity building programmes, the University offers a number of full time research programmes in educational planning and management, namely, M. Phil., Ph. D. and national and international Diploma in Educational Planning and Administration. The University also offers part time Ph. D. programme. In addition, the University also acts as a clearing house through publication of Journal of Educational Planning and Administration, books, and research reports. The University also provides consultancy to both national and international agencies and also undertakes joint research programmes with various national and international institutions.

disabilities. It also elucidates the role played by NGOs. The paper augments increased focus and emphasis on providing inclusive education in order to achieve EFA targets. The paper expresses concern over the dwindling funding as most of the agencies working in the field largely depend on state funds. The paper also discusses the need for evolving appropriate monitoring of inclusive education under the overall framework of Education for All goals.

The paper from AKESP, Pakistan presents the concern on size and seriousness of disabled population in Pakistan and efforts made to meeting out the educational needs of this group. The paper examines policies of the successive governments and mechanisms for providing equal opportunities to disabled population to access educational facilities. The paper describes the role of several voluntary agencies in extending educational facilities for disabled children and shows concern about lack of professional expertise in providing inclusive education as also lack of appropriate infrastructure and low priority in funding.

We would like to express our sincere thanks and gratitude to all the contributors of the present issue of the newsletter. Besides, we would also like to thank the readers, individual professionals & institutions for their continued support and overwhelming response.

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Education Welfare Zone: New Approach to Education Welfare Policy in Korea

Background

Most developed countries are keen to adapt neo-liberalism to build capacity and competition in the globalized economic system. However, neo-liberalism policy is widening the gap between social classes in income and life opportunities. Korea is no exception to this. After financial crisis, Korean economic system went through reorganizing period and it deepened income gap between the rich and the poor.

It is well known that poverty has negative impact on development of children. Most children from low-income groups lack parental care and attention as both parents need to work. Children are either put into nursery or left alone. Even when parents are at home, tiredness causes scant parental care. Even if time allows, parents do not know exactly how to help children in their studies, and they also lack proper connection with the school. Family discord and family breaking due to poverty are causing emotional instability among children. A recent study by Korean Educational Development (KEDI) on condition of low-income area school education (2002) showed that 35% of teachers quoted emotional development problem (lack of confidence, lethargy, etc.) among students as the most serious concern. Besides, some students lacked proper food and medical care. In low-income area schools in Seoul, 3.6% to 4.5% of students were academically poor. This finding is almost four times greater than national average of 1.1%. This outcome of low academic achievement of low-income group students without parental care and support under the unstable emotional environment and absence of basic things like nutrition and medical care is but natural. Improvement of living conditions and educational environment is necessary to guarantee genuine educational opportunity to the low income and disadvantaged children. Total education welfare service, integrating welfare, education and culture is needed for them. However, government's educational welfare policy which is mainly about providing money and goods to students, has significant limitation. As social inequalities are deepening, more active and integrated education welfare policy has been felt necessary. The government has adopted in 2003 a more meaningful policy programme called 'Education Welfare Action Zone'. The project is implemented in selected educationally and culturally poor places in low-income group areas of metropolis to increase educational and cultural opportunity and improve the quality of educational, cultural, welfare services through

cooperation of government and private organizations, and school and local community.

Characteristics of Education Welfare Action Zone

As urbanization and capitalism advance, residential areas get segregated by economic status. The rich live in good living environment while the poor gather up in cheap dwellings. Therefore, residential area and social class overlap. There has been a large difference in living conditions and opportunities between different areas. Recently, there is policy movement in Korea to eliminate the gap between 'Kangnam', and "Kangbuk" indicating the gap between different areas in city, is getting serious. In this context the policy of choosing certain areas as educational welfare priority area and providing relatively more financial aid and support is significant step.

The project aims for the school to interact with local cultural and welfare organizations to form local educational community and through it improve educational welfare level for low-income group children. It's goal is to prevent and rehabilitate educational handicap of children and form support network of home – school – local community for cognitive and emotional development of low-income group children. It also provides welfare service for healthy physical development. The project tries to solve the problem in structural level rather than at individual level. Another uniqueness of this project is realizing that the problems in low-income group area can not be solved by school alone. The project tries to develop cooperation among educational, cultural and welfare organizations to solve the local problems. This strategy is necessary to run a comprehensive educational welfare policy which integrates education, culture and welfare. Education welfare action zone approaches the educational problem of low-income group in area-centered way rather than approaching individually. Also, it realizes that education welfare policy should be integrative, connecting education with culture and welfare services in order to develop competence and improve life quality of low-income group. Compared to previous educational welfare policies focused on material support, the education welfare action zone is showing big improvements.

To begin with, the project was initiated in six zones of Seoul and two zones in Pusan as a pilot project in 2003. The project was expanded to 15 zones in 2005 and 30 zones in 2006. These zones were selected considering social and economic conditions of people.

Effects of Education Welfare Action Zone

A study conducted on effect of programs provided in education welfare action zone showed that: individual schools were able to use different programs such as support for learning activities, the provision of cultural experiences, emotional and psychological development, and after-school daycare and educational services. The project initiatives helped the teachers to learn more about students beyond the regular information that could be gleaned in the classroom. This facilitated them to develop a better understanding of individual circumstances and everyday life of students. The schools were able to make use of the educational welfare facilities installed in most of the schools for administering the project to form an emotional support network for those students who felt alienated and left out by their classmates. This programme has led to the establishment of a cooperative student-guidance structure between teachers and the concerned. Despite the differences over the range of the roles which schools and teachers should perform in conjunction with the support programs in education welfare action zones still persist, teachers, who are the central figure in terms of the execution of these programs, were able to acquire a deeper understanding of their roles in supporting students of low income class. Students' participation had improved in not only learning-related programs but also in other activities, resulting in a marked improvement in their emotional stability and their attitude towards learning. Moreover, the increased support and interest exhibited by teachers also had the effect on improving certain students' overall academic performance.

