

IMPACT ASSESSMENT OF EDUCATIONAL SCHEME: A STUDY OF ASHRAM
SCHOOLS IN NANDURBAR DISTRICT

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

SUBMITTED IN FULFILLMENT

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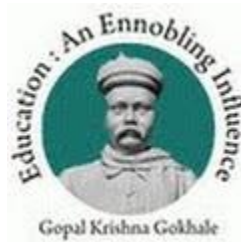
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Executive Summary

The present research; “Impact Assessment of Educational Scheme: A study of Ashram Schools in Nandurbar District”, is based on primary research coupled with secondary sources following a mixed method approach to understand the complexity of continued deprivation and exclusion facing by Ashram school students. The study though small scale has therefore helped us map both the scale and complexity of educational and social issues facing by AS teachers and students. It has also brought out startling facts about the educational and socio-economic milieu of this beneficiaries by judging the level of awareness /knowledge, attitude, skills and aspirations they have availed and the changes has occurred in the material conditions of beneficiaries that shows the government and its agencies have conspicuously failed in delivering educational and constitutional rights to the beneficiaries of AS. This study has specifically looked into the implementation aspects of the AS scheme and AS statute that aimed at the overall development of beneficiaries.

Lack of infrastructure facilities, geographical isolation and cultural capital, unlike the other communities, accounts for their perpetual educational backwardness, poverty and makes them vulnerable to social injustice and exploitation. Their parents’ livelihood is largely depending upon farming, migration and wage labour. Such a destitute life will always have a negative impact on their achievements and literacy rate.

This study signals that there is a significant gap in achievement has been generating among its beneficiaries. With reference to resource conditions, those are studying in government AS are disadvantaged than to the grant in aid. However, the general problem with the government AS is that due to the cumbersome administrative procedures many of them had given up education and joins to labour work. The positive results of the AS scheme could be found only among Kothali and Mandvi schools as they firmly follow rules of the AS statute.

Research Design and Samples

This study has covered a total of ten AS out of 125 in Akrani (3 AS) Taloda (2 AS) and Nandurbar (5 AS) blocks of Nandurbar district so as to ensure diversity and population compositions. The study helped us to understand the changes in their educational views and their livelihoods. The survey focused on studying the resource status and multi-dimensional nature of educational

deprivation and exclusion. The size of sample is 402 students, (160 boys and 242 girls). The necessary primary data has been collected through field visits along with a semi-structured questionnaire. The secondary data has been collected through the government reports; organizational reports, data from village, taluk/ district Project Officers (ITDP), revenue offices and archival visits. Other documents are published as well as unpublished research reports and academic journal articles etc.

Objectives of the Study

To assess the status of available resources in sample Ashram schools.

To assess the perceptions on consistency of activities in sample Ashram Schools.

To assess the perceptions on outcome of beneficiaries in sample Ashram Schools.

To assess the impact of sample Ashram schools with respect to principle objectives of Ashram Schools.

Education of Scheduled Tribes

In India, tribal's live in the forest-clad hills and valleys which is often far away from the mainland with poor infrastructure and other means of communications. They live mostly in scattered settlements rather than villages, which makes them difficult to access education facilities for the whole communities. Teachers from mainland are often reluctant to work in schools in tribal areas because of the distance from towns, lack of infrastructure and other amenities. Moreover, tribal students also face difficulties in following prescribed text books which are not in their mother tongue, occasionally; content is not appropriately designed for their livelihood.

Ashram Schools

In this regard, the government and grant-in-aid Ashram schools have significant role in tribal education. Tribal development department, Government of Maharashtra, is financially supporting 528 government and 556 aided residential Ashram Schools in hilly and remote regions of the state. These voluntary organizations running AS are receiving 100 per cent grants from government on the pay and allowances of the teaching and non-teaching staff and maintenance grant at the rate of 900 per month per child. Expenditure equal to 12 per cent of the salary is given for the book, writing material, furniture and contingencies is also borne by the government. 8 percent of the

salary bills also paid to the organization for providing uniform to the students, utensils and bed-sheets etc. Approximately 75 per cent of the actual rate is also paid to them as grant-in-aid. Voluntary organizations are also grants at the rate of 3 Lacks for the construction of Primary school buildings and 5 lacks for the post-metric AS.

