

# Inclusive EDUCATION

Quarterly Bulletin

April-June, 2014

## Seminar on Inclusive Education and Social Diversity in Bihar

(28-29 June, 2014, A N Sinha Institute for Social Studies, Patna, Bihar)

### Proceedings of the Seminar

The Seminar on Inclusive Education and Social Diversity in Bihar was organized by Deshkal Society with Support from PACS (a DFID Programme) to build and broaden the perspectives, policies and practices on inclusive primary education through teacher-training, advocacy and consultative processes with the Civil Society Organisations, PACS partners and the Department of Education, Government of Bihar.

### Inaugural Session

Sri Jitan Ram Manjhi, Hon'ble Chief Minister, Bihar inaugurated the Seminar and released the book on *Bharat Me Samaveshi Siksha aur Samajik Vividhata*, a Deshkal Society publication. Sri Brishin Patel, Hon'ble Education Minister, Govt. of Bihar was the Chief Guest; Smt. Jyoti Devi, Member of Legislative Assembly, Bihar, Sri Dhir Jhingran, Senior Adviser (education), UNICEF and Ms. Arti Verma, State Manager, PACS, Bihar were the Guests of Honour. Sri. Anjani Kumar Singh, Chief Secretary, Govt.

of Bihar also made his gracious presence among the dignitaries. Dr. Shaibal Gupta, Member-Secretary, Asian Development Research Institute (ADRI) Chaired the Inaugural Session. Sri. Sanjay Kumar, Secretary, Deshkal Society welcomed the dignitaries and guests to the Seminar.

In the beginning of the programme, **Dr. Dhir Jhingran** pointed out that the Right to Education as a campaign, though, began with better infrastructure and ensuring 100% enrolment of children in the schools, but the time has now come to focus

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on the quality of education provided and the educational performance of the children. Dealing with social diversity and difference in performances is a problem that needs immediate attention. It is also necessary to ensure positive environment in the class room and school. Cultural repertoire due to different household experiences should be respected and efforts should be made for engaging such children in creative learning.

**Ms. Arti Verma** stated that the responsibility of ensuring quality and minimum learning level of children is often placed on the households of the marginalized section and its cultural environment. She pointed out that PACS has taken the lead in the construction of new schools in Bihar under the provisions of Right to Education Act, 2009 and very good responses have been received from the parents, especially from socially backward sections. She added that the problems may also be seen in relation to the land rights of these communities, for which a Land Secretariat has been established at the A N Sinha Institute for Social Studies, Patna. PACS is also working on MNREGA under which communities have been empowered and encouraged for the role of social accounting to check the irregularities related to various aspects of MNREGA. It is also working on National Health schemes in seven districts of the state.

**Mrs. Jyoti Devi** pointed out that the Government has been working on various issues of inclusiveness. Mrs. Devi was of the view that a greater emphasis should be given on girls' education in order to make the education system inclusive in true sense. She

also stated that education is a strong tool for the empowerment of people.

**Sri Brishin Patel, Hon'ble Education Minister** shared that there prevails collective restless among the education policy makers in the State, and it is clear now that without education the development of the state will always remain a distant dream. He asserted that 90-100 percentage of the children enrolled in Govt. schools are from poor families. Most of the girls from these families are enrolled in govt. schools, whereas their male counterparts are enrolled in private schools, which are considered better than the Govt. schools. It highlights a deep rooted gender bias. He is also of the view that policies hardly pay any attention to school environment. As far as mid-day meal is concerned, he is of the opinion that children should not go to school with bowls in hand rather should be properly fed with dignity.

