A STUDY OF THE REASONS OF URBAN DEPRIVED CHILDREN REPEATEDLY BECOMING OUT-OF-SCHOOL EVEN AFTER THEIR MAINSTREAMING IN THE REGULAR SCHOOLING SYSTEM

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ABSTRACT

Mainstreaming, in the context of education, is a practice of educating students with special needs in their regular classes during specific time periods based on their skills. Its means regular education classes are combined with special education classes. Main streaming is a regular practice at many schools. Special education students can be mainstreamed in to a regular education classroom for part of the school day. Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan (SSA) policy has emphasized the mainstreaming of children who were originally enrolled in EGS or AIE centers. States have been advised to upgrade the EGS facilities into regular schools. In the context of this policy, need to be seen in conjunction as the children served by EGS and AIE centers come from families enduring extreme poverty and other sources of vulnerability. Educating them is likely to draw out the best creative energies of the system.

The strategies for mainstreaming out of school children can be broadly divided in to three major categories- enrollment drives, universalizing physical access, and strategies for other out-of-school children. Some children who are in very difficult circumstances, children who migrate with their families, street and other homeless children cannot be enrolled directly into regular schools. SSA allows taking up a variety of flexible alternatives programmes to cater to the needs of specific groups of out of school children. It is the obligation of the government to ensure not just enrolment but attending and completion of elementary education. In this connection mainstreaming programme is being run in all over the India. Specific strategies are planned for mainstreaming of these children.

However, despite of all efforts many children of both the sexes become out-of-school or dropout again even after their mainstreaming. It is observed that many children discontinue their study. What are the causes of this discontinuity? Whether this problem has similar nature or it has some different roots? The position is not still clear, and need to be explored in details. The present research was aimed at to examine enrolment pattern, attendance pattern and dropout pattern of the students of deprived poor community. The specific problems were to examine dropout variations in the home and school environment, and attitude of teachers towards deprived poor. Another specific problem was to explore

the role of home environment, school environment and attitude of teachers in determining the dropout in children after their mainstreaming.

INTRODUCTION

Education is a basic need and right of every human being. It seeks to develop innate inner capacities of man. **Education is the manifestation of the divine perfection, already existing in man** (Vivekananda)**.** Education gives knowledge of the word around us it develops in us a perspective of looking of life. It helps us build opinion and have point of view on things in life. Education is important as it teaches the right behavior and good manners, thus, makes civilized. It teaches how to lead life and organizational skills. It develops social skills for interacting with others. It is the basis of culture and civilization. The right to education is a fundamental human right. Every individual, irrespective of cast, gender, nationality, ethnic or social origin, religion or political preference, age or disability, is entitled to free elementary education (Universal Declaration of Human Right, 1948). Education narrowly refers to formal institutional instruction. Generally, international instruments use the term in this sense and the right to education, as protected by International Human Rights Instruments, refers primarily to education in a narrow sense (UNESCO, 1960).

The Universal Declaration of Human Rights states that everyone has the right to education; hence the right applies to all individuals, although children are understood as the main beneficiaries (Beiter, 2005). The right to education is a universal entitlement to education, a right that is recognized as a human right. According to the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, the Right to Education includes the right to free, compulsory primary education for all, an obligation to develop secondary education accessible to all, in particular by the progressive introduction of free secondary education, as well as an obligation to develop equitable access to higher education, ideally by the progressive introduction of free higher education. In addition to these access to education provisions, the right to education encompasses the obligation to rule out discrimination at all levels of the educational system, to set minimum standards and to improve quality of education (UNESCO & UNISEF, 2007). The Right to Education is separated in to three levels: primary (elemental orfundamental) education, secondary (elementary, technical and professional) education, and higher (university level) education.

The Right of Children to Free and Compulsory Education Act or **Right to Education Act (RTE)**, which was passed by the Indian Parliament (2009) describes the modalities of the importance of free and compulsory education for children (between 6 and 14) in India under Article 21-A of the Indian Constitution which proclaims that all children should be in school and received free and compulsory education. The success of right to education act which has enforced from April 2010 in India highly depends on the accountability of its government (State Project Office, RGSM, 2009). The Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan (SSA) is the National programme launched for the implementation and achievement of the goals in this regard.