Nandurbar District

Nandurbar, one of the tribal districts of Maharashtra, is situated on the triangular confluence of the three states viz Maharashtra, Gujarat and Madhya Pradesh. Majority of its population live among the remote and isolated hills and ranges of the Satpuda. The overall history of the district shows that poverty, illiteracy, ignorance, superstitions, blind practices and outdated faiths have proved to be the major hindrances on keeping the tribal and rural communities away from the main stream of life. After taking all these ill circumstances into consideration, government as well as many social workers and institutions realized that illiteracy is the root cause of all the social, educational and economic problems of the district and education is the basic need and the source for the overall boost of the people of the district.

Tribal- Sub Plan

The Special Component Plan for Scheduled Castes (SCP) and the Tribal Sub-Plan (TSP) were innovated and devised in the 1970s as specific developmental instruments to secure for the SCs and STs a due share of developmental schemes and corresponding outlays, not less than their population-proportion, so as to bridge the gap in their development and advancement. The TSP and SCP are one of the most significant offerings to the cause of social justice for Dalits and Adivasis.

Statute of Ashram School

Theoretically, statute is a formal written enactment of a legislative authority that governs a state, city or country. Typically, statutes command or prohibit something or declare a policy. In the context of Ashram School, statute is a set of permanent rule established by the government to govern the internal affairs of the scheme. Ashram school statute elaborates the set of rules and regulations to be followed by both government and aided ashram schools. It primarily covers aspects like, first, regulation of the schools, second, protection of beneficiary's right and finally, to enforce rights and resolve potential

conflicts. In principle, the statute prevents or deters the mismanagement of the resources and tries to ensure the functioning of the schools without any hindrance.

Impact process

By and large, impact assessment focuses on whether a policy or intervention has succeeded in terms of its objectives or, it may be a wider assessment of overall changes caused by the policy or intervention—positive and negative, intended or unintended. In short, as author Chris Roche defines impact as ‘the systematic analysis of the lasting or significant changes’

Resources

This retrospective study primarily assessed the hostel, classroom and other infrastructure resources through student’s perceptions and deprivation index. It was considered important to seek how beneficiaries perceive the present availability of various resources as one of the indicator of successful implementation of the scheme. Beneficiaries were asked to rate their perceptions about the availability of various infrastructure facilities on the scale of ‘Adequate’, ‘Inadequate’ and ‘Very Inadequate’.

Hostel Deprivation Index

Deprivation indices for year 2006 and 2016 (See Annexure I) are compared to understand the progress of the sample AS and improvement in the provision of hostel infrastructural facilities. As shown in the chart 4.2 and annexure I, this study found that out of total ten samples Ashram schools eight had a relatively higher deprivation score of 69.23 in 2006 for hostel facility. The two girls’ Ashram schools (Kothali and Mandvi) had scored relatively low at 38.46 and 46.15 respectively. By 2016, the provision of facilities at hostels in all AS had improved as shown by a drop in the index value. The deprivation level decreased significantly in Pavala from 69.23 to 23.08. There is a 38.46 point decrease in four AS (Rajbardi, Borad, Son, and Kothar). On the other hand, Kothali AS had better hostel facilities in 2006 and that improved even more and almost reached to the best level. The deprivation index for Kothali was the lowest (38.46) in the sample in 2006 and dropped to 7.69 in 2016. Similarly, Mandvi’s hostel deprivation index also declined to 15.38 in 2016 from 46.15 in 2006.

Classroom Infrastructure Deprivation Index

The study observed substantial variation in the availability of various classrooms infrastructural facilities in these sample Ashram schools. Koparli, Pavala and Son faced considerable classroom infrastructural constrains in 2006 with the highest deprivation index value of 77.78 in 2006. These Ashram schools were followed by Jognipada, Rajbardi and Borad with the deprivation index standing at 66.67. Mandvi experienced relatively low deprivation with the index valued at 33.33. As shown in the chart 4.3 and annexure II, although the performance of the scheme improved in next ten years but not close to deprivation-free environment. Mandvi performed poorly only on adequate lighting aspect of the infrastructure with the score of 11.11 in 2016.

