

REACHING THE UNREACHED

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ABSTRACT

To care for the felt basic needs and priorities of the poorest, especially the women and children and empowered them towards their overall development and self-reliance. It is the vision of Reaching the Unreached organization.

KEYWORDS: *Reaching the Unreached Organization*

INTRODUCTION

To care for the felt basic needs and priorities of the poorest, especially the women and children and empowered them towards their overall development and self-reliance. It is the vision of Reaching the Unreached organization. Even in the beginning of the 21st Century the most important stumbling block in the way to rapid socio-economic development in the developing countries like India, is undoubtedly the illiteracy in general and the adult-illiteracy in particular. Almost 18 to 20 per cent children are never enrolled, and among those enrolled the proportion of children not reaching the secondary school certificate level is more than 80 per cent. At the higher education level, the situation is no better, either. Not more than 7 per cent of the relevant age-group attends the tertiary level of education. The problem is further aggravated by population explosion witnessed in the latter half of the 20th century. It is imperative that certain strategies are devised to tackle the problem of such a vast magnitude. It would be necessary that well-conceived but different strategies are devised for educating the babies born in the 21st century, and the illiterate children and adults carried over from the outgoing century. Unfortunately, most of the children needing a special strategy may belong to the under-privileged sections and may have illiterate parents. There is hardly any motivation for these children to pursue education.

WHAT IS OPEN UNIVERSITY?

Open University is an experiment recently introduced to universalize higher education in the world. Through this system an individual wants to keep himself up to-date in the process of emerging new knowledge. An open university is meant for those who want to gain higher knowledge and develop higher learning skill.

Tamil Nadu Open University (TNOU) is the 10th Open University in the country, which was established in 2002. This University aims at benefitting the sections of people who have been deprived of and/or denied access to higher education. The community of the deprived includes the destitute, the physically challenged, the working men and women, the economically weaker and marginalised people, and the drop-outs owing to various reasons. In nutshell, it aims at reaching the hitherto unreached. Within a decade, since its existence, the TNOU has remarkably catered to the learning needs of more than 5 lakh students with over 100 programmes, through 13 schools and 7 divisions. It has a well-knitted network of student support services with 4 Zonal Centers & Constituent Community Colleges, 152 Learning Resource

Centres (LRC), 165 Computer Programme Centres, 195 Community Colleges, 10 General B.Ed. Programme Study Centres (PSC), 13 Special B.Ed. Programme Study Centres, 9 Special Centres in Prisons, 33 Off-campus Centres, 3 Counselling and Psychotherapy Centres. In addition, the University has entered into a MoU with EduKart for a Virtual Study Centre (VSC) facility.

EDUCATION FOR TRIBAL'S LIVING IN HILLY TRACTS

The government has been implementing various development projects for the overall development of this area after the independence of Bangladesh. Apart from different line ministries and divisions, the Government is also implementing various development projects for the acceleration of socio-economic development process of the three hill tracts districts through the Ministry of Chittagong Hill Tracts Affairs. Some of these projects include supplying safe drinking water and fisheries development, improvement of health care services, agricultural infrastructure development, tourism development and poverty reduction, women empowerment and socio-economic development. In order to increase children's access to quality education and the development of educational institutions expansion, it provides vocational education for youth, assists the ethnic community to conserve their own language and culture and develop programs for infrastructural development. Different development activities in the rural infrastructure development sector, agriculture sector and small scale industry sector create job opportunities for women in these areas which eventually empower them. At present, more than 50% of the beneficiaries of the projects implemented by the Ministry of Chittagong Hill Tracts Affairs are women. In addition, this ministry has undertaken some specific programs and projects targeting the women of the Chittagong Hill Tracts.

EDUCATION FOR STEET CHILDREN

A tragic consequence of today's world is the rapidly growing number of street children. The United Nations estimates the population of street children worldwide at 150 million. These children are sometimes abandoned; they are also AIDS orphans or offspring of impoverished parents who have them live and work in the streets. As the AIDS pandemic grows, children are on the street at an increasingly younger age.

Special Need of Education

These most underserved and vulnerable children would benefit immensely by attainment of the educational targets set forth by states in Education for All. Education is a fundamental human right that allows all children to develop toward their potential. A lack of education has dire consequences for the child and negative consequences for the society as a whole. In healthy family relationships, children acquire healthy intrapersonal and interpersonal skills. Street children often develop behaviours that interfere not only with their own intrapersonal and interpersonal well-being, but also negatively affect later adaptation and contribution to a healthy, productive society. They learn behaviours on the streets that inflict damage on the self; the likelihood of treating others the same way is increased. These children have many needs and offer special challenges. Some of these can be addressed through education with a values-based educational approach.

ROLE OF ICT IN REACHING THE UNREACHED

The power of ICT in the field of information, communication and technology empowerment in rural areas is now widely recognized. Reaching the unreached and voicing the voiceless are now achievable objectives in development programmes. To assess whether Village Knowledge Centres (VKCs) and Village Resource Centres (VRCs) are really making a

difference in the lives and livelihoods of the socially and economically handicapped sections of the rural population, it is essential that continuous monitoring and evaluation, as well as In this publication guidance is given on the procedure to be adopted for setting up VKCs and VRCs (Village Resource centres which have satellite connection and telecommunication facilities). It was the hope of scientists of MSSRF in the year 2000 that by 2007, all our villages will have Knowledge Centres. The Government of India included Knowledge Connectivity under its Bharat Nirman programme (i.e., New Deal for Rural India), and provided funds for establishing 100,000 common service centres to service rural India. Private sector companies like ITC started expanding its e-chaupal programme.

CONCLUSION

It can be said by way of conclusion that if India were to emerge as a civilized and benevolent democracy in the 21st century, the democratic government must accept the challenge of wiping off illiteracy from its surface. The backlog from the outgoing century will have to be dealt with separately while a new strategy of compulsory primary and elementary education for every baby born in the 21st century must be devised and forcefully implemented. While the formal type of primary schooling is the best suited vehicle for educating the new-born, faith and confidence will have to be reposed in the non-formal and open and distance learning modes for tackling the problem of the backlog of illiterate children and adults. These deficiencies or shortcomings are not insurmountable. With determination and given the political will, the formal and non-formal modes can certainly be improved and made far more efficient. The most important problem is that of a general parental indifference and their need to employ child-labour for supplementing family incomes to ward off hunger and food-insecurity. There is no easy solution to this problem, though concentration on female education may reduce it in the coming one to two decades. Considerable stepping up of public investment in primary education is called for. Urgent measures to increase the quantum of national savings are called for which could be gainfully invested in primary and elementary education in the country-side. In the final analysis, population control is the key factor. If the country succeeds in reducing the rate of growth of population by at least 50% in the next one to two decades, there would be a substantial reduction in the consumption of essential goods and services (food, clothing, transport etc.) leading to corresponding increase in the per capita availability of investible resources. Moreover the demand for social consumption in the fields of education and health will come down which may enable the planners and administrators to raise efficiency of these social service sectors.

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