**Shri Jitan Ram Manjhi, Hon'ble Chief Minister,** Bihar thanked all for the opportunity given to him to inaugurate the Seminar amidst the presence of intellectuals and friends like, the education Minister; Prof. Shaibal Gupta; Chief Secretary Shri Anjani K Singh, and the MLA Mrs. Jyoti. Sri Manjhi shared his experiences as an MLA and a Minister since 1980. As a common man, he shared that, the birth of a scheduled caste person is still circumscribed by exploitation of many sorts. He thanked Deshkal Society and PACS for raising the issues of inclusive education in Bihar and for taking forward the agenda of inclusive education for all. Government's laws and policies cannot be successful unless and until the society accepts and incorporates them. He asserted



that over time the traditional skill-based Varna system has been transformed into a discriminatory system, which needs to be fought against. He said that most of teachers in private schools get salary merely in the range of Rs. 5000- 10, 000 per month. However, these schools are better managed than government ones. The government schools lack in proper delivery as well as their efficient management. He shared that when he joined college in 1962, he was allotted a “sick room” as hostel accommodation because he was a Mushahar by caste.

He also pointed out the significance of seemingly small issues like school dress may have in education system. He cited the example of good cloths and the need of uniforms in the schools. He also promised to allot Rs. 20,000/- per school for educational tour every year.

**Dr. Shaibal Gupta**, chairing the session, shared that Gaya district holds special place in the common man’s heart where Deshkal Society’s project is on-going. It is the land of Moksha (Salvation). Besides, Swami Sahjanand has described this place as unique after identifying 44 types of oppression and exploitation prevalent in the area. He pointed out the initiatives of the Govt. of Bihar since 2005 to improve the school education system by setting up and upgrading thousands of schools, appointment of lakhs of teachers, and strengthening various educational institutions. He gave due recognition to the fact that knowledge has now become the basic element of development and economic growth. Inclusiveness without dissemination and knowledge sharing at competitive level is only an egalitarian myth that is never to be realized. He applauded and recommended that this model of inclusiveness through knowledge and education can be replicated at National level.

### ***Session II: Panel Discussion on Inclusive Education and Social Diversity***

**Dr. Upasana Singh**, Head, Dept. of Education, Patna women’s College, Patna is of the opinion that inclusiveness is a philosophy. She stated that it is a myth that all children are equal and so equal treatment should be given to them. In fact, such a belief is a barrier in the path of proper inclusion.

The capabilities and needs of children are different and so educational provisions should be provided accordingly. The emphasis should be on equity more than on equality. She stressed that the study materials and the pedagogy must be reviewed if inclusiveness is to be achieved. Inclusive education is a challenge to be achieved not only by the state of Bihar but by the entire country.

### ***Session II: Inclusive Education: Grassroots Practices in Bihar***

**Mr. Ravi Prakash**, PACS, Delhi and the moderator of the session, shared in the beginning of the session that quality of education in Govt. Schools is poor and not proportionate to the standard of the class. Classrooms have not changed, and still remain as a replica of the discriminatory society.

**Ms. Parul Sharma**, UNICEF, Bihar shared their work on educational development in schools. Their main focus is on child friendly schools; physically and psychologically safe environment for children; respectful and affectionate treatment of all children in schools; making learning inclusive; changing the notion that children are the receivers of the processes of learning and cognition; making the work of Bal Sansad and Meena Munch more meaningful and secured; teaching children to respect for all and disciplined behaviour; and also to secure the voice of the teachers and the community in the teaching-learning process. She also shared that the work of UNICEF is mostly at the grassroots level, mostly in developing understanding and strategies for effective intervention. She also pointed out that during a survey of 375 schools it was found that in almost all schools Pupils’ Teacher Ratio (PTR) were 82. Further, a good no. of schools in Bihar lack basic facilities like, safe drinking water, clean and working toilets. UNICEF also has a programme named hidden Convoy which helps intelligent students for higher studies.

**Fr. Anto**, Bihar Dalit Vikas Samiti, is of the view that right to education is most important as it led to increased awareness of other rights, and ensures their fulfilment. Better and discrimination free education must be ensured for the children belonging to Mushahar communities. He also stated

that 1200 children from Mushahar communities have joined 40 study centers in different villages under the project run by Bihar Dalit Vikas Samiti. He also shared his experience that these children and their needs are yet to be recognized in the schools or society at large.

