



A Study of The Needs of The Out of School Children in Urban Slums

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ABSTRACT

The development of a nation depends largely on the educational attainment of its masses, so our first and foremost task is to identify masses that are unable to get the benefit of education. Every child either boy or girl, has its own way of thinking and learning. It is in this context the researcher examined the needs of the out of schools children living in the slums of Delhi. The present research was of descriptive survey type. The survey studied gender and age variation in the needs of the out of school slum children relating to academic, residential, psychological, recreational, economic, dietary and social aspects. The sample comprised of 400 out of school slum children enrolled in the centre schools run by the different NGO's in Delhi. The study revealed that of out of school slum children had more social, residential, economic and dietary needs as compared to recreational, social and academic needs.

KEYWORDS

Needs, Slums and Out of school Children.

Introduction

Education is the wheel that gears up the welfare and progress of people and its development is ultimately aimed at maximizing the capacity to fulfill the needs and requirement of the nation. The educational planners and administrators all the time are engaged in the activities for and with the people, particularly the children in the age group of 6-14, to enable them achieve the desirable skills at the elementary stage itself so that they eventually may attain a specific level of education and knowledge and graduate out as compatible product in the job market. Education should always be need based and sustainable for today's demand. That is why education performs two functions, one is conservative and other is progressive.

According to contemporary thinking, education was the 'third eye' of man which gave him insight into all affairs and taught him how to act. As mentioned in 'Mahabharata' there was no "eye" that matched education (Altekar, 1951, p 4).

India achieved freedom from the British imperialism on August 15, 1947 after a prolonged struggle guided by Gandhiji's ideals of truth and non-violence. Based on these values and the philosophical traditions of India, the new Indian constitution, came into force on January 26, 1950. One of the most important constitutional provisions regarding education is incorporated in Article 45, which states: "The state shall endeavor to provide within a period of ten years from the commencement of this constitution, for free and compulsory education for all children up to the age of fourteen years."

In 1964, Indian Educational Commission was instituted, "to advise government on the national pattern of education and on the general principles and policies for the development of education at all stages and in all aspects". The Commission asserted (Para 7.08) that: In view of the immense difficulties involved, such as lack of adequate resources, tremendous increase in population, resistance to the education of girls, large number of children of the backward classes, general poverty of the people and the illiteracy and apathy of the parents, it was not possible to make adequate progress in primary education, and the constitutional directive has remained unfulfilled.

Need for the Study

People living in slum areas play a key role in urban life. They do every odd work beginning from rag picking to construction of houses. The resources of slum dwellers are limited. Many children from slum areas do not have access to schools with adequate facilities. Besides, the distance of the school from the residence, a question of quality of the educational facility suited to the needs and cultural background of the low income rural migrants also raised. Above all, poverty is one of the prime factors for slum areas educational development. Child whether belongs to slum areas or any other place, he or she has some needs regarding their education and life.

The proposed study is relevant to the present problems of universalisation of primary education in case of out of school slum children. The non-formal education centres have been functioning with the purpose of schooling of these children by extending the facilities. Lack of performance of these centres is generally reported by so many quarters of society. This study might help in knowing some factors working behind the problems of non-performance of these centres. Thus, present study aims at studying the needs of children residing in slum areas of Delhi. Some of these children may be children on the street, some of them may be children of the street and some of them may be abandoned or orphans. Besides, there may be more than several reasons why these children are educationally disadvantaged or out of school and they mostly bank on the educational facilities provided by some NGOs and other welfare organizations. Nonetheless, these slum children are special in many ways with regard to universal primary education and drains of RTE are not likely to reach their heavily buried fact. They need special attention owing to their special needs and fact finding studies can definitely reveal and highlight those points which would draw our attention to these children and modify the RTE approaches in such a manner that is conducive and concomitant to these out of school children.