Deprivation index for other infrastructure of Ashram school

The study observed substantial variation in the availability of other infrastructural facilities in these sample Ashram schools. Koparli, Jognipada, Rajbardi and Son faced considerable other infrastructural constrains in 2006 with the highest deprivation index value of 70.00 in 2006. These Ashram schools were followed by Pavala, Songirpada, Mandvi and Borad with the deprivation index standing at 60.00. Kothali and Kothar experienced relatively low deprivation with the index valued at 50.00 as shown in the chart 4.4 and annexure III. The performance of the scheme improved in next ten years but not close to deprivation-free environment. Only Kothali performed excellent on all aspect of the other infrastructure and reach the deprivation-free environment in 2016.

Activities

Activities /interventions are formal as well as informal in nature and part of the over-all instructional programme. There is involvement of the teaching, non-teaching staff and other stake holders in it. Activities that are carried out inside the classroom, in the laboratory or in the workshop and have reference to the prescribed courses are named ‘curricular activities’. Co-curricular activities encompass singing, dancing, gardening, mass drill, community work, games, etc.

Rationale of curricular and co-curricular activities:

- Organization of curricular activities enables students to be active in the classroom and the organization of co-curricular activities brings sound health and proper physical fitness among the students through organizing games and sports.
- Proper organization of curricular activities develops study habits among the students. And the co-curricular activities develop literary talents of the students.
- Organization of curricular activities provides both theoretical and practical knowledge to students in their taught subject matters and co-curricular activities provide scope to apply the obtained knowledge in different situations.
- Proper organization of curricular activities enables the students to have their academic brilliance by acquiring mastery over their subjects of study. And co-curricular activities provide ample scope for the students for social adjustment through different social activities.
- Organization of curricular activities gives a sound theoretical knowledge and understanding about useful, responsible and democratic citizenship to the students in the classroom situation. This becomes possible through academic treatment of civics and politics. For practicing the spirit of this type of citizenship among the students, co-curricular activities are to be organized through formation of student unions, student councils etc. in the educational institution. The cause behind it is to train the students practically how to develop responsible democratic citizenship. Thus above mention points explain the rationale of various activities executed in AS.

Outcome

Outcomes are the short-term and intermediate changes that occur in learners, as a direct result of the educational activity, or experience. Effects of outcome are either at the individual or group level. Objectives of Ashram school schemes reflect the different outcomes that might be sought. However, educational objectives are state what the participant will do learn or gain through a scheme. Nevertheless, in order to assess 'Outcomes' of the scheme, students' perceptions about the gain of awareness (Knowledge), change in Attitude, Skills and Aspiration are inquired here.

As 30.6 percent of respondents conveyed their satisfaction about the knowledge gain in the Ashram schools; however majority of respondents (45.3 percent) informed that they were moderately

satisfied about the same. It points out the need to undertake more dedicated efforts in dissemination of knowledge. Beneficiaries' knowledge not only augment human capital base of the society but also generate various positive externalities for the community in proximity. Therefore, these efforts should be considered to be most essential in the tribal community, faring low on all aspects of human development.

While 29.6 percent of respondents conveyed their satisfaction about the attitude related gain in the Ashram schools; however majority of respondents (44.3 percent) informed that they were moderately satisfied about the same. It points out the need to undertake more dedicated efforts for change the attitude.

Though, 30.8 percent of respondents conveyed their satisfaction about the skill gain in the Ashram schools; however majority of respondents (44.8 percent) informed that they were moderately satisfied about the same. Nevertheless, 21.4 percent informed that they are dissatisfied with the skills gain. On the other hand 1.5 percent is not respond on this. It points out the need to undertake more dedicated efforts for skill related activities.