He has also converted one of the centers to a Resource Centre, the main function of which is to improve practices for empowerment. A great deal has been achieved through this center. He asserted that there is an inherent enthusiasm for quality education in the state. However, opportunities to bring equality in the schools still lack. There is also a need for asserting ones identity, ones- self, he feels. He proposed Komal Resource Centers at panchayat level.

**Ms. Bharati Chauhan** stated that the main function of Save the Children in Bihar is to build confidence among children, while ensuring the process of learning. They have also formed Child Protection Committees comprising 15 members including ANM, teachers, parents and villagers. The Save the Children in Bihar is working with 100 schools in Manpur block of Gaya district where they have developed mechanisms to improve capabilities- both physical and mental- of the children.

The main function of Save the Children in Bihar in education is to create child friendly inclusive quality learning environment. The objective of the programme is to improve the learning level of children through innovative classroom processes. To ensure the child rights at village level Save the Children did the formation of Child Protection Committees comprising 15 members including ANM, teachers, PRI members, AWW and villagers. Save the Children is supporting 100 government schools and Aanganwadi centres of Manpur block of Gaya district and Phulwari Sharif block of Patna districts since last 3 years.

**Mr. Satyendra Kumar** shared that Centre for Social Equity and Inclusion, Patna has been working on to promote equity, social inclusiveness, and democratic values in education. They are also working on inclusiveness through games like, Khel se Mel. They are also working beyond the walls of schools and in community and village. They advocate

entrepreneurship model in education in terms of humanitarian values and linkages with employment.

Ending the session, **Mr. Ravi Prakash** shared that there is a critical need and challenge of strengthening the process of skills development and knowledge building of the teachers in government primary and upper primary schools. In this regard, PACS has developed strategies and programmes at two levels; first, improvement of teaching learning practices and processes in classrooms, and second, changing the behaviour of teachers towards children belonging to socially excluded communities.

#### ***Session IV: Diversity, Social Inclusion/Exclusion and Inclusive Classrooms: An Innovative Programme for Improving Learning Achievement of Diverse Learners in Rural Govt. Primary Schools in Gaya District of Bihar***

**Dr. Arvind Mishra**, JNU, speaking with reference to the data on Gaya district on the above mentioned theme, called for understanding the school taking into account the social economic context of the children. He emphasized that this is important because 80 % of children are first generation learners. He advocated for the development of a school environment in conformity with the home environment so that children find the school familiar, welcoming and joyful without developing a feeling of alienation. Further, he shared the following five challenges that need to be addressed urgently in making the teaching process inclusive make the school effective:

- a) Creation of inclusive learning environment in the school considering the socio-economic context of the children
- b) Development of teaching learning material considering the background of the children
- c) Development of the teaching skills of the teachers for assisting children in developing reading and writing skills
- d) Development of imparting education in multi-grade classrooms
- e) Understanding the critical needs of differential learning among the children

**Mr. Sanjay Kumar**, Secretary, Deshkal Society shared that the main objective of the Gaya experiment was to increase learning achievement and retention of children from socially diverse communities in government rural primary schools by facilitating inclusive teaching-learning practices and processes, improving instructional quality and enhancing school effectiveness. He presented the achievements of the experiment in brief. The major achievements of the experiment are:

- Enrolment of children in the schools has increased from 87% in 2010-11 (base year) to 100% in 2012-13
- Much progress has been made in terms of Retention of the children. Attendance rate improved from 52.01% in 2010-11 to 73.50% in 2012-13
- Dropout rate also has reduced considerably from 47.99% in 2010-11 to 26.50% in 2012-13.
- Learning levels of the children in terms of reading and arithmetic have improved manifold. In 2010-11, 29.79% of children enrolled in grade I-V in the schools in the project location could not read. The percentage of children not able to read had dropped to 11.50% in grade I-V. Likewise, 10.50% of children enrolled in grade I-V could not do elementary arithmetic in 2010-11. However, in 2012-13, only 2.9% of children enrolled in grade I-V could not do elementary arithmetic.
- The number and regularity of participation of teachers in CRC training have increased.
- Activities like classroom demonstration, and teacher and educator support for implementation of inclusive practices and processes in classrooms were nil when the experiment was first launched in Gaya. However, by 2012-13, Deshkal Society was successful in providing these supports. Classroom demonstration and teacher-support are provided for 10 days in each school by a member of the project team. On completion of one cycle of demo and support, the next cycle begins. Thus, all the schools have been covered for classroom demonstration.
- Meetings of the School Education Committee, formerly known as School Management Committees, have also been held regularly.

