



**ORIGINAL RESEARCH PAPER**

**Education**

**PROBLEMS FACED BY SLUM CHILDREN IN COMPLETING THEIR EDUCATION: CONTRIBUTION OF NGOS IN CREATING EDUCATIONAL OPPORTUNITIES FOR THESE CHILDREN**

**KEY WORDS:** Non Governmental Organizations, Slum Children, Universalization of Elementary Education, Education and Right to Education, problem

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**ABSTRACT**

A country's progress can only be measured through the level of education of its individuals. Every child comes to school belongs to a different socio economic background in India; especially those are living in a slum. Most of these children come from a very low economic background where they work for the food. Education seems to be a never achieving goal for these children. Non Governmental Organization are the only way to educate these children as these organization works on the grass root level. This study examines the problems faced by slum children in completing their education. It also studies the kind of program which NGOs run to educate these children. Two NGOs namely Chetnalaya and Prayas were selected from North West Delhi as sample. 20 students, 4 teachers and 4 coordinators were selected for data collection. Interviews and focused group discussion were used for the data collection process. Finding of the study reveals that NGOs working in the field of education of children are a great help to improve the national literacy. These NGOs interact directly with the families of the children and convince them to send their children to study at NGO centre. Flexible timing, facilities provided to children and regular communication with the family make the task of teaching children possible in these areas. This paper examines the problems which slum children face in completing their education and various programmes run by NGOs in this field which help slum children in this regard.

**INTRODUCTION**

A country's progress can only be measured through the level of education of its individuals. Every child comes to school belongs to a different socio economic background in India; especially those are living in a slum. Education is very important for an individual's success in life. Education has a vital role in the personal and the social development of a human being. Education generally works as the foundation of society which brings economic wealth, social prosperity and political stability. In agreement with the Constitutional pledge to ensure free and compulsory education for all children up to the age of 14 years, provision of universal elementary education has been working as a salient feature of national policy since independence. Universalisation of elementary education (UEE) in its totality is still an indefinable goal and much ground is yet to be covered. "Education for all" declares that everyone has a right to education. Its aim is to give everyone a chance to learn and benefit from basic education – not as an accident of circumstance, or as a privilege, but as a RIGHT. The Right of Children to Free and Compulsory Education (RTE) Act, 2009 as well as Article 21-A, inserted in the Constitution of India through the Constitution (86th Amendment) Act, 2002, became operational on 1st April 2010. Its implementation will directly benefit close to 10 million children who do not go to schools at present. The Non-Formal Education (NFE) scheme was initiated in 1979 for the children of 6-14 years of age, who remain outside the formal education system due to various reasons. NFE cater learning needs of working children and children in difficult circumstances. Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) have been playing a major role in education of marginalized groups in developing countries since 1980s. They came out as alternative providers of education against the backdrop of the State's failure to provide relevant and quality education for economically and culturally disadvantaged groups. Non-Governmental organizations also work for economically and socially deprived, physically and mentally challenged; deals with all communities, urban and rural from every caste and creed and provide right to all. These are the nongovernmental educational organizations that have brought a vast sign of relief in the country. They provide quality education for slum children and other social services in India for the enhancement of nation in all respects. There are many slum education NGOs that are not only give education for slum children but also provide home to orphans. Chetanalaya is a nonprofit organization in Delhi and Haryana. Initiated in 1970 as humanitarian response to the plight of people in the resettlement colonies and slum clusters of Delhi as well as the backward villages of Haryana, Chetanalaya reaches to over a million people through multi pronged interventions. Jahangirpuri being the first and the oldest intervention area of Chetanalaya is inhabited by a community of poor rag-pickers for whom rag-picking is their only

source of livelihood. To ensure betterment of their lives and that of their children Chetanalaya has constantly been working for their upliftment. The Project aims at different target groups within the rag-picking community. Prayas is one of India's largest non-profit organizations. Its goal is to protect the rights of marginalized children, women and young people. PRAYAS (NGO) having a non political, non religious and non commercial character and is mainly engaged in imparting completely free education to the children from the families belonging to Economically Weaker Section and backward class of the society.