In exercise of the powers conferred by section 38 of right of education to free and compulsory education act, 2009, the state government makes some rules: these rules may be called the Chhattisgarh right of children to free and compulsory education rules, 2010.

Mainstreaming, in the context of education, is a practice of educating students with special needs in their regular classes during specific time periods based on their skills. Its means regular education classes are combined with special education classes. Students with special needs who cannot function in a regular classroom to a certain extent "belong" to the special education environment. Main streaming is a regular practice at many schools.

Special education students can be mainstreamed in to a regular education classroom for part of the school day. Students have the ability to work „one-on-one‟ with special education teachers, addressing their needs for remediation during the schooling. This system gained importance in the opinion of many researches and education its (Sindelar & Deno, 1978). Mainstreamed is customization and often relies on the judgment of the regular classroom teacher and the special education teacher, both of whom keep in constant communication to clearly evaluate a student's‟ progress. Mainstreaming allows the special education students to take full advantage of all available resources.

SSA policy has emphasized the mainstreaming of children who were originally enrolled in EGS or AIE centers. States have been advised to upgrade the EGS facilities into regular schools. In the context of this policy, need to be seen in conjunction as the children served by EGS and AIE centers come from families enduring extreme poverty and other sources of vulnerability. Educating them is likely to draw out the best creative energies of the system (as the experience of many countries has established). It is important, therefore, that the flexible methods used by EGS and AIE centers are utilized and incorporated into the curriculum of the regular schools into which such centers are upgraded.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

1. To study the attendance pattern of the urban deprived children.
2. To study the dropout pattern of the urban deprived children
3. To understand the causes of becoming out-of-school again.

HYPOTHESES

1. There would be no education level, sex and category variation in attendance pattern of urban deprived children.

2. There would be no education level, sex and category variation in dropout pattern of urban deprived children.

3. There would be no significant difference among groups formed on the basis of sex, category and drop-out on family environment.

4. There would be no significant difference among groups formed on the basis of sex, category and drop-out on school environment.

METHODOLOGY

Mainstreaming of the students who joined the schools in the special campaign under RTE in Chhattisgarh is being run in two districts only. These districts are Raipur and Raigarh. The programme of mainstreaming has been launched in urban area only. Despite of all the efforts, the drop out problem of mainstreamed students is still a big concern. Keeping in mind the problem of these dropouts, an attempt was made to find out the reasons of urban deprived children repeatedly becoming out-of-school even after their mainstreaming in the regular schooling system. For the study of the objectives and testing the hypotheses a specific methodology was employed, a brief description of that is presented as under

SAMPLE

1. Mainstreaming programme is run in urban area of two districts Davanagere and Chuitradurga. Sample was drawn from those schools where mainstreamed children

were enrolled. All the students taught in class 1 to 6 in these schools were included in the sample for the study of attendance and drop-out patterns.

2. There were 57 mainstreamed dropouts and 86 school dropouts selected. Also, 127 and 52 regular students from mainstreamed and school category were taken for comparison purpose.

DESIGN

1. To study the objective number 1 and 2, **a survey** of schools where mainstreamed children were enrolled was made.

2. To examine whether home environment, school environment, attitude of teachers and causes for leaving schools are different for the different groups of dropouts, **four separate group design** was opted.

3. To study sex, category and dropout variation in home environment, school environment and attitude of teachers, **2 x 4 x 2 factorial design** taking two levels of sex (boys and girls), 4 levels of caste category (i.e., SC, ST, OBC and GEN) and two levels of dropout (i.e., dropout and regular) was employed.

4. To explore the role of home environment, school environment, attitude of teachers and causes for leaving the schools in **classification** of students into different groups of dropout, obtained data in the study of objective three were used taking factors of home environment, school environment, causes for leaving schools and attitude of teachers as predictors and dropout categories as classification or outcome variable.

TOOLS

To assess attendance pattern, dropout pattern, home environment, school environment, attitude of teachers toward poor students, and causes of leaving the school, appropriate measures were developed.