The results of the comparative analysis of project schools and other schools in similar context, showed that members of the participating schools exhibited a more positive perception of a variety of aptitude programs for special talents, opportunities to take part in cultural experiences, and library facilities and books leading to positive changes in educational activities of schools which participated in the project. A significant effect of training was found on teachers understanding and guiding the students from the low income class. These programs appear to have had a positive influence on the educational activities of teachers who work for the schools that took part in this project. Unlike the visible changes which took place in the schools' educational activities, no significant changes were uncovered among students with regards to some activities. While library usage ratio was significantly higher in the participating schools, no significant difference was found in participation in aptitude programs for special talents or cultural experience activities. Although limited, the fact that students from the schools who took part in this

project exhibited a higher tendency to utilize community facilities than their counterparts from the schools that did not take part can also be identified as one of the effects of these programs. This phenomenon appears to a large extent due to emphasis of programs on strengthening close cooperation within local communities. Although the programs' positive effects were to some extent visible with regards to the educational activities of schools and students, the results of the analysis proved to be much smaller than what had been anticipated in terms of outputs. With the visible exception of a few categories, such as students' cognitive and non-cognitive achievements, and students' satisfaction with their school and teachers, no significant statistical differences emerged between participating and non-participating schools. In addition, the analysis of the schools displayed no statistical proof of any visible positive changes in the students from the low income class.

While it is difficult to come up with a relatively optimistic conclusion of the effects of the programs based on the statistical analysis of the actual evidence, the conclusion that these programs were ineffective is equally premature. However, the case studies revealed that the members of the schools are conscious of positive changes which have taken place within each school in terms of school and students' educational activities, and also in terms of students achievement. Moreover, the evidence also points to a certain degree of effectiveness in terms of educational activities at the school level. More time may be needed for the various positive changes which have taken place in individual schools to become widespread. Furthermore, a longitudinal analysis should be conducted once a more detailed method has been designed which can better identify substantive effects.

Future Tasks

There is a need for analysis of characteristics and needs of students in order to develop support programs accordingly. The principal's leadership is crucial to ensure that these programs are applied to the entire school rather than specific individuals or departments. As is the case, replacement of a principal as part of a routine personnel change can emerge as an obstacle to the smooth implementation of these programs. As this problem is closely intertwined with current personnel policy, measures to mitigate the problems caused by the replacement of principals and teachers is need to be adopted. Cooperation between schools and local bodies must be further enhanced. In this regard, the role of regional bodies, such as Council for Operation of Local Projects, and Commission on Support Programs, must be further invigorated. At the individual school level,

more active discussions should be conducted amongst the people in charge of the programs and those who administer the facilities. While it is essential for schools and the local communities to spare more efforts to achieve a consensus amongst them, the efforts of educational offices in metropolitan areas and of the central government are even more fundamentally essential. Metropolitan educational offices should draw up measures to facilitate the councils set up in conjunction with the support programs implemented in education welfare action zones by developing ability to carry out their functions. Similarly, at central government level, there is a need for the Ministry of Human Resources

Development to play a leading role in ensuring the smooth implementation of the support programs in education welfare action zone through close cooperation with Ministries of Culture and Tourism, Health and Welfare, and Gender Equality. A national level council need to oversee the activities and support programs implemented in education welfare action zone for achieving better results.

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Inclusive Education in India

Introduction

According to the National Sample Survey Organization, India has about 18.5 million people with disabilities, constituting 1.8 per cent of the total population of the country. The literacy rate of the disabled population is 49 per cent (Census 2001), whereas that of the disabled females, it is around 37 per cent as against the national average of over 54 per cent for the female population. Literacy rate for the disabled male population is 58.14 per cent as compared to the national average of 75.85 per cent for males. The above data show that the education services need to be further expanded for children with disabilities. Inclusive education has evolved as a movement to challenge exclusive policies and practices and has gained momentum over the past decade to become a favoured approach in addressing the learning needs of all students in regular schools and classrooms.

India has been implementing integrated education for the disabled children since 1974 as a central government sponsored scheme. Integrated education for disabled (IED) has become an important component of education projects, such as District Primary Education Programme (DPEP) and Sarva Siksha Abhiyan (SSA). Further, NGOs have also emerged as a strong support system for inclusive education. Besides government supported programmes and activities, many private schools as well as NGOs have been implementing inclusive education at their own initiative. Flexibility being offered by the boards of examination, especially the National Institute of Open Learning has further facilitated this process. However, to achieve the targets of Universal Elementary Education (UEE) by 2010, it is essential for India to address the educational needs of children with disabilities and all other children so that they get the opportunity to go to neighborhood schools.

Policies and Programmes

The first official attempt to analyze the problem of educating the 'handicapped' was made in the report of Central Advisory Board of Education (CABE) in 1944. The report recommended special schools when 'the nature and defect [of children] made it necessary'; otherwise, it recommended that 'wherever possible, handicapped children should not be segregated from normal children' (CABE 1944). The report made two other major recommendations. First, it asked for making education of the disabled an essential part of a national system of education to be administered by the Education Department, and secondly, it wanted 10 per cent of the total expenditure on basic and high schools to be set aside for education of the 'handicapped'. The Education Commission Report (1964-66) and later the Education Policy Resolution in 1968 advocated special efforts for education of disabled children .