Education is essential to economic development, especially for poor people in developing countries. Although many more children enroll in school today than a decade ago, enrollment does not guarantee mastery of even the most basic skills. "Education for All" is still an uncompleted task, since approximately 17% of children aged 5 to 14 are still out of the school in 2004/05 (Government of India, 2006). Here our study focuses on slum children in Delhi who don't even get chance to enroll in school. As All India Survey of Out-of-School Children shows 15.21% children living in slums are out of school in Delhi. The Constitution Act, 2009 has made free and compulsory education for all children of the age 6-14 a fundamental right. The Government has a significant responsibility for the provision of elementary education to achieve the goal of Universalization of Elementary Education (UEE). NGO partnerships can be besides fruitful in moving towards this goal. The NGO experiences reveal that there is a strong latent demand for education even among the poorest communities, and that poverty as a causal factor for low educational participation can be overcome with a responsive education system. In a large developing country like India, there are numerous gaps left by the Government in the development process. Many NGOs try to fill these gaps in modern India. Certain non-governmental organizations (NGOs) provide basic education for urban disadvantaged children, including children living in slums, child laborers etc. in various innovative ways (Chakravarty, 2002).

**OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY**

- To study the problems faced by Slum Children in completing their education
- To know the contribution of NGOs working in the area of slum in north west Delhi
- To study the problem that NGOs face in implementing their educational programs for Slum Children.

**REVIEW OF LITERATURE**

The researcher used secondary data from journals, books, website and documents to study the problems and areas of this study.

**Jagannathan (2000)** conducted a study on 'The Role of nongovernmental organizations in primary education: A Study of Six NGOs in India'. The major findings of the study were

- The survey has established that NGOs can and do play a strong role in assisting the State. It has validated the premise in the introduction of the report that NGOs can be strategic partners for the realisation of the long-awaited goal of universalizing elementary education in India.
- NGO experiments have given rise to cost effective approaches such as voluntary teachers, community schools, decentralized teacher training models and educational materials.
- NGO participation strengthens the community link, increases the transparency of Governmental interventions and enhances the accountability of the schooling system to beneficiaries.
- The NGOs surveyed have made schooling possible for many of the unreached out of school children who have been left out of the Government schooling system. MVF has made significant breakthroughs in getting bonded child labourers into schools, including adolescent never-been-to-school girls. Bodh and Pratham have provided schooling for slum dwellers. Rishi Valley started its work with children in remote hamlet without easy access to schooling.
- The survey has highlighted the need for specially designed strategies and initiatives for children that are still out of school. The NGOs surveyed demonstrated that specific initiatives to address particular target groups, are required e.g., working children, street children, slum children, children of migrant families and tribal children.

**Husain (2005)** argues in his article 'Analysing Demand for Primary Education Muslim Slum Dwellers of Kolkata' that the main source of education in low-fluctuating income slums is NGOs. They provide non-formal education for two years and try to get their students admitted to government-sponsored or KMC schools. However, the rate of admission to the formal education system is quite low - especially in relation to their output. The students who fail to get admitted to the formal education system are retained within the formal education system by the organisations.

**Shirname (2007)** pointed out in a workshop that over a period of time, enrolment, both at the primary and upper levels of education, has increased significantly. This was because of various programs and schemes introduced at policy level, govt. level, as well as various programs initiated by NGOs. In the year 2004, the enrolment ratio (gross) reached to 90 and 71 per cent respectively at the primary and upper primary level of education. NGOs can be major contributors and are generally committed to ensuring that education reaches the poorest, most disadvantaged groups. This landscape also includes commercial providers – a rapidly growing sector – and community groups such as religious bodies

**Tsujita (2009)** in his study titled 'Deprivation of Education: A Study of Slum Children in Delhi, India' found that Certain non-governmental organizations (NGOs) provide basic education for urban disadvantaged children, including children living in slums, child labourers etc. in various innovative ways A variety of basic learning opportunities are at least theoretically available for urban deprived children in slum areas. 21 out of 50 slums, have an NGO or Community-based organization which provides similar child-care services for pre-school children. Improving the provision of pre-school education is important not only as a means of child development and nutrition per se but also as a means of improving formal school attendance.

