

Top-up Project Completion Report
on

**Pilot initiative to Promote Inclusive Education in Bihar through
influencing the Teaching -Learning modules**

Submitted by

Deshkal Society

205, 2nd Floor, Indra Vihar,
Delhi-110009,

Phone- Fax-+91 11 27654895

Email: deshkal@gmail.com

Website: www.deshkalindia.com

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Poorest Areas Civil Society (A DFID Programme)

Bihar State Office

128 B, Patliputra Colony, Patna- 800013

Bihar

Phone: +91-612-2277705

1. BACKGROUND AND INTRODUCTION

Gross Enrolment Ratio in the rural primary schools in Bihar is an impressive 110% but the attendance rate is an alarming 50% and the dropout ratio by the Class V is a depressing 15%. Most importantly, these developments weigh heavily against children of socially excluded communities. In other words, a disproportionate number of children from marginalised communities either develop a habit of absenteeism or attain the status of dropouts. In essence, the prevailing primary education is not inclusive enough to infuse a sense of belongingness and fairness that could promote satisfactory learning attainment and school retention among marginalised children.

Recent studies and observations on government primary schools and classrooms indicate that the school curriculum and teaching-learning practices and processes are not sensitive towards addressing the learning needs and concerns of children from socially excluded communities, and prejudiced and discriminatory practices against these children still operate in classroom practices and processes. Children are often perceived as having ascribed learning potential and abilities, or lack of it, based on their socio-cultural and economic backgrounds. On the other hand, the school community also claims in public discourse to treat all children as 'equal' and views them in terms of a universal category. While the first is based on the ideology of caste hierarchy, the second denies children their individual identity and strength as well as their identities and consciousness formed as part of growing up as members of collectives.

Children learn in different ways owing to their community experiences, environmental conditions, socio-economic and cultural backgrounds. For primary education to be fully inclusive, it needs to be ensured that the curriculum is accessible to and relevant for all children in terms of what is taught (content), how it is taught (method), how children learn best (process), and how it relates to the life experiences of the children and the environment in which they live and learn. The teaching materials need to be made inclusive by making them responsive to the diverse cultures and socio-economic backgrounds of all the children and relevant to their learning needs and interests.

As a result, children from socially excluded communities find themselves excluded from the teaching-learning processes, and lose interest in the existing education system. Their gradual alienation with the system has profound impact on their overall learning status, which is generally developed in two stages: first, their learning attainment is adversely affected, and second, they develop high rate of absenteeism, and eventual dropout.

On the contrary, what is prevailing in the primary schools is a lack of sensitivity and awareness, as described above, towards the needs of children from socially excluded communities. And, moreover, this sensitivity and awareness deficit is vertically pervasive among not only in primary schools but also in institutions and organisations, both at district and state level, that maintain oversight over these schools and provide direction to the overall primary education system. Against this background, there is a need for a perspective building through consultative process in the state that constructs or betters the understanding of inclusive education among relevant stakeholders, including DIET, SCERT, BEP, SCPCR, Government B.Ed. training colleges officials and, consequently, the agenda of inclusive education is brought into the centre of the primary education discourse.

2. OBJECTIVE

In light of the fact, Deshkal Society and PACS thought to initiate a pilot project to understand the classroom practices and appraisal visits to selected schools in the country employed inclusive classroom practices and strategies. Based on the engagement with education functionaries create a platform to discuss and debate on the issues of inclusive education as well as develop and disseminate knowledge on inclusive education.

The proposed plan also aimed to collaborate and develop creative engagement with State Council for Educational Research and Training (SCERT) and Bihar education Project (BEP) for the state level activities, mainly in the state level stakeholders' workshop, and dissemination of the perspective paper and the resource materials on inclusive primary education. Similarly, we also propose to collaborate with DIETs/PTECs and BRCs at district and block levels respectively for the consultative workshops, and dissemination of the perspective paper and the resource materials.

3. STRATEGIES TOWARDS ACHIEVING THE OBJECTIVE

- Broadening the perspective, teaching-learning skills and capacity of teachers, CRC coordinators, BRC coordinators and Block Education Officer CSOs, and those who are actively involved in primary education in four blocks of sample districts through training and consultative processes.
- Building a perspective and practice through collaboration, critical engagements, knowledge and information dissemination with key officials of BEP, Department of education, Bihar, SCERT, District Education Officials and DIETs/PTECs/BITEs for making inclusive primary education a reality in Bihar.
- Training, advocacy and policy engagement with the Department of Education, Bihar Civil Society Organizations (CSOs) and PACS partners at state, district and Block level through a sustained network.
- Creating a dialogue and partnership between schools and socially excluded communities through advocacy and consultative processes at the block level for strengthening the cause of inclusive education.
- Creating information and knowledge base in Hindi through perspective papers and resource materials on inclusive education for all relevant stakeholders.