The National Policy on Education (1986) and the revised policy of 1992 proposed integrating the physically and mentally handicapped with the general community as equal partners, and preparing them for normal growth to enable them to face life with courage and confidence. It proposed measures such as : i) wherever it is feasible, the education of children with motor handicaps and other mild handicaps will be common with that of others; ii) special schools with hostels will be provided, as far as possible at district headquarters, for the severely handicapped children; iii) adequate arrangements will be made to give vocational training to the disabled; iv) training programmes for teachers will be reoriented, in particular for teachers of primary classes, to deal with the special difficulties of the handicapped children and v) voluntary effort for the education of the disabled will be encouraged in every possible manner.

The Department of Social Welfare of the Government of India started a scheme called Integrated Education for the Disabled Children (IEDC). This scheme was shifted to the Ministry of Education in 1983 during the Sixth Five Year Plan (1980-85). Special schools were discouraged except for severely handicapped, who could not be educated with normal children. Two historic legislations enacted in the nineties have provided education of children with special needs in India a sound direction and solid footing.

Rehabilitation Council of India (RCI) Act 1992

The Act was enacted in the Parliament in 1992, on behest of the then Ministry of Welfare (presently known as the Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment) to regulate the manpower development programmes in the field of education of children with special needs. The RCI has so far developed or approved more than 50 courses dealing with special education and rehabilitation. The RCI has also recognised more than hundred institutions in India to offer these courses. The RCI has standardised B.Ed. and M.Ed. special education courses for the benefit of universities and colleges of education in India.

Persons with Disabilities Act 1995

An important policy development has been the enactment of Persons with Disabilities (Equal Opportunities, Protection of Rights and Participation) Act, 1995 (PWD Act 1995). The Act makes it a statutory responsibility on the part of central, state and local governments to provide free education in an "appropriate environment" for all children with disabilities up to the age of 18 years. It asks the concerned governments and local authorities to provide disabled children with free education; make schemes and programmes for non-formal education; conduct research for designing and developing new assisting devices and teaching aids; set up teachers' training institutions to develop trained manpower for schools for children with disabilities; prepare a comprehensive education scheme for providing transport facilities and books etc.

The Act provides for preventive as well as promotional aspects of rehabilitation, like education, employment and vocational training, reservation, research and manpower development, creation of barrier free environment. The Plan of Action for Children issued by Department of Women and Child Development, 2005, (Ministry of Human Resource Development) mentions the need to provide early identification and integrated early childhood services and opportunities to ensure optimum development of children with disabilities up to 6 years. It also envisaged, to ensure inclusive and accessible education and life skills training for all children with disabilities beyond the stages of early interventions.

Political Commitment

The most important development in recent years has been the political commitment for education of children with disabilities. The Minister for Human Resource Development in a statement presented in Parliament (2005), reassured government's commitment for education of children with disabilities. The statement included a proposal for an Action Plan with objectives to ensure that no child is denied admission in mainstream education, that every child would have the right to access an Aanganwadi and school and no child would be turned back on the ground of disability. It envisages creation of a cadre of teachers trained to work within the principles of inclusion, facilitating access for girls with disabilities and disabled students from rural and remote areas to government hostels. The statement further ensured to provide for home based learning for persons with severe, multiple and intellectual disability, to promote distance education for those who require an individualized pace of learning, to emphasize job-training and job-oriented vocational training, and promote an understanding of the paradigm shift from charity to development through a massive awareness, motivation and sensitization campaign.

This Statement has resulted with evolving of National Action Plan for Inclusion in Education of Children and Youth with Disabilities (IECYD). The Framework of IECYD spells out its goal as to ensure the inclusion of children and youth with disabilities in all available general educational settings by providing them with a learning environment that is available, accessible, affordable and appropriate. The comprehensive Action Plan for IECYD proposes a multisectoral and interdepartmental collaboration at both the Central and State levels to identify areas of convergence and decentralized planning and delivery of resource support where possible towards developing strategies to promote access and participation of disabled children and young persons in general educational institutions. The IECYD Plan covers the education of children and young persons with disabilities from early childhood to higher education i.e. from 0-6 to 18+ years.

Further, the National Curriculum Framework on School Education (NCERT, 2005) recommends making the curriculum flexible and appropriate to accommodate the diversity of school. Education of children and youth with disabilities have also been supported by other schemes and programmes that are accessed as part of networking and coordination with other ministries and departments. NGOs also have acquired a significant place in policy planning and implementation.

Enabling Developments

A National Advisory Council for Education of the Disabled has been constituted under the Ministry of Human Resource Development. The Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment has taken some measures towards effective implementation. These are: (1) appointment of a chief commissioner for persons with disabilities; (2) setting up of five core groups of experts under relevant ministries to formulate appropriate schemes; (3) allocation of needed funds to RCI; and (4) state level mechanisms to redress the grievances of the disabled persons.

District Rehabilitation Centre/Scheme

An important scheme was initiated in eleven districts on pilot basis by the Ministry of Welfare. The aims and objectives of the scheme encompasses the issue of disability in its entirety, beginning from awareness, education, catering to each and every form of disability.

Voluntary Organisations

The Ministry of Welfare and the Ministry of Human Resource Development fund NGOs to organize education and rehabilitation services for the disabled and for providing aids and appliances for the physically handicapped. Voluntary organizations have played a key role in providing services for the disabled, at times, more than the governmental effort. Over the years, the number of such NGOs have been growing and becoming more organized. More importantly, NGO's have played a significant role in formulating the policies and providing support to the governmental efforts and initiating action. There are more than 2,456 voluntary organizations in the country running 1200 special schools, 450 of them receive grants from the government towards their operational costs. Majority of the voluntary organizations are autonomous.

The NGO sector has pioneered valuable services, ensuring social integration into the community. However, with limited infrastructural services and limited funds, the voluntary sector can only serve on a micro level. One of the main problems with the voluntary sector is their limited and fast dwindling capacity to raise funds and their increasing dependence on grants-in-aid from the central and state governments. As they obtain a major portion of their funding from the government, their main policy allegiance remains with the government, there by weakening their position at times to question governmental policy. NGO's and State are often locked in an institutional embrace, not simply the product of minimalist regulation by registration but more directly through finance and through capture and substitution.