**Minna Swami Nathan** in his book "the young child in India" (1978) points out the government sponsored programmes for the benefit of children tend to be ineffective because they are inadequate in terms of coverage and funding, inappropriate because they are not adopted to the specific needs of underprivileged children, fragment because they tend to respond single needs and are not integrated responses to meet the interested needs of poor children.

**Shaikh, R. A. (1983)** in his study of life style of slum dwellers and

its relation with education reveals that though many of slum family heads could not have education for themselves they had a positive attitude towards education. Some of the parents engage their children in the family crafts, and did not see any purpose in education. The children who get education show a positive attitude towards education. The life style of the slum dwellers were so worse- gambling, drinking, prostitution, Juvenile delinquency were widespread among the slum dwellers.

Programme Evaluation Organization of **India Planning Commission** undertook the study (1998) to assessed performance of Non Formal Education (NFE) programme in terms of its coverage, enrollment, literacy rate and retention of out-of-school children in order to achieve the goal of universalisation of elementary education. It compared the performance of state Government run centres with those run by voluntary organisations and identified factors contributing to the differential performance. The study was based on primary and secondary data collected from six states (18 districts). Information was gathered from 108 NFE centres, 1944 eligible children/ learners, 108 instructors, 72 supervisors, 221 knowledgeable persons and 18 VOs. It was revealed that inspite of adequate enrollment in NFE centres, the outcome of the programme was extremely poor.

**RESEARCH DESIGN**

Population of the present Study comprises NGOs and Slum Children of North-West Delhi. The Sample of the Study has been taken from two NGOs 'CHETNALAYA' and 'PRAYAS' which are working in slums of Bhalswa and Jahangir Puri respectively from North-West Delhi. Teachers, coordinators and children were selected randomly from NGOs. Tools for the study include interview schedule for teachers and students, focused group discussion with children and interview schedule for coordinators. The analysis of the data collected from various respondents through interview schedules were analyzed qualitatively by keeping the objectives of the study in view.

**REPRESENTATIONS OF DATA**

The process of data collection is really vast and very important for any study. The data for a study can only make meaning when a researcher categorize it and represent it through various graphs and tables. Here the researcher had tried to represent all the required data in tabular forms. All the data has been categorize under various themes which are formed on the basis of objectives of this study.

**To study the problems faced by Slum Children in completing their education.**

In order to obtain above objective i.e. to study the problems faced by slum children in completing their education students, drop out children, teachers and coordinators were asked to response on interview schedules. The responses were analyzed on the basis of work done by children at home or outside the home. The responses can be summarized as follows:

**Table 1 Problems faced by Slum Children in completing their education from the perspective of students studying at NGOs**

Description	Working somewhere	Taking care of siblings	Did not like formal school	Timings problem	Other
Why did you not take admission to the formal school?	10 (50%)	8 (40%)	4 (20%)	3 (15%)	-
Why did you leave the formal school without completing your education?	9 (45%)	8 (40%)	3 (15%)	5 (25%)	-
What are the problems you are facing in completing your education?	9 (45%)	8 (40%)	4 (20%)	4 (20%)	-

Table 1 analyzes the responses of students studying at this NGO, majority of children i.e. 50% did not take admission in formal schools because they are working somewhere for earnings. 40% did not take admission in formal school because they have to take care of their siblings as their parents work outside. Similarly 45% children had left their formal school because they have to go for work. Working somewhere, taking care of siblings are major problems in the slum, which prevent them, going to schools regularly. They further explain that because our parents do not have money to educate us we are working and coming at this NGO for studying.