**Dr. Gyandeo Mani Tripathy**, Principal, Maitreya College of Education and Management, Hajipur, Bihar made critical observations on the current education policies and practices for improvement of primary and upper primary schools in Bihar. There is no doubt that good policies have been formulated for decades, but, generally, there has been no connection of these policies with practices at the ground level. After working on educational programmes for almost two decades, it was Dr. Tripathy's realisation that there is a lack of dialogue and association between policies and grassroots. Hence, the growing gap between policy and practice. Dr. Tripathy suggested that the policy makers and educational administrators need to take the initiative to build critical engagement and dialogue with educational practitioners as well as innovative transformers of education. He ended the overview with a positive note that Bihar has always been inventing new ways of changing the society and education. So it is his belief that policy makers, educationists and educational practitioners are not only capable to face the challenges of critical issues and challenges of contemporary education system but will also provide creative inputs and constructive approach for improvement of the schools, where the children will experience joyful learning.

**Dr. Manoj K Tiwary** ended the session by summarising the deliberations and thanking the panellists, discussants and the participants.

### ***Session V: Way Forward***

**Prof. Manoj K. Jha**, Head, Dept. of Social Work, University of Delhi, Delhi, moderated the session and requested the Panellists to present their recommendations. The panellists, namely, Dr. Dhir Jhingran, **Dr. Manoj K. Tiwary**, and **Ms. Arti Verma** presented their recommendations.

The key recommendations of the Seminar are as follows:

- Deprivation is multi-dimensional. It subsumes caste, religion, ethnicity and migration related factors. Many times they converge and create instability in the households of those who suffer from it. That is why poor people have different world view than many of us middle class. They

have different priorities and their lack of commitment to provide education to their children is determined by a range of deprivations.

- Relationship between teachers and students, especially from marginalised community, has become problematic. How the context of children to be brought to fore has become a challenge.
- Other considerations do not have much meaning if curriculum transaction does not take place in the classroom.
- Issues of diversity, marginalisation and inclusive education should become a part of pre-service training programme.
- CRC and BRC system has become almost defunct. It needs to be revived. At present, their sole purpose is to collect data.
- There should be some mobilisation work in community to generate demands for education.
- There is a need to build a coalition so that emerging voices and concerns could be presented to the government.
- Research and documentation aspects of on-going projects have to be strong and ought to be shared.
- Inclusive education faces twin challenges. One at the level of concept formulation. Second with respect to strategies and tactics those are guided by these concepts.
- The concept of inclusive education may seem 'untimely' in the age of globalisation and liberalisation but without accepting it we commit another blunder to gloss over existing inequalities and injustices.
- However, the concept of inclusive education has to be locally developed and contextualised and not to be replicated and generalised without taking into account societal and community specific configurations.
- There are huge numbers of first generation learners in primary schools. For them schools are the only place where they undergo educational processes. Therefore, the failure of schools or their inability to teach them satisfactorily is tantamount to deny these children inclusivity.