Role of Premier Institutes/Organisations

Most of the schemes and programmes in the area of special education have support from national level institutes. At the school stage, National Council of Educational Research and Training (NCERT) has been playing a significant role since 1983 through advocacy (print media, face-to-face meetings, campaigns and training and research). It has emerged as the apex institute for integrated education. National University of Educational Planning and Administration's (NUEPA) approach has been diffused and limited. University Grants Commission (UGC) has also initiated a number of programmes since 1985, notable among them being 100 percent assistance to University Education Departments for teacher preparation in special education. National Council for Teacher Education (NCTE) has recommended the inclusion of a component of special education in all pre-service teacher preparation courses. NCERT is adapting instructional materials in teaching environmental studies to disabled children and has included mathematics and science in the programmes for the blind. A number of national institutes for handicapped under the Ministry of Social Welfare, also contributed to the cause significantly.

Monitoring

If inclusion is seen as an approach to minimize or abolish exclusion from the education programmes, then the indicators of monitoring educational progress, such as gross and net enrolments, attendance, achievement levels etc remain the same for disabled children too. This would also mean that children with special needs will also be covered for planning and monitoring at par with other children of that age group. However, at present there is no specific information or data available about educational progress of disabled children. If inclusion is seen as a time targeted mission or goal evolving from the country's specific agenda for EFA, then there would be a need to define the mission in observable terms within the specific targets. This necessitates to generate indicators, for monitoring and assessing inclusive approach initially at specified intervals and later on regular basis. Two important indicators for monitoring can be: (i) number of disabled children of school age group and (ii) number of schools for disabled children and enrolment. In 1993, NCERT collected such information as part of Sixth All India Educational Survey. Census 2001 has also covered the population with disability. As a part of Education Monitoring Information System (EMIS), National University of Educational Planning and Administration (NUEPA) also has designed data capturing formats for this group of children.

Challenges for the Future

The last decade of the previous century has recognized that children with disabilities and special education needs constitute a significant group in the monitoring of Education for All targets. A number of enabling provisions have been created by way of legislation, role of premier institutions as well as capacity building of the government and NGO sector to provide the inputs by way of manpower, learning materials and upgrading the quality of education programmes, especially at pre-school and elementary levels. However, there are still serious challenges that require considerable efforts and decisions for ensuring expansion of educational facilities in all parts of the country. Focus also has to be on the quality of life to be attained by the disabled children through schooling and sustaining the institutional and organizational structure for their educational development.

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State of Special and Inclusive Education in Pakistan

The Context

With respect to the educational and rehabilitation needs, children with disabilities are doubly disadvantaged in Pakistan since the overall state of education is dismal. Over 59 years of existence, Pakistan has not been able to respond to the very basic issues in education, such as access to primary education, low participation and high drop out rates, teacher absenteeism, teachers' professional development and welfare measures, accountability in and management of education, etc. Current low literacy rate of 53%, further characterized by gender and urban-rural disparities (male literacy: 64%, female literacy 39%; urban literacy: 69.7%, rural literacy: 41.6%) as well as the meagre educational spending of 2.2% of GDP are indicative of low priority education receives irrespective of the multitude of policies and various pronouncements. Although in recent years, private and civil society sector have taken much greater role in provision and improvement of education, the scope and scale of these services has been limited with respect to the demand factors, if not thoroughly insignificant.

Considering the broader educational context and priorities, it is not difficult to gauge the state of educational services for disable and disadvantaged in Pakistan. According to the 1998 Census, approximately 2.49 percent of the population has some form of disability.

Translated in absolute numbers, nearly 3.2 million people in Pakistan are disabled out of which 1.37 million are females and 1.99 million males; while 37.2% of them fall in 0-14 age group. This is significantly lower than the WHO estimate of approximately 10 percent, which is because of a different definition as WHO included persons with mild and moderate disabilities also. Rough estimates project that 28 percent of persons with disabilities are literate; only 14 percent of persons with disabilities are employed; 70 percent are reliant on family members for financial support whereas the majority, almost 66%, with disabilities live in rural areas where awareness levels are extremely low (World Bank, 2005). Urban centres also have huge numbers to cater to, for example, Karachi alone has more than 300, 000 people with disabilities. Entire population of disabled people is sparsely catered through 142 government and 114 NGO run centres whereas vocational training centres are no more than 50 across the country. (UNESCAP Country Paper Pakistan: 2004).

Policy Provisions for Educating the Disadvantaged

Special and inclusive education featured in the policy discourses as late as 1981 when the year was declared as the International Year for the Disabled Persons, followed by the decade of Disabled Persons ending in 1992. Due to this international thrust, Government of Pakistan

created an Employment and Rehabilitation Ordinance for Disabled Persons in 1981 (allocating 2% employment quota for disabled person) and later on the Directorate General of Special Education was established in 1985. While UN driven movement created interest in policy corridors, it became a personal priority of the then ruler of Pakistan, General Ziaul Haq who had a daughter with multiple disabilities. Consequently, various national institutes sprang up while provincial ministries were pushed to include special education amongst their key goals.