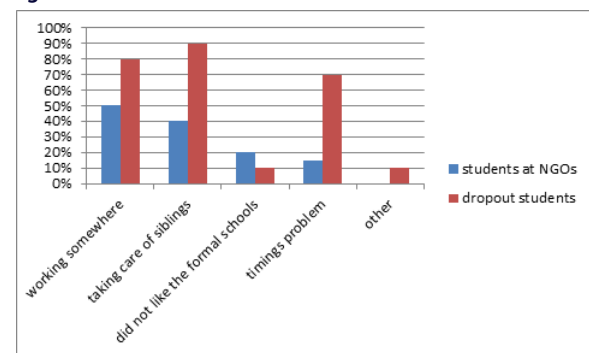
**Table 2 Problems faced by Slum Children in completing their education from the perspective of drop out children**

Description	Working somewhere	Taking care of siblings	Did not like formal school	Timings problem	other
Why did you leave formal school or NGO?	8(80%)	9 (90%)	1 (10%)	7(70%)	1(10%)
What are you doing these days?	6 (60%)	8 (80%)	-	-	-
What are the problems you are facing in completing your education?	6 (60%)	8 (80%)	-	-	-

Table 2 analyzes the responses of drop out students on the problems they face in completing their education; majority of students (90%) reported that they have to take care of their sibling that was the reason they left the school or NGO. They explained that they have a big family and their parents (mother and father) have to go for work so it is their responsibility to take care of their siblings. This was the reason they left the school. Only 10% children answered that they did not like the environment of formal schools. As one of them explained that because of getting punished by teacher he left the school.

80% children reported that they are still involved in the work of taking care of siblings. This is the main problem they are facing in completing their education. Whereas 60% children replied that they also have to work outside along with taking care of siblings.

**Figure 1**

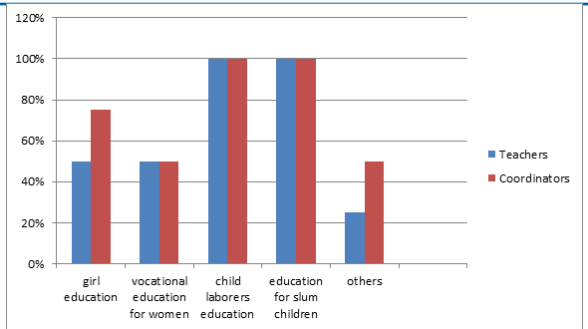


Responses on reasons for leaving the formal schools and problems faced by children in completing their education can also be represented in the above figure.

**Contribution of NGOs in the field of education for slum children**

The responses of teachers and coordinators on types of educational programmes run by NGOs can be shown in following figure:

**Figure 2**



The above figure very clearly shows that both teachers and coordinators have reported that NGOs are mainly working for child laborers and children living in slum and provide educational opportunities to them.

**Table 3 Educational programmes and facilities/help given by NGOs from the perspective of students**

Description(a)	YES	NO
Does NGO provide you anything free of cost books, uniform, stationary etc.	19 (95%)	1 (5%)
Does time schedule of this NGO suit you?	20 (100%)	-
Do you like the way teacher teach at this centre?	20 (100%)	-
Do you have any suggestion for the improvement in the teaching learning process?	-	20 (100%)
Description(b)	Items	Responses
Facilities provided by the NGOs	Food	19 (95%)
	Free of cost books	14 (70%)
	Stationary	10 (50%)
	Shoes	05 (25%)
	Other	

Table 3 shows the response on efforts of NGOs from students' perspective. It was important to take their perspective as they are the beneficiaries of these programmes. In relation to facilities provided by NGOs majority of children (95%) reported that NGO provide them facilities. In these facilities, 95% children expressed that food is provided by centre on daily basis and 70% children replied that they are receiving free of cost books from NGO. Children's responses show that all of the children (100%) were satisfied with the timings of NGO as well as with the way of teaching there. They explained that they had problem in going to formal schools because it took five hour a day but at this centre we can come after completing our work easily. Children reported that no single child (0%) had any problem with the type of teaching at centre and they don't have any suggestion for the improvement in teaching ways. They explained that the teacher's way of teaching is very satisfactory, the teacher use play way and storytelling method for teaching.