4. KEY ACTIVITIES

1. Assessment of stakeholders' perspectives on inclusive education through FGDs, Interviews and case studies.
2. Appraisal visits of schools of Loreto Day, Kolkata; Vidyashram, Varanasi; Anandniketan, Wardha; and APCL, Patna that employ inclusive primary education strategies and practices.
3. Publication and dissemination of perspective paper on inclusive primary education in Bihar.
4. Formation of a State level network on Inclusive Primary Education.
5. Strengthening the process of network building through E-group, Web site and social media.
6. BRC level training in the districts of Bhojpur, Gaya, Darbhanga, and Kishanganj.
7. Perspective building of key stakeholders and formation of network building through district level consultative workshops for one day.
8. Face to face meetings with policy makers, state and district officials and key representatives of CSOs and PACS partners.
9. Translation, Publication and Dissemination of resource materials on inclusive primary education among key stakeholders of primary education.
10. Preparation, publication and dissemination of Bulletin on inclusive primary education.

5. NETWORK AND ADVOCACY (Engagement with government)

A sustainable and active network of key stakeholders of Inclusive Primary Education has been developed through E-group, Web site and social media. This network has facilitated communication, sharing the experiences and understanding on inclusive primary education of the members. It has also been instrumental in dissemination of relevant materials on inclusive primary education among the network partners. To this end a Google group has been created for dissemination of project achievements as well as news and knowledge on inclusive education. The Google group Deshkal of Inclusive Classrooms has approx. 2000 members.

5.1 Enhanced understanding of approximately 15 CSOs on inclusive education and practices through intensive networking and alliance building

Enhancement of understanding of 15 Civil Society Organisations on inclusive education and classroom practices has been an important achievement in the current year. In this process, the CSOs were involved through face to face meetings and interviews, which helped us in creating a dialogue and engagement with the CSOs. These meetings helped us in knowing their opinion and questions on inclusive education.

The CSOs were involved in the state and district level workshops which built the ground for policy perspective on inclusive primary education in the state of Bihar, and built the interest and concern for inclusive primary education among key stakeholders of primary education at district level. The workshops created a space to engage critically around the current issues of inclusive education and sensitise the stakeholders.

5.2 Advocacy with Department of Education, Govt. of Bihar

Advocacy with Dept. of Education and other educational policy institutions were developed around these recommendations.	What was the feedback on the recommendation proposed?	Was the recommendation accepted or adopted?	What are the next steps?
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Preparation of Child Social Profile of the children enrolled in the schools in Bihar. 2. The teachers should be trained to embrace social diversity in the classroom to make learning of the children effective and inclusive. 3. The Open and Distance Learning System run for the training of 113793 untrained teachers should also focus on sharing the child social profile with the teachers and make it a part of the curriculum. 4. Constitution of a committee on inclusive education. 5. Strengthening the institution and Tola Sevak and Talimi Markaz. 6. Sensitisation and training of School Education Committee members. 	<p>The recommendations are highly recommended by the SCERT and Dept. of Education, Govt. of Bihar.</p>	<p>The recommendations were accepted and it was assured that actions for their incorporation will be taken</p>	<p>To advocate for speedy adoption of the recommendations</p>
<p>The following recommendations were made in the network building meeting:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Formation of a small core group on inclusive education 2. Case study based research on schools and their practices of inclusion/exclusion 3. Involvement of the Dept. of Education, Govt. of Bihar and SCERT in these processes 	<p>The recommendations are highly recommended by the SCERT and Dept. of Education, Govt. of Bihar</p>	<p>accepted the recommendations and assured to take them forward and incorporate them in the educational activities of the state</p>	<p>to create pressure on the government to adopt these recommendations as soon as possible</p>
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Preparation of Child Social Profile of the children enrolled in the schools in Bihar 2. The teachers should be trained to embrace social diversity in the classroom to make learning of the children effective and inclusive. 3. The Open and Distance Learning System run for the training of 113793 untrained teachers should also focus on sharing the child social profile with the teachers and make it a part of the curriculum. 	<p>The recommendations were made to UNICEF, Ms. Pramila Manoharan who took interest in the recommendation</p>	<p>accepted the recommendations and assured to take them forward and incorporate them in the educational activities of the state</p>	<p>To advocate for speedy adoption of the recommendations</p>

6. LEARNING AND CHALLENGES

6.1 Key Learnings

- Transactions on Inclusive Education among the teachers and the Head masters need to be contextual, thus constructively and creatively connected with their daily life experiences.
- There is a need to develop communication strategies and learning/training materials for the trainees (teachers) so that they can identify themselves with the programme and that the programme is for their benefit and serves their professional interest.
- There needs to be a more robust connection between the Govt. Policies at the top level and the state and district level educational officials, who are at the helm of its implementation at the grassroots level.
- Ensuring participation of all children in the learning process is, perhaps, the most daunting task on the way of making education inclusive for all. Participation of the children, especially from the socially excluded communities, in the process of learning should be the parameter to gauge the success of a school.