Since 38.8 percent of respondents conveyed their aspiration towards the government service; however, sizable number of respondents (19.4 percent) informed that they want to work as professional. Interestingly, 14.9 percent informed that they want to work for private sector. However, there are 10 percent students who had not it fix their aspiration. It points out the need to undertake more dedicated efforts of career guidance related activities.

Impact

Impacts are the broader changes that occur within the community, organization, society, or environment as a result of program outcomes. Pearson's Correlation has been calculated to find relationship between deprivation index in 2016 and students' performance. Correlation test is used to evaluate the association between two or more variables. Pearson correlation (r) measures a linear dependence between two variables. Students' average marks for previous three years from 2016 and deprivation indices are negative. Further the correlation coefficient between the students' performance and classroom deprivation index as on 2016 was negative and statistically significant

at 10 percent. It implies that the non-availability of the said infrastructure facilities affects the educational performance of student. It therefore signifies the importance of policies and measures to reduce deprivations in different aspects of students' life in sample Ashram Schools.

Only two out of ten sample AS (Kothali and Mandvi) could create relatively better educational environment and made huge impact on beneficiaries as well as surrounding communities. The synthesis of indicators reveals that these two schools have very distinct characteristics compared to other schools. The most exclusive characteristics are these schools enjoy community support in their activities. Similarly, they are able to generate resources from own activities, leading to self-reliance of the schools. In addition, these schools are successful to establish cordial relationships with District Educational Officer (DEO) and Project officer (PO) with frequent interactions. Harmonious relationship can be observed among teachers, Head Masters (HM), School Management Committee (SMC) members and parents of the students. Most of the other schools lack in these fundamental characteristics.

There is a lack of state or national level role model like Kavita Raut, a sports icon who belong to tribal community from this region. Educational resources / inputs alone are not enough for social change of tribal families. Apparently, their social, cultural as well as economic concerns also need to be addressed. However, AS barely address such issue. Apart from that many government AS teachers keeping themselves away from local social and political issues. Further, due to lack of attitude and aspirations, lack of leadership and devotion in activities, poor role of alumnus and their organizations and lack of pressure groups are some important reasons for unsatisfactory effect / changes / impact in this regard.

It is expected that AS scheme make the community aware of the importance of the education through systematic publicity and motivational programmes. However, a follow-up resources, activities and outcome of sample AS revealed that active role of School Management Committee (SMC), Integrated Tribal Development Programme (ITDP), and Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) as well as teaching and nonteaching staff got good success in increasing awareness about education. However, SMC mostly include the deliberations on schools physical condition. Discussions on how to minimize students' retention and boost up their learning

achievement rarely come on the agenda. SMC members need to be oriented their school purpose is not more participation in the SMC meetings; they are supposed to bring parents' or villagers' concerns to the meeting tables and send meeting outcomes to the parents and villagers.

This study primarily addresses two research questions, first, “are the agencies concerned to the Ashram Schools in Nandurbar district implementing the governmental policies and objectives in the expected way?” on that the study shows that though there is a realization among the state and its agencies that their existing policy paradigms are not in consonance with the tribal realities social dynamics. It require a fresh imagination in the policy deliberation in case of tribal education. As discussed in the chapter three, Ashram school project has a well-defined statute that can address the issues if it follows meticulously. However, it seems, the privately-run Ashram schools are have become a major auxiliary player in this issue, seems to be not following the statute properly. This keep the Adivasis firmly at the bottom of social hierarchy.

Moreover, on the ground, due to inadequate resources very less positive externalities are generated in the minds of beneficiaries rather there are big chances for creation of negative externalities such as decrease in respect and educational interest as well as it may hamper their educational outcome such as knowledge gain (awareness), attitude, skills and aspirations and create gap between AS and its objectives. However, this gap and relationship between resources and impact seems to be the major stumbling block of tribal education in these talukas.

Lack of an understanding such as study through learning seems to be not yet implemented in tribal education curriculum. Issues associated with the infrastructure and lack conducive environment at school level has been lavishly discussed in chapter 3rd and 4th proved the first hypothesis of the study right: “*conducive atmosphere in Ashram Schools seems to be hampering the educational achievements of the beneficiaries*” right. Though there have been significant efforts to enhance the quality of AS, it failed to reflect on the ground, especially at government-run ASs.