**To study the problem that NGOs face in implementing their Educational programmes for Slum Children**

In order to achieve above objective i.e. to study the problem that NGOs face in implementing their educational programmes teachers and coordinators were asked to respond on Interview schedules. The responses were analyzed on the basis of difficulties faced by organization in terms of retention of children, bringing them to centre and implementing other educational programmes. The responses can be summarized as follows:

**Table 4 Problems faced by NGOs in implementing their educational programmes from the perspective of teachers**

Description	Yes	No
Do you work on your level for the retention of these children?	4(100%)	-
Does this organization face any problem in implementing their programmes?	3(75%)	1 (25%)
Do parents cooperate in sending their children to NGO?	2 (50%)	2 (50%)

Table 4 reveals that all of the teachers (100%) reported that they make efforts for retaining the children in the centre. They explained that it is very important to have continuity in children's study and for this we teach them through activities, give individual attention and provide them flexible timings. If they continue with the studies they are more likely to go to mainstream education.

Teachers (75%) reported that organization face problems in implementing their educational programmes. In relation to this they explained that the main problem comes in bringing them to centre. We convince their parents, make children aware about education, provide them flexible timings etc.

In regard of parents cooperation in sending their wards to the centre teachers had mixed responses. 50% teachers answered that parents cooperate in children's education. Whereas other 50% teachers reported that they do not cooperate. We convince them by providing children flexible timings and basic facilities. They further explained that if parents are ready to send their children to the centre our half of the problem get solved by this.

**Table 5 Problems faced by NGOs in implementing their educational programmes from the perspective of coordinators**

Description	Items	Responses
Do you face any problem in implementing your programmes?	Yes	3 (75%)
	No	1 (25%)
Does NGO face any external obstacle in implementing their programmes?	Yes	1 (25%)
	No	3 (75%)
Does NGO hire any resource person from outside to solve any problem of students?	Yes	2 (50%)
	No	2(50%)
What difficulties do you face while bring children to centre?	Convincing parents to send their children to NGO	3 (75%)
	Making children aware about their education	4 (100%)
	Bring them centre every day	3 (75%)
	Any other	1 (25%)

Table 5 indicates coordinators' responses on problem faced by organization in implementing their educational programmes for slum children. 75% coordinators responded that they face difficulties in implementing their educational programmes. 25% coordinators face external obstacle in implementing programmes. Whereas 75% coordinators answered that the difficulties are not external. They explained that problem which we face is mainly concerned with this area because government does not have any problem with us; it is the internal cause like parents problem of sending their children on work instead of school or organization.

In regard of hiring any resource person to solve these problems, 50% coordinators answered that they hire resource persons for solving the issues. Whereas 50% replied that they do not hire any resource person from outside but solve the problem on their own. They explained that most of the time resource person is called to make children aware about issues like HIV aids but we also call them at the time of making survey so that they can convince parents to send their children and solve problems which is coming across implementing educational programmes.

In relation to kinds of problem that NGOs face in implementing their programmes, 100% coordinators reported that making children aware about importance of education is the problem we face. Whereas 75% coordinators believed that convincing parents to send their children to the centre is also the problem we face regularly. Even 75% coordinators reported that they have to call children on regular basis. They explained that most of the students studying at this centre are working children; they sometimes do not want to come at centre so we daily go to their homes and call them for study.