6.2 Key Challenges

- Persistent challenge for development of teachers' knowledge and skills for improvement of learning of diverse school going children
- Moderating the importance of textbook and focusing, instead, on peer learning in the classroom.
- Lack of trust among Govt. education officials at state as well as at grassroots levels on the initiatives undertaken by civil society organisations.
- Difficulty in openly discussing the critical challenges and problems existing at the ground level in the schools with the teachers, head masters as well as with parents. They generally share their subjective and partial viewpoints without trying to create a holistic understanding of the issues. Therefore, it is very difficult to capture the issues and questions affecting school's performance in terms of quality teaching-learning, relationship between parents/community and the schools; and the attitude of the teachers towards the children coming from socially excluded communities.
- Inadequate resource materials on inclusive education for the training of teachers.

7. IMPACT/OUTCOMES

7.1 Introduction of 'inclusive teaching practices in the class' as part of teacher training modules in four BRCs in four districts reaching out to almost 900 teachers and 500 primary schools

Approx. 900 teachers, headmasters and CRC coordinators from 500 schools in the four project blocks in Bihar were trained on introducing inclusive teaching practices in the classrooms through the BRC level training sessions. The project facilitated the BRC training program in the Block Resource Centers (BRC) in project districts. During this activity, we have built up creative engagement and dialogue with teachers, headmasters of the schools as well as the Coordinators of Cluster Resource Centre, Block Resource Centre and Block Education Officers to share their opinion, critical questions, experiences and challenges for making education inclusive in the primary schools of this area.

Total 25 BRC training sessions have been held so far in the 4 blocks training

20 CSOs and 80 key stakeholders built interest and perspective on inclusive education through the **district level workshop**. The key stakeholders and the CSOs appraised the teaching learning process in classrooms, teaching learning materials, nature of discrimination in classrooms against children who come from the social excluded communities.

Perspective building of approximately 260 stakeholders of inclusive education viz. state education officials, CSOs, PACS partners, educationists and practitioners through the **State Level Consultative Workshop** has helped us develop a ground to influence policy makers and policy processes on inclusive primary education in the state of Bihar. The workshop created ground for advocacy for inclusive education as well as garnered wide media coverage in Times of India, Hindustan Times, the Telegraph, Dainik Hindustan, Dainik Bhaskar, Dainik Jagaran including Patna based electronic media.

Face to face meetings helped us in creating a dialogue and engagement with 32 key stake holders of primary education, mainly key representatives of NCPCR, SCPCR, officials of education department, selected faculty members of DIETs, PTECs and BITEs and key representatives of Civil Society Organizations and PACS partners. These meetings helped us in knowing their opinion and questions on inclusive education.

7.2. Sustainable and committed network of key stakeholders for advocating inclusive education at state and in four districts

A sustainable and active network of key stakeholders of Inclusive Primary Education has been developed through E-group (inclusiveclassrooms@googlegroups.com), Web site and social media. This network has facilitated communication, sharing the experiences and understanding on inclusive primary education of the members. It has also been instrumental in dissemination of relevant materials on inclusive primary education among the network partners. To this end a Google group has been created for dissemination of project achievements as well as news and knowledge on inclusive education. The Google group Deshkal for Inclusive Classrooms has approx. 2000 members.

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7.4. Perspective building of stakeholders on inclusive education

Approximately 500 stakeholders like, Govt. officials, Teachers, CSOs were oriented and sensitised and provided support in the inclusive education initiative through the workshops at district and state levels.

7.5. Dissemination of learnings among key stakeholders through publication of booklet, policy paper and quarterly news bulletin

Materials developed and disseminated are-

1. Perspective paper on inclusive primary education
2. Book titled, Bharat me Samaveshi Siksha aur Samajik Vividhata
3. Bulletin on Samaveshi Siksha
4. E-Bulletin on Inclusive Education
5. Inclusive Education: A Perspective Paper For Enriching the Process of Learning
6. Seminar Report on Inclusive Education and Social Diversity in Bihar
7. Training Materials for Teacher Training at BRC level (2 Nos.) namely, Sthayi Myth (Hindi), and Padhai ka Sakaratmak evam Madadgar Parivesh Banana (Hindi)

The Bulletin on Inclusive Education has been published from the second quarter of the project and two issues of the Bulletin have been published so far. The Bulletin presented and disseminated the views and news on inclusive education among the key stakeholders through its circulation among 2000 stakeholders. The bulletin serves as an instrument for consistent dialogue among the key stakeholders on inclusive education. In this process the Bulletin has also led to the emergence and sustenance of the process of network building. Additionally, two issues of an E-Bulletin on Inclusive Education have been published and disseminated among the stakeholders through e-groups, emails and website.

