



## 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 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 Manjhiji 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 experimented 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’ 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.

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### *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***

|            |  |
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| Moderator  | Dr. Manoj K. Tiwary, Consultant, Deshkal Society, Delhi  |
| Panellists | Dr. Arvind K. Mishra, Asst. Professor, Zakir Hussain Centre, JNU, New Delhi<br>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 Way Forward***

***12.00pm- 1.00pm***

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

***1.00pm-2.00pm***

***Lunch***