- On this basis, there is a need to strengthen the primary school system. Factors that will help in this endeavour are: principle of "one teacher-one classroom"; favourable pupil-teacher ratio; extensive training on CCT and CCE process; training on skill augmentation regarding first generation learners; training on multilingual children; strengthening and streamlining of tola sevaks; improving infrastructure; non-discriminatory treatment to Madrasas; external management of MDM; avoidance and rationalisation of excessive paper work and deputation; training of SMC members: balance between academic and non-academic activities of SMC members; and a strengthened monitoring and evaluation mechanism
- Two important points that have emerged in this conference: first as emphasised by father Anto the inclusive education is a fundamental necessity of our age. Second, the myth of an indifferent community, especially marginalised ones, for education has been removed.
- There is a need to utilise, strengthen and monitor the government's efforts on inclusive education that are already in place.
- The concept of human rights, which is a prerequisite for inclusive education, needs to be included in teacher training programme and also in school curriculum.
- SMCs, if aptly mobilised, can become a real vanguard for inclusive education.
- Monitoring is one of the most important factors to strengthen a programme and it should be carried out by stakeholders and not by implementing agencies.
- There is a need for coalition among like-minded organisations. This will also help us in developing common grounds.
- There is a need to share experiences regarding existing models of inclusive education or to develop innovative models.

**Prof. Manoj K Jha** requested the participants to give their critical inputs on the recommendations presented by the panellists. It is significant that participants from diverse background took deep

interest and showed concern by giving their suggestions from multiple perspectives that will not only strengthen the current educational programmes but also help in developing conceptual framework of inclusive education. In the end, Prof. Jha shared a brief note on these deliberations and concluded that the diversity of questions and issues raised by the participants shows the commitment of the people for the betterment of education in Bihar.

**Mr. Jay Prakash**, Coordinator, PACS Education programme of Deshkal Society, Bihar extended the vote of thanks to the panellists, guests, participants and the key stakeholders for their tremendous support, cooperation and commitment for the Seminar. He also added that their concern and commitment for Deshkal Society's work will remain invaluable and will inspire the Society to take forward the agenda of inclusive education in Bihar.

## Programme Schedule

### DAY 1

**Registration and Tea**                      **10.00-10.30 am**

**Session I: Inaugural**                      **10.30 am- 12.30pm**

*Inauguration and release of the Book on Samabeshi Sikha aur Samajik Vividhata*

Welcome and Context                      Shri Sanjay Kumar, Secretary, Deshkal Society, Delhi

Inauguration                                      Shri Jeetan Ram Manjhi, Hon'ble Chief Minister, Bihar

Release of the book                              Hon'ble Chief Minister

*(Samabeshi Sikha aur Samajik Vividhata, Sampadak: Sanjay Kumar)*

Inaugural Speech                                Hon'ble Chief Minister

Chief Guest                                        Sri Birshin Patel, Hon'ble Education Minister, Govt. of Bihar

Guest of Honour                                Dr. Dhir Jhingran, Senior Advisor, UNICEF, Delhi  
Ms. Jyoti Devi, Member of Legislative Assembly, Bihar  
Ms. Arti Verma, State Manager, PACS, Bihar

Chair     Dr. Shaibal Gupta, Member-Secretary, ADRI, Patna

**12.30-1.30pm**                                **Lunch**

**Session II**                                        **1.30pm- 3.00 pm**

*Panel Discussion on Inclusive Education and Social Diversity*

Moderator                                        Dr. Dhir Jhingran, Senior Advisor, UNICEF, Delhi

Panellists    Shri AK Pandeya, Director, Research and Training,  
Dept. of Education, Govt. of Bihar  
Mr. Hasan Waris, Director, SCERT, Bihar  
Dr. Kedar Nath Pandey, General Secretary, Bihar State Secondary  
Teachers Union, Bihar  
Dr. NP Bhokta, Professor, Dept. of Education, Gorakhpur University  
Dr. Upasana Singh, Head, Dept. of Education, Patna women's College, Patna

*Note: The distinguished panellists may kindly complete the discussion in 15 mins.*