Despite the concrete provisions in governance frameworks, internalization of the need and significance of education for disabled persons remained at a surface level. This was reflected when the policy thrust was lost immediately after a regime change in 1988 where provision for special education again became a peripheral concern. Later the Directorate For Special Education was placed under the legislative and administrative control of Ministry for Social Welfare Development which was rechristened as Ministry for Social Welfare and Special Education. While a policy was promulgated in 1998 for special education, a more encompassing National Policy for Persons with Disabilities was introduced in 2002. The first attempt to translate the policy into an action plan was made in 2005, which envisages a multi-pronged approach aiming at prevention, cure, rehabilitation, provision of services, integration and inclusion of persons with disabilities. With respect to education, the framework highlights that catering to Special Education Needs (SEN) in severe and profound cases will be ensured through separate institutes while also promoting inclusive education across all public sector schools till grade 10. Strategies for achieving this goal include formulation of a written policy on inclusive education, admission to children with disabilities in regular schools, amendments in curriculum and textbooks making them more inclusive of SE needs physical spaces of school along with sensitization and professional development of teachers for the same.

Timelines for 2006 have lapsed without much action, however, what is critical to note is that Ministry of Social Welfare and Special Needs cannot and does not have any influence over the National Education Policy and provision unless and until a strong and generative linkages are developed with the Ministry of Education. Lack of action is also reflected in the consistent trends of under spending. For instance, ministry of Social Welfare and Special Education utilized only 182 million rupees out of allocated 786million rupees during 2005-06 fiscal years under the head of development budget. For 2006-07, an amount of Rs299.37 million is allocated which is significantly less from the previous year.

However looking at the current trends, effective utilization of the otherwise small budget is rather questionable.

Physical Environment and Accessibility

On the supply side, only 300 institutes for special and inclusive education barely cater to the need. In addition, accessibility is also limited by how and where these institutions are constructed. Since majority of the centres are not purpose-built and are opened in rented spaces, there are no provisions like ramps for persons with physical handicap or severe mobility issues. Similarly, open spaces where children could run or play games are not available. Usually, schools try to overcome this constraint by engaging children in in-door games and activities. However, children with moderate and mild mental or learning disabilities want to play and run around as they are characterized by limited concentration span and hyper behaviour. Therefore, absence of open and secure spaces poses health and safety concerns for them.

Another related issue is the commuting to schools. As indicated above, majority of institutions are functioning in urban centres of Pakistan where traffic and population density are major issues. With few options available, children have to commute long distances. This not only causes a lot of fatigue for them but in extreme weather conditions, result in seizures and other health problems. State does not play any role in providing these facilities while only 6-7 charitable institutions make arrangements on their own. Usually transportation services are provided by private players and the fee could range from rupees 500-1000 which is borne by the families.

Quality of Education for Persons with Disabilities

In the absence of national guidelines and quality assurance mechanisms with regard to special education, the learning content, methodologies and assessment become the prerogative of respective institutes and schools. Some modification of Montessori environment and content is introduced in majority of special education schools/centres catering to learning and mental disabilities of mild and moderate level. The first two years of education is focussed on learning alphabets of English and Urdu, pronunciation, basic instructions that children can understand and follow. Teaching aids used for Montessori can be seen and similar colourful ambience is created. Another main component of the educational programme is developing social skills and behaviour as well as sense of personal hygiene. Teachers express their concern that when children with mental and psychological disabilities come to the school, they do not know how to hold things or even sit. In schools advocating inclusive education, curriculum and books are adapted according to specific disabilities being catered to. For instance, for children with visual impairments, books and picture cues

with bold prints and illustrations are used while integrating audio aids. However, the extent to which this is done is largely dependent on individual school's commitment and expertise available.

In majority of schools, remedial services like occupational and speech therapy, physiotherapy as well as vocational skills including threading, weaving, paper work, etc., are also included in the formal curriculum. In terms of time allocation, two-thirds of the time is dedicated for these services. Partly, parental demands and satisfaction levels have determined the focus on these services as it takes off the burden (both in terms of finance and responsibility) from them. Also, children stand a better chance of employment if they are equipped with some vocational/technical skills. However, availability of specialized staff as well as resource constraints influence the inclusion of remedial services. Schools initiate out-patient services so those children who are not enrolled in school also come for their treatment.

One of the weakest aspects is the assessment and planning for the improvement and education of students with disabilities. Globally, Individual Education Plan (IEP) is considered to be the key tool which serves as a reference point for teachers, parents, caregivers and community members to support the disabled. In Pakistan however, IEP is confused with a *daily lesson plan* therefore is not based on a comprehensive assessment of child's current performance, participation and the extent to which a disability is affecting his/her daily life nor maps out the learning goals and expectations based on his/her current strengths, weaknesses and potential. Consequently, there is a very anecdotal and brittle mechanism for tracking and understanding the progress made on different developmental domains. Few institutions attempt to generate IEP from evaluation results such as physical tests, psychological and IQ assessments, observations made by parents, teachers, related service providers, and other school staff. And if initial effort is made, tracking and enrichment of IEP is hardly considered important.

Academic and Professional Development for SEN Teachers

The quality of special and inclusive education are indicative of inadequate professional capacities in Pakistan. Since SE comes under a separate ministry, pre and in-service teacher education programmes by government do not have any specific component on special or inclusive education. Thus, all government school teachers, who number approx 662, 000 have practically no orientation to special education needs while only 2% of approx 384093 teachers in private and other sectors are aware of it.

The work force for special education institutes solely dealing with learning, physical, mental and psychological disabilities is prepared through the Ministry of Social Welfare and Special Education and its affiliate institutes in urban centres. Moreover, key public universities such as Karachi and Punjab Universities have Special Education Departments and Centres for Child Psychology which offer long-term and short-term training programmes and conduct research and assessment on all aspects of disabilities. While provision of these services is definitely limited, the quality and scope of programmes also becomes a concern. Barring a few exceptions, the focus of training services is on remedial or diagnostic aspects, there is a lot to be desired as far as skills for using assessment for creating educational programmes and responding to individual needs is concerned.

Silver Linings: Role of Civil Society and Private Organizations

Contribution of Civil Society, NGOs and private sector organizations for special and inclusive education has remained commendable since early 1900s. Prior to the UN Decade of the Disabled (1983-92), onus of meeting the needs of persons with disabilities has remained on madrasah, mosques and community centres which have a long history of providing equal access to children with special needs on the subcontinent (UNICEF ROSA, 2003).