RESULTS

Enrolment Profiles

Trends of enrolment in primary and upper primary level classes are decreasing. Less number of children was getting admission in government run schools of urban area. It is in contrast with population growth. One reason may be the preference for private schools run in the same area. Girls' enrolment is higher than boys in all the classes (except class 2 and 7). It is also an unnatural trend; census report demonstrates that population of girls is less than the boys but enrolment of girls is higher than boys. It may be because of preference for boys to send them in private schools. A discriminatory behaviour against female child is evident by the findings of the present research. Share of admitted students demonstrate that OBC students were about 55%, SC students were about 22%, General students were 12% and ST students were about 11%.

Attendance Profiles

Attendance of girls was higher than the boys in all the class. However, the average attendance was about 50% days in primary, while it was about 36% at upper primary level. Attendance of OBC students was higher than any other category students in all the classes. Students of general category were lower in primary classes. Attendance of SC and ST students were at average, but it was lower in middle classes.

Dropout profile

Dropout rate was higher in girls than boys at initial level (i.e. class 1 to 4) while more boys left the school in classes 5 and 6. In class 8 dropout rates was higher in girls. Dropout rate in OBC was relatively lower; while it was higher in general category students. ST students showed highest dropout percentage in class 1, but their rate was decreasing. SC students showed mixed trend, however, students of all the categories showed lowest dropout in class 8.

Home Environment: Gender, Category and Dropout Variations

Mainstreamed dropouts as well as school dropouts showed that their family environment was more abusive and de-motivating for learning than non dropouts or regular students. In comparison to regular students, their minimum requirements, learning requirements and secondary requirements were less fulfilled in the family. They also had less facilities and less study motivating environment at home. Home environment for boys was found to be more favourable than for girls as their learning and secondary requirements were more fulfilled, and family had more motivating environment for their study. Motivating family environment for OBC and General Category students was higher than the students of SC and ST category. Girls of dropout group found their family relation more abusive than the regular boys and girls. Their secondary needs were also fulfilled less than dropout boys and regular students. Dropout of general category also reported that they had most abusive family relation than subjects of any other groups.

School Environment: Gender, Category and Dropout Variations

It was observed that majority of the students rated their school having good provision of providing facilities to students, teachers were punctual and toilet and drinking water facilities were good. Teaching facilities in the school was moderate and psychological factors like pressure for learning, teacher fears, and indiscipline was observed up to some extent. Shortage of classroom and teachers was also reported by some students. Some students also reported that they were being involved in cleaning of their schools. Discipline maintain by teachers was observed by only few students. Discriminatory behaviour (both, caste and gender basis) and sexual harassment in the 5 school were also reported by the few students. Student's exploitation by teacher for personal work was rare but was prevalent. In comparison with regular students, mainstreamed and school dropouts observed more than their counterparts that schools had teaching facilities and required amenities but they were also facing discriminatory behaviour and sexual harassment in the schools. They also observed that discipline problem was there in the school and school were facing shortage of teachers and classroom. Boys were found to be more critical than girls; they observed the scarcity of teachers and indiscipline in school. OBC and general category students observed that their schools had greater facilities and create more learning pressure, while SC and ST students were of opinion that discriminatory behaviour was prevalent in the school. Dropout boys reported more scarcity of teacher and indiscipline in the school than dropout girls and regular students. Though scarcity of teacher was reported more by SC, ST and OBC dropout but in general category, regular students were reporting more about it. Discriminatory behaviour was observed more by SC and ST dropout while there was no difference between dropout and regular students of OBC and general category. Basic amenities was reported in a similar manner by regular students while SC and ST dropout observed it more and OBC dropout observed it least available in the school.

Attitudes of teachers towards deprived children: Gender, Category and Dropout variations

Mainstreamed dropouts perceived that their teachers had least favourable attitudes towards deprived and poor children; school dropouts were the second who had the similar opinion. On other hand, regular students observed that their teachers had more favourable attitude for deprived and poor children. As far as interaction between sex and dropout is concerned, regular students perceived that the teachers had more favourable attitude while dropout boys felt least favourable attitude of teachers.