**Session III** **3.00-4.30pm**  
***Inclusive Education: Grassroots Practices in Bihar***

Moderator Mr. Ravi Prakash, PACS, Delhi  
Panellists Ms. Parul Sharma, UNICEF, Bihar  
Fr. Anto, Director, Bihar Dalit Vikas Samiti, Bihar  
Mr. Abdul Jabbar and Mr. Arvind Toppo, Aga Khan Foundation, Bihar  
Ms. Bharati Chauhan, Save the Children, Bihar  
Mr. Satyendra Kumar, Centre for Social Equity and Inclusion, Patna

*Note: The distinguished panellists may kindly complete the discussion in 15 mins.*

**DAY 2**

**Session IV** **10-11.30 am**  
***Diversity, Social Inclusion/Exclusion and Inclusive Classrooms: An Innovative Programme for Improving Learning Achievement of Diverse Learners in Rural Govt. Primary Schools in Gaya District of Bihar***

Moderator Dr. Manoj K. Tiwary, Consultant, Deshkal Society, Delhi  
Panellists Dr. Arvind K. Mishra, Asst. Professor, Zakir Hussain Centre, JNU, New Delhi  
Sri Sanjay Kumar, Secretary, Deshkal Society, Delhi  
Discussant Dr. Gyan Deo Mani Triapthy, Principal, Maitreya College of Education and Management, Hajipur, Bihar

**11.30 am-12 pm** **Tea**

**Session V** **12.00pm- 1.00pm**  
***Way Forward***

Moderator Prof. Manoj Jha, Head, Dept. of Social Work, University of Delhi, Delhi  
Panellists Dr. Dhir Jhingran, Senior Advisor, UNICEF, New Delhi  
Dr. Manoj K. Tiwary, Consultant, Deshkal Society, Delhi  
Ms. Arti Verma, State Manager, PACS, Bihar  
Vote of Thanks Sri Jay Prakash, Coordinator, Deshkal Society (PACS-Education), Bhar

**1.00pm-2.00pm** **Lunch**



# District Level Workshop on Inclusive Education

14-June-2014| Conference Hall, Hotel Navin Residency| Tower Chowk| Darbhanga, Bihar

The One Day District Level Workshop on Inclusive Education was organised on 14 June, 2014 at Darbhanga, Bihar. The major participations were the stakeholders of education in Bihar, mainly the teachers, BRC Coordinators, CRC Coordinators, Principals of DIET, representatives of Civil Society Organisations, social activists, students and parents. There were a total of 40 participants in the Workshop. Prof. Bidyanath Jha, Principal, MRM College; Sri Subhash Chandra Jha, Principal, DIET; and Sri Umesh Rai, BEO, Bahadurpur Block, Darbhanga were the panellists of the Workshop.

Mr. Jay Prakash, Coordinator, PACS-Education, Deshkal Society welcomed the panellists and the participants to the Workshop. He also introduced the theme of the Workshop and what is expected of it.

Kiran Kumari and Pushpa Kumari both the students of Kasturba Vidyalay, Premjivar, Bahadurpur shared their experiences of victimhood of exclusion caused due to socio-economic conditions of their families. Pushpa Kumari laments for the lack of opportunity that did not allow her to opt science in intermediate as her preferred subject as no school within her physical access offers the same and the cost for pursuing her dreams to be an engineer are beyond her affordable limits. The theme of the workshop was mainly to review the teaching learning process in classrooms, teaching learning materials, nature of discrimination in classrooms against children who come from the social excluded communities and critical questions and challenges of pedagogic democratization in primary schools. Thus it aimed at building interest and concern for inclusive primary education among key stakeholders of primary education at district level in collaboration with DIETs and PTECs.



Sri Hardam Kamti, a parent said that things have improved in Govt. schools but a lot is missing. The children studying in government schools as there is a lack of choice, as private education is often very costly and many parents cannot afford it. Even after many education incentives, the public education system has not yet succeeded in winning the confidence of the society.

A block Resource Centre Coordinator criticised that ASER Reports are driven by ulterior motives to demean and demoralise the public education system by showing poor learning levels of students in government schools, thus, paving the way for private schools to grow. He further added that a Three Member Committee Report on Roadmap to Inclusive and Quality Education was submitted to the then Hon'ble Chief Minister, Bihar in 2007 but no action was taken on it.