The bulk of support comes from NGOs and Civil Societies operating at village, city, provincial and federal level while private concerns are also taking up an active role. Several institutes like Ma Ayesha Hospital, Hamza Foundation, Aga Khan Social Welfare Board, Al Shifa Trust, Pakistan Society for the Rehabilitation of Disabled for Physically Handicapped Students, Lahore; Dewa Academy for Deaf, Karachi are providing education and rehabilitation support in urban and rural contexts whereas Allama Iqbal Open University and Aga Khan University- Institute for Education Development is venturing into professional development of teachers in inclusive education using open learning mode as well.

The financial and infrastructural needs are generally met through charity donations and fund raising while very small percentage of expenses is met through fee charged for the services provided. Most commonly, heavy remissions are given as huge majority of parents cannot afford school fee and treatment costs. More recently, funding also has come from Bait-ul-Mal, and national and provincial trusts for people with disabilities as well as bilateral and multilateral international donor agencies. In this regard, Special Olympics Association for Pakistan plays a critical role as it encourages private institutions to initiate national and international student exchange

programmes while meeting all operational expenses for these activities.

Recommendations and Future Directions

Educational opportunities for disadvantaged and disabled in Pakistan are extremely impoverished to say the least. Issues crippling the overall education sector have exacerbated the situation especially in the absence of national consensus and coordination.

It is therefore critical to adopt a multi-pronged approach which bridges the policy gaps while improving the implementation quality of special and inclusive education in Pakistan. Some of the key steps towards this include: (i) creating seamless coordination and synergy between Ministry of Social Welfare and Special Education and Ministry of Education to ensure that various government initiatives are complementing each other instead of random sprinkling of already sparse institutions; (ii) information generation and analysis on persons with disabilities need to be strengthened and should be detailed with research knowledge on effective practices and approaches for prevention, cure, rehabilitation and education of disabled; (iii) private and NGO sector initiatives need to build on their positive practices and organize their services so that impact at large scale could be achieved. Role of international and UN agencies is vital in supporting these small and dedicated organizations; (iv) currently, remedial and educational facilities are concentrated in urban centres but direct facilitation and access needs to be provided in rural areas as majority of disabled people reside in rural areas; (v) professional development of teachers, teacher educators and administrators along with awareness raising of policy makers, programme developers and parents will be key to successful initiation and implementation of special and inclusive education; (vi) while specific components should be added in the pre and in-service courses for

teachers and practitioners should also realize that mere tinkering with existing curriculum or Montessori methods will not help disabled persons in the long run and (vii) print and electronic media need to be engaged to overcome stigma of special and inclusive education.

More importantly awareness level needs to go up in Pakistan while every individual and institution taking up greater responsibility for providing equal opportunities to persons with disabilities.

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BRAC on Education for the Disadvantaged Groups of Bangladesh

Background

Education is a human right and an essential tool for achieving equality, peace, and development. The Constitution of Bangladesh pledges for an equitable access to a uniform, mass oriented and universal system of education. Bangladesh has witnessed a quantitative expansion of the education system and substantial increase in enrolment rates in recent years but the inequitable access to quality primary education is still omnipresent (Ahmed et al 2005). By addressing challenges constantly and supplementing government initiatives in Education for All, Non-government

Organizations (NGOs) are visible actors in the education sector of Bangladesh. NGO programmes are designed to reach the underprivileged and/or difficult to reach out-of-school children. Bangladesh Rural Advancement Committee (BRAC) is the pioneer in the field. This paper is an overview of the BRAC's interventions in education of disadvantaged groups in Bangladesh.

BRAC Interventions

Initiated in 1972, BRAC was in the beginning involved in educational activities with functional literacy programme. In 1985, BRAC Education Programme interventions included an innovative non-formal primary education

(NFPE) model. NFPE was designed to address the basic and primary educational needs of rural poor children, especially girls. Subsequently BRAC initiated several need-based education programmes. BRAC has multi-faceted programmes from pre-primary to continuing education which address the educational needs of the poor children especially girls. A typical BRAC school is a one-room rented house made of bamboo or mud-wall with a thatch or a tin roof where children sit on mats in a U-shape. A female teacher, who has at least 10 years of schooling, is responsible for 33 students on an average. Students are selected from about one kilometre radius of the school and teacher is from the same community. The teachers receive 15-day initial training. Afterwards, they undergo regular three-day monthly refreshers courses. Community participation is ensured through 'parents-meeting' once a month in each school.

Pre-Primary

Children from poor and illiterate families seldom get chance at home to be prepared for schooling. However, of late, a growing number of children that enter school are the 'first generation learners'. They are more likely to become slow learners' and subsequently dropout (Ahmed et al. 2005). Although, the necessity of pre-primary schools had been felt for long, the government education system of Bangladesh is yet to introduce a systematic pre-schooling (Begum et al. 2004). In late 2002, the Bangladesh government allowed BRAC to establish pre-primary schools throughout the country. This is a one-year programme where children aged 5+ are instructed for two hours a day, six days in a week. An adolescent girl from the local community is usually recruited as teacher/instructor. She facilitates different activities, including familiarizing with alphabets, writing, counting and manipulating numbers, and learning rhymes through games. The 'pedagogy of play' as it is termed for the instruction in these schools, is interactive and child-friendly. It helps children develop: (a) a love for books and knowledge; (b) familiarity with individuals and group, and teacher-directed learning methods; and (c) personal, family, and community-related knowledge, skills, and attitudes. This eventually prepares them for schooling at primary stage. Usually, 20-30 children are selected from deprived and marginalized families of the villages. During 2005, there were 16,025 BRAC Pre-primary School (BPPS) with a total of 425,000 students (63% girls) and 30,400 teachers (100% females).