Till now 4 issues of the Bulletin has been published and disseminated widely.

Quantitative Impact:

	Proposed	Completed
Survey of literature, including reports and papers, especially on Bihar	50	50
Assessment of stakeholders' perspectives on inclusive education through FGDs, Interviews and case studies.	20	20
Appraisal visits of schools of Loreto Day, Kolkata; Vidyashram, Varanasi; Anandniketan, Wardha; and APCL, Patna that employ inclusive primary education strategies and practices.	4	3
Publication and dissemination of perspective paper on inclusive primary education in Bihar	1	1
Formation of a State level network on Inclusive Primary Education.	1	1
Meeting of members of the core group of the network partners	6	6
Strengthening the process of network building through E-group, Web site and social media.	2	2
Face to face meetings with policy makers, state and district officials and key representatives of CSOs and PACS partners.	40	46
BRC level training in one block in each districts of Bhojpur, Gaya, Darbhanga and Kishanganj	28	28
District level consultative workshop 1 day	3	3
State level consultative workshops 2 days	1	1
Translation, Publication, Copy Editing, Layout design, Printing and Dissemination: Five resource materials.	5000	5000
Bringing Out Information Bulletins	6 Issues	6 Issues
Recommendations at state level	11	11

Change Story

Behaviour Change of Government School Teachers & Headmasters through BRC Training Programme

Teacher Training Programmes at BRC levels have been facilitated by Deshkal Society as part of the activities of Pilot Initiative to Promote Inclusive Education in Bihar through Influencing the Teaching-Learning Module supported by PACS. These training sessions provided the opportunity to Deshkal Society to interact with the teachers and other stakeholders of education at the grassroots level and also to share the resource materials.

Aptly recognising critical issues of teaching & learning processes, hidden curriculum, pedagogic violence, and subjective interpretation of universal and parochial principles responsible for exclusion, the training programme aimed at developing an understanding on these issues among the teachers and to gauge the attitude and treatment of stakeholders responsible for implementing the Right to Education Act, 2009 focusing the excluded communities.

One major point that emerged during the training is the perceived failure and myth of Public education system in India.

The training began with a discussion on six myths that generally dominate the teaching-learning process in the classrooms leading to educational failure of many children and thus halting their educational journey. The persistence of discriminatory practices by teachers, educators, school authorities towards underachieving learners & socio-cultural identities, capabilities and potentialities are based on several problematic assumptions. Some of these pertain to pervading beliefs and common perceptions about the children & individual and collective identities and their capabilities and potentialities. These are often deeply rooted and shaped by varied socio-cultural contexts which have remained largely un-spoken but understood by those who believe in diverse societal norms. The six key myths that foregrounded the training programme are:

Myth I: Children are Children After All í They are the same!

Myth II: Learning Achievements of Children are determined by Heredity.

Myth III: 'School Kids' Are Different from 'Street Kids'!

Myth IV: Boys are for Schools, Girls are for Marriage.

Myth V: Children Learn Only from Textbook Transactions by Teachers in the Classroom!

Myth VI: Inclusive Education Means Enrolment of All Children in School.

Recent research has advanced the understanding of larger psychological, social, and cultural factors that influence decision making and human behaviour. It also demonstrates the factors & significant impact on development outcomes (World Bank Report, 2015). To put it differently, development policy and practice is due for its own redesign if based on careful consideration of the human factor. In this context, school as an organization could be more effective if teachers and educators became aware of their own historical biases and if organizations implemented procedures that mitigate their effects.

8. ROAD AHEAD

In the process of implementation of the project and consistent building up of engagement with key officials of the Department of Education, Govt. of Bihar, the project team as well as key stakeholders deeply realised to make inclusive education an urgent need and to adopt and implement these recommendations and suggestions by the Department of Education, Govt. of Bihar.

- Constitution of a Committee on Inclusive Education.
- Strengthening the institution of Tola Sevak and Talimi Markaz.
- Sensitisation and training of SEC members.
- Non-discriminatory treatment to Madrasas.
- Development of children social profile.
- Identify and develop approaches for enrolment and regular participation of out-of-school children in Bihar.
- Preparation of Child Social Profile of the children enrolled in the schools in Bihar.
- The teachers should be trained to embrace social diversity in the classroom to make learning of the children effective and inclusive.
- The Open and Distance Learning System run for the training of 113793 untrained teachers should also focus on sharing the child social profile with the teachers and make it a part of the curriculum.
- 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 strengthened monitoring and evaluation mechanism.
- Issues of diversity, marginalisation and inclusive education should become a part of pre-service training programme at DIETs, PTCs and BTECs.