A teacher at a B. Ed. College shared that education has been treated as a commodity for long. Inclusive education cannot be achieved if education continues to be treated as a commodity. Making education more inclusive and cooperative is a joint responsibility of the State, the Society and the teachers.



The Principal, DIET pointed out that the concept of inclusiveness is based on the philosophy of equity and it is not about equality. Every student's needs to be taken into consideration while planning education system.

A Principal at a college said that public education system in recent years has witnessed a horizontal growth but this alone is not enough. Vertical growth is urgently required. He further added that picture

is not as grim as is publicised. In spite of all odds there is a silver lining and the objectives of inclusive education can be achieved with concerted efforts of all stakeholders.

Block Education Officer, Bahadurpur said schemes and programmes are in the process of implementation in schools to promote in inclusive education.

The workshop ended with a vote of thanks by Jay Prakash.

## Face to Face Meeting with Babu Thomas

Looks after the Department of Education in Bihar Dalit Vikas Samiti finds exclusion inherent in caste based discrimination prevailing over centuries in the society. He is pained to say that in spite of addressing the challenges of exclusion, education is being compromised like anything in Bihar. Even after 67 years of independence, our education system has not been able to create a sense of belongingness in the minds of dalit community- especially Mushar.

A community who has been facing the socio-economic and cultural oppression over centuries has almost forgotten its “being”. Deprived of fundamental needs required for existence, education is a distant dream that rarely comes to them. And an exclusive society, as we are, adds Babu Thomas cannot ensure inclusive education. Society will have to come forward and accept the existence of these communities-a step towards social integration and prerequisite for social inclusion. Inclusiveness is not an issue of equity and equality only; it is about the equality of opportunities too. And our education system and its implementing bodies are not properly equipped to address this issue.

Thomas considers all children are of equal value but also categories them on the basis of their learning calibre attributing it to the environment and opportunity. A teacher is expected to understand the individual learning capability and it is important in order to meet the learning needs of a child. Exclusion may occur if learning deficit of a child is not met properly and this generally happens



with the children of Dalit community. Being slow learners the children of this community use to be silent, shy, fearful and non- participating and are always neglected in the classroom. They need more opportunities and attention and need to be involved in activity based learning process.

Heredity Educability is nothing but a myth - learning is a matter of opportunity. Children from educated and rich family have the advantage of access to opportunity and enabling environment that help them in learning. Working with the Mushar children over a longer period of time, Mr. Thomas finds them mentally strong and willing to accept challenges, risk loving and sportive. Social negligence and rejection cause bizarre behavioural changes in street children but their desires are same of other children. He is of the view of treating them in a more caring way because of their freedom loving attitude. Girls of these communities are still lagging behind and we should pay more attention to their educational upliftment.

## Face To Face Meeting with Father Ananda

Father Ananda of Manthan shared the experiences of 45 years journey of Manthan towards bringing the Mushar children into the mainstream of education. Lack of awareness, sense of being non-existent, extreme level of negation and rejection are the major challenges to address when mainstreaming of Mushar children comes before. Manthan, besides, taking care of education needs of Mushar children, also addressing the issues of Human Rights, women empowerment, health and other socio-economic and cultural factors causing deprivation.

Nearly 150 villages having Mushar hamlet are being covered by Manthan. Each village has Mata Samiti-all the members are mothers of Mushar children-is acting as task force. Basic Education Centre for the children from 1 to 4 and Human Resource Centre for 5 to 8 are being run to compensate the individual learning deficit of children. These centres operate before and after the school time as all children are admitted in government schools. Manthan also runs residential and vocational programmes for them.

Besides seeking the root of exclusion in socio-economic and cultural milieu, Father Ananda also points out the excess consumption of liquor, nomad nature and their utter helplessness in managing the things also attribute to their pathetic condition.