In many occasions, students, especially girls, are not found in school uniform, moreover, they are not provided with utensils and required educational equipment's (see images in Chapter III). Library and laboratories were found not maintained properly though there is a full-time separate posts allocated for it even after this school has all the teaching and non-teaching staffs it needs. It

shows lack of proper monitoring from the government side. Few students were found interested in sports and shown us their medals and certificates received after participating state and district level school sporting events but lack of special sports teacher, grants for sports and games at school level is forcing them to abandon hopes at school level only.

The students' gender ratio is also shows huge disparity, for example, at Koparli out of 428 students girls are only 165. Teaching has been found in line with time table but due to unclean class rooms, lack of teaching aids, language and style of teaching students are not able to comply with the learning process. Though Ashram school has boundary wall it also lacks sufficient toilet and water facilities.

As far as impact is concerned, though there are substantial level of improvement in the AS programme many issues are yet to be recognized and addressed. For instance, lack of decentralization in the power structure regarding the management of school adversely affecting the outcome of the scheme. As per the AS statute almost 80 per cent rules vest authority to Tribal Commissioner, ATC and PO. The headmaster who holds the sole responsibilities doesn't have the legal power to make independent decisions in case of a critical situation. There is a clear disbelief on headmasters from the Commissioner, ATC, PO and tribal department seems to be fiercely hierarchical while dealing with parents and teachers. The study also found out the inconsistencies in addressing issues like underutilization of the existing schools, duplication of the service, girls enrolment, water and sanitation facilities, monitoring diet and fewer involvement of community and parents significantly hampering the aim of the scheme. This proves the second hypothesis "inconsistencies in implementation along with less-involvement of beneficiaries are hampering the objectives of Ashram School scheme in Nandurbar district" right.

Likewise, in case of teaching, teachers are forbidden to take independent decisions even in emergency situations. What emerges from this field research is how the most vulnerable tribal students living in Ashram Schools, sometimes, with no physical protection of any kind under severe exploitative conditions, thus shaping the process of inequality beyond the village context and in the modern education system, leading to the continued powerlessness and oppression of the Adivasi community. Almost all AS comes with their own problems that mostly associated with geographical and regional differences.

On the contrary, yet, efforts by the governments to specifically address the issues associated with AS seems to be dysfunctional. Field evidences supports the idea that the agencies that are running these institutions are seems to be focusing only on cosmetic changes in the functioning of the schools but largely reluctant to ease its stringent rules and regulations with regard to the functioning of the school. Irregularity associated with the day to day functioning of the school is yet another dilemma which needs to be addressed on urgent basis. The study also surveyed a small number of alumnus (51) which AS scheme has created a small group of elites from its first generation learners, but these are more alienated from the community they leave behind and integrated themselves into the upper strata they have supposedly reached. This is hardly a happy situation and can be cause for concerns on its own.

Many suggested that in India any kind of targeting the poor with services is misplaced because, unless they are to serve everyone, they will prove to be universally bad. Jos Mooij's idea of Indian welfare regime is valid here. She argued that there are three trends within the Indian "welfare" context—which the Adivasis are considered to be one of the major beneficiaries—: a collective right-based trend, an individualizing marketization trend, related to that a state policy targeting approach. Her work showed the ways in which market-based provision of basic welfare, such as education, removed protection from state sector and encouraged those who could afford it to leave. Mooij (2014) argued that the overall effect is that the state has become *for* and *of* the poor: creating a provision for the poor. What India ought to focus on, the sociologist Dipankar Gupta (2014) argued, is high-quality service for everyone, and he says the country can afford these. These, seems utopian propositions given that even basic social security measures of poor tribal children discussed earlier are so difficult to fight for . However, this study shows that there is an urgency of a radical policy initiative to address the issues related to Ashram Schools in the state, because, much of the structural imbalances of power and exploitative vulnerabilities within the Ashram school programme, remained unnoticed since its inception, even as many incidents of blatant human rights violations slackened by the media and civil right activists.