Statement of the Problem

"A study of the needs of the out of school children in urban slums"

Operational Definition of the Terms Used Needs

Needs means dearth of something which is useful or desired by the individual to live happily, to feel secure economically and socially, and to gain personal worth and satisfaction failing which the slum children will not be able to live as a human being. This includes academic, dietary, economic, social, psychological, residential and recreational needs

Slum

Means human habitations developed either in the outskirts or in middle of the city with temporary structures without basic amenities of life.

Out of school children

It refers to the children of school going age of 6-14 years but they are not attending any school regularly providing formal education due to various reasons.

Objectives of the Study

The following objectives have been stipulated for the research study -

- To study the needs of the out of school slum children.
- To find out whether there exists any significant difference between needs of out of school slum children in relation to certain variables such as sex and age.

Population and the Sample

All the 'out of school' slum children of slums of Delhi constitute the target population. But representative sample of 400 students from 20 different slum/centre schools run by different NGO's were taken as the sample of the study. The sample schools and number of students were selected randomly.

Method of the Study

The present study comes under the type of Descriptive survey research.

Tool of the Study

Needs Reflecting Interview Schedule (NRIS) developed by the researcher.

Statistical techniques used

After the collection of data statistical technique of percentage and t-test in case of percentages were applied and results were interpreted.

Findings of the study

On the basis of the analysis of the data the following findings were drawn.

As most of these out of slum children were living in non-adjustable conditions in the tents, they demanded firstly for residential needs. 90.75 percent of these children showed the need of the house. Girls and boys do not differ on the need of residence. Also, as these children grew their level of maturity also grew with respect to this need. Hence they demanded more the need of a house at upper primary age level.

Bread, clothes and shelter are the three basic needs of a man without which he cannot survive. Same is the case of out of school slum children. The second most important need of these children was dietary needs. 89 percent of these out of school slum children wanted a nutritious and balanced diet which is an eventual requirement for the child's physical development at the growing age. That is from 11 to 14 years children were generally dissatisfied with their dietary food needs and demanded a nutritious food for them.

It is evident from the study that out of school slum children placed less importance to their academics and thus showed only 55.25 percent need of their good academics. These children were less concerned for their academics. A very few of them only focused on their education and thus wanted a good school having proper infrastructure, sufficient number of classrooms, with facilities of drinking water and toilets.

Everyone wants social acceptance in life. Same is the case with out of school slum children. Slum children also demonstrated 71.75 percent needs of social acceptance. They also wanted that everyone in the society should recognize them and behave them nicely as they do with others. Girls depicted more recognition need on the part of the society because they felt that girls were only considered as means of household support. Also upper primary age level out of school slum children demanded more social needs as compared to that of primary age level out of school slum children.

The major problem because of which these children are out of school and are living in the slum areas is poverty. Thus, these children wanted (86.25 percent) to be economically strong. They wanted to become strong by acquiring economic status so that they could fulfill all their basic needs and dreams of life. It is also seen that boys wanted to be more economically strong as compared to girls of the children on the street. At every stage i.e., at primary age level and upper primary age level students wanted to fulfill their necessities with the help of money.

68.25 percent out of school slum children wanted to become psychologically sound. They wanted that everyone should give love and affection to them. People should give recognition to them. Girls wanted more to be psychologically balanced as compared to that of boys.

So as to accompany their parents in their work, these children were not able to enjoy their childhood.. Thus, they showed 52.75 percent needs of these recreational activities. Boys wants more to play outside with their friends as compared to girls. Also in all age groups that are primary age level and upper primary age level they demanded recreational needs. These activities differ accordingly with age and gender.

Conclusion

The present study on out of school slum children highlights diversity of their problems needs. Even if the non-formal centre run by different NGO's have taken up the task of educating them and ultimately lodge them in the mainstream of formal education, the facilities provided by them are insufficient. So, Government and Non-Government organizations needs a systematic approach for planning, organization and effective implementation of their programs in the light of social, economic and cultural context of particular slum area. Thus the study demands effective educational planning to realize the universal primary education a major component of "education to all"

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