Primary

BRAC imparts primary education among thousands of disadvantaged children of Bangladesh. Started in 1985 with 22 Non-Formal Primary Education (NFPE) experimental schools, after 20 years the number of the

primary schools has increased to 33,107 in both rural and urban areas. BRAC primary schools cover about 100 thousand students with girls constituting 66%. During the last two decades, 2.4 million children graduated from BRAC primary system, over two-thirds were girls and over 90% students enrolled in higher grades in formal system (Nath 2005).

BRAC Primary Schools (BPS), BRAC Adolescent Primary Schools (BAPS) and Educational Support Programme (ESP) schools are the three major types of primary schools under BRAC. Further, BRAC also runs Community Primary Schools (CPS), Education for Indigenous Communities (EIC) and few Formal Primary Schools (FPS).

All the categories of schools except ESP, provide education from Grade I-V. The ESP has Grade I-III. The BAPS serve children of 11-14 years, FPS 6-11 years, and all other categories of schools admit 8-10 years age group children. Learners in BPS, BAPS and EIC can complete the full 5-year curriculum in minimum 4 years time. In CPS and FPS, students have to study the curriculum for minimum of 5 years and in ESP for 3 years. BPS, BAPS and Education for Indigenous Children (EIC) schools are directly managed by BRAC; whereas some hundreds of partner NGOs manage ESP schools. Since 1991, ESP schools adopted the BRAC model and are provided with technical and financial support from BRAC. During 2005, there were 4,000 ESP schools run by 616 partner NGOs.

For the last 4 years, BRAC has been operating schools for small ethnic/indigenous communities, considering their educational and cultural needs. Further, there are 44 CPS that were handed over by the government to BRAC to make them functional. In addition, 11 formal schools (FS) are also in operation with 2,561 students and 66 teachers. The learning outcome of these schools is remarkable. A total of 289 students appeared in the government administered primary scholarship examination in 2005. Of them, 87 students were awarded scholarships.

BRAC follows a learner-centered and participatory teaching method in these schools. Basic features of non-formal, such as flexibility in age range, contact hour, relevance of curricula and instruction and class size, are followed according to the diverse special needs of disadvantaged children studying in these schools. Formerly popular as NFPE schools, they still are the key schooling intervention of BRAC. Curriculum for these schools, however modified, is not very different from the one developed by the government. BRAC follows the government specified 50 competencies by making them more suitable to the needs of the learners. Courses for these schools are designed to develop the children's interest in learning by means of an appropriate curriculum

and through singing, dancing, arts and crafts, physical exercise, games and story book reading. Curriculum for EIC schools was specially designed to meet the specific educational needs, including usage of mother tongues as the language of instruction in the elementary stages. Even in schools that have students with more than one mother tongue, 2 teachers are employed, one from each community. Currently, there are 52,149 ethnic minority learners in EIC schools where 2,947 ethnic minority teachers deliver instructions. Although BRAC Formal Schools (BFS) and BRAC Community Schools (BCS) follow government curriculum and textbooks, they apply BRAC experience for teacher training and conducting teaching learning outcomes.

There is a significant difference in economic background of students in BRAC schools compared to government and private schools. 70% of mothers and 56% of fathers of students in BRAC schools had no schooling. Similarly, about 40% of the BRAC School students suffer from food insecurity (Nath and Choudhary 2001). As most of the students of BRAC schools are underprivileged, having poor parents with no schooling, and who need to help parents in work, BRAC provides some concessions, such as no tuition fees, provision of free educational materials, flexible school hours, relevant and enjoyable goal-oriented curricula, learner-centred teaching approach (group work, peer-work, and reading circle) with little or no homework, regular students' home visits by teachers and supervisors etc. Again, BRAC undertook Children with Disability (CWD) initiative in 2003. It is striving to provide extra care and make specialized facilities for 14,471 children with special needs currently enrolled in more than 8,000 BRAC schools.

Secondary

About 98% secondary schools in Bangladesh are non-government and are located in rural areas. The quality of these schools is so poor that about half of the students have been unable to score the required minimum marks to pass in the public examinations. BRAC has limited programme to improve the quality of rural non-government secondary schools where most of the underprivileged children study. To-date 919 schools were selected for interventions, like imparting management training to head teachers and management committee members, subject-based teacher training, and training on values education. Recently, BRAC has introduced a unique pilot computer aided learning (CAL) programme to develop conceptual clarity of the difficult lessons and make the learning interesting, participatory and enjoyable. In future, computer aided learning will be applied in selected rural schools.

Continuing Education

There are two important initiatives of BRAC for continuing education, namely, the *Gonokendro* (Community Library), and the Kishori Kendro (Adolescent Centre).

Kishori Kendro (*KK*), formerly known as Reading Centre (RC), came into existence as BRAC primary school graduates who could not continue their study in higher grades in formal institutions tended to relapse into illiteracy. This is more so in case of girls. To encourage them to retain their literacy and life skills, reading centres were established in 1993. The RCs not only contained reading materials, but also became a safe place where the adolescent girls could socialise, play indoor games, sing, dance, and exchange ideas amongst themselves. BRAC has 3000 reading centres called Kishori Kendro in rural areas, serving 0.29 million female adolescents. Further, this programme developed the Adolescent Peer Organized Network (APON) programme for vulnerable adolescent girls and later on for boys. APON is a course facilitated by peer adolescents in Kishori Kendro and secondary schools where participants are educated on essential issues which typically are not discussed in Bangladeshi society, such as reproductive health, early marriage, women's legal rights, problems of dowry, inheritance law, oral divorce, acid thronging, HIV/AIDS, abuse and drug addiction. A number of life skills training courses have also been designed to enhance the status and self-esteem of the adolescent girls by increasing their earning potential and financial management skills through APON-II course. Until 2006, about 0.2 million adolescent girls and boys were educated through APON courses.