**FINDINGS OF THE STUDY**

Major findings drawn from the data and Information collected from Interview Schedule of teachers, coordinators and children.

- Half of the parents do not cooperate in the education of their children. They want their children to earn money instead of going to schools. Whereas there are parents who want their children to be educated.
- It was seen that children in these slums face mainly two kinds of problems in completing their education. First, children have to go for work and second, they have to take care of their siblings. Taking care of sibling is the problem of more than half of the students.
- Children living in slum have a very large family that is the reason that when parents go out for earning these children have responsibility of their home and their siblings, this prevent them coming at NGOs for studying.
- NGOs run various programmes at slums such as vocational training for women, girl education, education for slum children and working children and health. But education is core area of these NGOs.
- Special assistance like financial help, flexible timings and remedial classes were given to slum children by NGOs since these children come from socioeconomic weak families they are sometime provided with financial help so that they can join the schools.
- NGOs provide various facilities to the students like food, free of cost books, stationary, shoes etc. which help them financially.
- Students studying at the NGOs are very much satisfied with the time schedules of NGOs and way of teaching at the centre. They feel better here than the formal schools.
- NGOs are playing an important role in the goal of Universalization of Elementary Education by bringing slum children, street children, girl child i.e. bringing each and every child to the educational institution.
- It was seen that NGOs are making many efforts in order to educate these children. One of the works was to bring children from their home on daily basis and making them aware about importance of education.
- NGOs seems to be helpful in bringing children to mainstream institution by admitting them in schools, solving problems of certificates, and convincing parents to send their children formal schools.
- Initiatives have been taken by these NGOs to mobilize these children. One of the difficult tasks was to convince the parents to send their child to NGOs, thus teachers and volunteers constantly make surveys to explain them the importance of education through Non Formal Education.
- It was seen that NGOs have to face problems of convincing parents, making children aware about education and bringing children daily at centre while implementing their educational programmes.
- NGOs also hire resource persons to solve problems related to bringing children to the centre, convincing parents to send their children to the centre and others.

**SUGGESTIONS**

This study has various implications for the students, teachers, and coordinators which can be described below:

**Coordinators**

- They should provide financial help along with food and free of cost books to those children who are from very weak socio-

economic status.

- NGOs' coordinators should also organize excursions for their students so that they can take interest in education.
- Coordinators should also focus on co-curricular activities of students which would help them for their all round development.
- As it was seen that most of children have problem of taking care of siblings, coordinator should arrange crèches for these students' sibling. This would help them to focus in study and increase access of education.

### Teachers

- Teachers should give individual attention to each and every student. This would help them to understand their problems and making solutions to these problems.
- Teachers should make a rapport with every student so that students feel free to share things with their teachers.
- Teachers should also have a rapport with parents; this would be helpful in convincing them to send their children to centre and mainstream education.
- Teachers should be trained in their work so that they feel more confident about their job.

### Students

- Students should come at the NGOs on regular basis whether they are working or not. This would help them in continue their study and completing their education.
- Drop out student should at least take admission at the NGOs. They should tell their problems to NGO people so that they can make efforts to solve these problems.
- Students should take advantage of facilities provided by the organizations because these organizations also solve problem of taking admission in mainstream teaching.

### CONCLUSION

It is seen that slum children are facing various problem in completing their education. One of the problems is that there are many child labourers in the slum who cannot leave their work for education. Taking care of siblings and household chores are the problems faced by girls living in slum. The study has covered the initiatives taken by these NGOs, facilities provided to children and efforts made for bringing these children to mainstream education. The study found that NGOs play an important role in bringing children to the centre by convincing their parents. To achieve this aim, the coordinator and teachers regularly visit their home and motivate them. To retain children they provide them basic facilities like free of cost food, books and stationary item. Apart from this they visit children's home if any child does not come for more than two days to centre. The study also revealed that providing flexible timing for children help them to accomplish this goal of education because most of them were child labourers.

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