Father Ananda finds the teaching- learning process monotonous, boring and routine exercise-



lacked innovation, methodology and activity. Teachers engaged in government schools are imparted training but they simply do not practice in the school. There is no monitoring system, accountability must be fixed. He does find anything violent in the pages of curriculum and appreciates the syllabus.

Father does not support the notion of heredity educability rather holds the situation and environment responsible for learning. Children from educated and affluent families learn fast because of the attention paid and time spent by their parents and that we cannot expect from the parents of mushar children who are always out for bread earning and hardly have time for their kids.

The dominant discriminatory forces are still existing in the society and the schools are not exception to this. Ananda shares the utterances of a headmaster-they cannot learn, they are worthless- truly reflective of exclusionary system.

## Face To Face Meeting with Father Anto

A face to face meeting with Father Anto of Bihar Dalit Vikas Samiti took place on 5.4 .2014 in the office of Bihar Dalit Vikas Samiti, Patna. More than an hour's discussion on the issues, challenges and misconceptions related to Inclusive Education, Father Anto shared his experiences and concerns working with Mushar children. His long transformative journey towards negation to affirmation with Mushar Kids has many things to contribute to the cause of inclusive education.

Learning is a journey from known to unknown- it starts from context to reflection to knowledge. Century old caste based discrimination deeply engrossed in the mindset of the society and system does not allow the children of dalit community to realise their own self. The major deprivation of dalit children as Father Anto says are deprivation of social love, social affirmation, social encouragement, and social recognition. And this unbearable quantum of deprivation compounded with scorn and hatred have affected adversely and forced them to be at the periphery only.

Our education system- primarily based on the reflective educational process-is a foreign borrowing and has nothing to do with local needs and context and is extremely discriminatory. School atmosphere is not respectful and no learning can take place in undignified and unhealthy environment .Schools are lacking life promoting culture. It is not a place of realization of self dignity and self esteem that correlates education. An environment engulfed with negation, rejection and discrimination cannot help the children of dalit community in actualisation of their learning capabilities and the school structure must endeavour in creating an enabling environment suffused with love, affirmation, recognition and appreciation.

“All children are equal” finds Father Anto as gifts of Nature but at the same time adds inter subjectivity



to the individual learning needs. Mushar children are intellectually capable but are deprived of environment and learning opportunities. He out rightly rejects the notion of Heredity Educability but also does not deny the importance of environment and opportunity as advantages to the learning. Street children are no way different from other children so far as dignity is concerned but their behaviour makes them different- and behind this is their struggle for existence.

With the changing time social practices are also changing but early girl marriage is still in practice in dalit community. And this happens due to economic exclusion because in patriarchal society girls are not considered as generating units. Mere enrolment cannot ensure inclusive education-participation in education system may be a step forward in this direction.

A discriminatory education system cannot ensure inclusive education-why CBSE, ICSE, and Bihar Board –why not one board, one curriculum and one syllabus for all says Father Anto and is strongly in favour of Common School System. Leaving behind these issues to the society, policy makers, Education practitioners to brood over honestly, Bihar Dalit Vikas Samiti is engaged in educational mainstreaming of Mushar children on its own and deserves appreciation for this noble cause.

## Future Activities on Inclusive Education

- Publication and dissemination of perspective paper on inclusive primary education in Bihar
- Formation of a State level network with key stakeholders of inclusive education, mainly, policy makers, representatives of civil society organizations, representatives of NCPCR, SCPCR, SCERT, DIETs/PTECs, PACS partners and educationists.
- District level Consultative Workshop for Perspective and network building among key stakeholders.
- State level Consultative Workshops for Perspective and network building among key stakeholders.
- Translation, Publication and Dissemination of resource materials on inclusive primary education among key stakeholders of primary education.

## About the Bulletin

The Bulletin aims at presenting and disseminating the perspectives, policies and practices on inclusive primary education among the key stakeholders. It serves as an instrument for consistent dialogue and network building among the key stakeholders of inclusive education.

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### *Declaration*

The views expressed in this publication are those of the project team only and do not necessarily represent those of PACS.