Community Libraries

Aiming to operate community-based libraries at union level and to provide reading access to rural population, BRAC launched Gonokendros in 1995. In 2005, 964 Gonokendros, including 30 in the ethnic minority areas, were serving 410,937 members. Mobile library works as an extension of Gonokendro for those unable to reach/travel to Gonokendros. The number of Gonokendros equipped with computers now stands at 185. Librarians of these Gonokendros work as computer instructors. A total of 2,102 children and youth received 1-2 months training on computer application/literacy.

Conclusion

BRAC's commitment towards a quality basic education for disadvantaged learners has always been central. A recent study by National Curriculum and Textbook Board observed that the students of BRAC did significantly better than those in regular and formal primary schools

(Nath and Chowdhury 2001). Intensive management, community involvement, relevant curriculum, creative teaching methodologies and trained teachers, are the contributing factors behind the success of the programme for disadvantaged children. Besides providing free education, including materials, BRAC also provides scholarships for the meritorious students of ethnic minority groups in secondary or higher grades and supports all BRAC primary students to continue education further. Thus, by persistent endeavour to ensure access to quality education for poor children, prioritizing girls, ethnic minority, children with special needs, and children in rural non-functioning schools, BRAC emerges as a 'hope' for education of the disadvantaged children in Bangladesh.

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Profile of the New Member Institution

We are glad that Australian Council for Educational Research (ACER) has joined the ANTRIEP family as member institution. Australian Council for Educational Research is an independent educational research organisation established in 1930. With offices in Melbourne, Sydney, Dubai, Delhi and the United Kingdom, ACER is able to provide services to the education community in Australia and, increasingly, internationally. The mission of ACER is to create and disseminate research-based knowledge and tools that can be used to improve learning. ACER undertakes a wide range of research and development and provides services and materials in support of educational policy-making and improved professional practice. ACER has seven research and development programs: Assessment and Reporting, Early Childhood Education, Learning

Processes and Contexts, National and International Surveys, System and School Testing, Teaching and Leadership and Transitions and Economics of Education. ACER works collaboratively with a range of institutions for different projects. These include State, Territory and Commonwealth Departments of Education and Training, Boards of Study, non-government education authorities, and higher education institutions.

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News from Member Institutions

National University of Educational Planning and Administration (NUEPA)

New Delhi, India

- Launched full-time M. Phil and Ph. D. Programmes in Educational Planning and Management. Besides, the University has also started part-time Ph. D. Programme.
- As a part of full-time International Diploma Programme in Educational Planning and Administration, the University has successfully completed XXIII Diploma Programme which was attended by 37 participating countries from Afghanistan, Bhutan, Botswana, Cuba, Georgia, Ghana, Guyana, Ivory Coast, Kyrgyzstan, Lebanon, Liberia, Mauritius, Namibia, Nepal, Russia, Senegal, Sierra Leone, Sri Lanka, Sudan, Tanzania, Thailand, Uzbekistan, Yemen, and Zimbabwe.
- Undertaken international research programme under CREATE - A joint research programme under the Consortium of Research on Educational Access, Transition and Equity (CREATE) with Five Member countries namely, UK, Bangladesh, Ghana, South Africa, and Sri Lanka.
- Renewed MOU with Korean Educational Development Institute (KEDI), Seoul, Korea.

Korean Educational Development Institute (KEDI)

Seoul, South Korea

- Organized a training program for senior policy makers of education department from Mongolia during November, 2006.
- A joint seminar on Financing National EFA Plan Implementation in Asian Countries was organized in collaboration with regional office UNESCO, Bangkok from 12-14 December, 2006.
- Renewed MOU with: National University of Educational Planning and Administration, Delhi, India; Mongolian State University of Education, Mongolia; and National Institute of Educational Policy Research, Japan.

Bangladesh Rural Advancement Committee (BRAC)

Dhaka, Bangladesh

- A study on 'Factors Affecting School-to-School Variations in the Achievement of Competencies' was conducted covering 298 BRAC primary schools.
- BRAC provided training to English teachers working

in private schools and conducted a study to examine the change in classroom practices among trained teachers.

- A research monograph titled 'Quality of BRAC Education Programme: A Review of Existing Studies' was published in August 2006.

Centre for Multi-Disciplinary Development Research (CMDR)

Dharwad, India

- Developed a data bank on Higher Education sponsored by Indian Council of Social Science Research.
- Conducting a study on 'Educational Participation of Scheduled Tribes in Orissa: An Analysis of Demand and Supply side Constraints'.

The Aga Khan University-Institute for Educational Development (AKU-IED)

Karachi, Pakistan

- As part of Consortium for Research on Educational Access, Transitions and Equity (CREATE), conducted a study on 'Overview of Primary Education in Pakistan'
- Undertaken a study on 'Teacher Deployment Policies in Pakistan' funded by Commonwealth, UK.
- A study on 'Leadership and Management of Change' was initiated as part of Research Programme Consortia-DFID, UK.

National Council of Educational Research and Training (NCERT)

New Delhi, India

- An eight member team from Sri Lanka visited to initiate a project on 'Upgrading Teaching Skills in Science, Mathematics and English' under India-Sri Lanka Foundation during July 2006.

South East Asian Ministers of Education Organisation-Regional Centre for Educational Innovation and Technology (SEAMEO-INNOTECH),

Manila, The Philippines

- Conducted a short course on 'Instructional and Curricular Excellence in School Leadership' for South East Asian Countries.
- Organised a seminar on 'Future Directions in Teacher Professional Development in collaboration with KEDI during November 2006.

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