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Causes for Leaving the Schools: Gender, Category and Dropout Variations

Mainstreamed dropout and regular dropouts perceived that the major causes for their leaving the schools were personal factors, peer factors, looking after family members, working for livelihood and distance of schools. The scores on these dimensions were higher than the regular students. However, one regular student (girls) reported that the major cause for her leaving the school was her marriage which indicates that child marriage is prevalent in poor urban society. Boys insisted peer related causes to be responsible for their leaving the school while girls reported the main cause of leaving their school was looking after family members. The similar result was seen in the case of dropouts and regular subjects. It is also evident that personal reasons were reported as a responsible factor for leaving the school by dropout subject while regular students did not show such emphasis on the personal factor.

Determinants of Dropout/Continuance of the Study

There are 23 factors which were found to be significant predictor of mainstreamed dropout vs. mainstreamed regulars. The significant predictors of dropout are (1) Personal factors for leaving the school, (2) Peer factors for leaving the school, (3) Lack of fulfillment of learning needs, (4) Working for livelihood, (5) lack of motivating family environment, (6) Less favourable attitude of teachers, (7) Higher de-motivating family environment, (8) Lack of fulfillment of secondary needs, (9) Lack of fulfillment of minimum requirements, (10) Discriminatory behaviour, (11) Lack of additional facilities, (12) Abusive family relations, (13) Looking after family members, (14) Higher age, (15) Teaching facilities & encouragement, (16) Being a girl, (17) Indiscipline in school, (18) School cleaning by stud, (19) Less number of classrooms, (20) Sexual harassment, (21) Fear of teachers, (22) Lack of basic facilities and (23) Learning pressure.

There are 13 factors which were found to be significant predictor of school regulars vs. school dropouts. The significant predictors of school regular or continuance of study in schools are (1) Low level of personal factors for leaving the school, (2) Motivating family environment (3) Favourable attitude of teachers, (4) Low level of peer factors for leaving the school, (5) Fulfilment of learning needs, (6) Low age (7) Less involvement in working for livelihood, (8) Number of teachers in the school, (9) Fulfilment of secondary needs, (10) Availability of basic facilities in the schools, (11) Discipline maintained by the teachers, (12) fulfilment of secondary needs, and (13) parental income.

CONCLUSION

Trends of enrolment in primary and upper primary level classes are decreasing. Less number of children was getting admission in government run schools of urban area. It is in contrast with population growth. One reason may be the preference for private schools run in the same area.

Girls' enrolment is higher than boys in all the classes (except class 2 and 7). It is also an unnatural trend; census report demonstrates that population of girls is less than the boys

but enrolment of girls is higher than boys. It may be because of preference for boys to send them in private schools. A discriminatory behaviour against female child is evident by the findings of the present research. Share of admitted students demonstrate that OBC students were about 55%, SC students were about 22%, General students were 12% and ST students were about 11%. Attendance of OBC students was higher than any other category students in all the classes. Students of general category were lower in primary classes. Attendance of SC and ST students were at average, but it was lower in middle classes. Dropout rate in OBC was relatively lower; while it was higher in general category students. ST students showed highest dropout percentage in class 1, but their rate was decreasing. SC students showed mixed trend, however, students of all the categories showed lowest dropout in class 8.

It was observed that majority of the students rated their school having good provision of providing facilities to students, teachers were punctual and toilet and drinking water facilities were good. Teaching facilities in the school was moderate and psychological factors like pressure for learning, teacher fears, and indiscipline was observed up to some extent. Shortage of classroom and teachers was also reported by some students.

Enrolment in government schools is decreasing. The possible reasons may be the attraction of private schools, and loss of favour of government run schools due to various factors. Those factors should be identified and be resolved. The average attendance of students was 50% in primary level classes and only about 36% in middle level classes; it is very low attendance. The causes of low attendance should be explored and be resolved. Results regarding family environment showed that there was gender discrimination in the families of urban deprived children; fulfilment of learning requirements and secondary needs of girls were less than boys and also, motivating for learning was less for girls than boys. It must be considered while managing the community participation in the school activities, specifically for management of dropout problems. Though involvement of students in cleaning the schools was found to be associated with less number of dropouts, however, students were getting involved in cleaning the school; it should not be a practice. But dropouts like it. It suggests that cleaning of school/classroom may be adopted as one of the learning object for few days (weekly). Such type of activity may be conducted as a mean of personality and school development and can be extended at society/ village/Mohalla level.

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