

Australia: Struggling with Equity

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Australia is a large island continent with a relatively small and increasingly diverse population. Inhabited for more than 40,000 years by the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander or Indigenous peoples, migration to Australia by the British started in 1788 with the establishment of a penal colony in Sydney. The population today is overwhelmingly migrants or descendants of migrants from around 200 countries who have made Australia their home since this time, with the Indigenous population of the country around 0.7 million, just 3 per cent of the total. Over the last 20 years, the population of Australia has doubled, and more than half of this growth has been due to net overseas migration, including large numbers from Asia and increasing numbers from the Middle East and Africa. Around one-quarter of the Australian population (26%) was born overseas and a further one-fifth (20%) had at least one overseas-born parent. The rapid increase in population and changes in ethnic mix have put pressure on the education system to adapt and keep up.

Australia does not have a single national education system. States and territories are each responsible for their own education administrations, although overall structures are similar. While the Commonwealth government has no formal responsibility for education, it provides large amounts of funding to the states for education. This increasing financial power and policy influence, along with the new national curriculum, suggest that any differences will narrow further in the future. Policy collaboration takes place in joint governmental councils that include the federal, state, and territorial governments. State education departments recruit and appoint the teachers in government schools, supply buildings, equipment, and materials, and provide limited discretionary funding for use by schools. In most jurisdictions, regional offices and schools have responsibility for administration and staffing, although the extent of responsibility varies across

jurisdictions. Central authorities specify the curriculum and standards framework, but schools have autonomy in deciding curriculum details, textbooks, and teaching methodology, particularly at the primary and lower secondary levels.

In 2008, the federal government and state education ministers agreed to a framework of reform in education—the National Education Agreement. Concurrently, the ministers of education also agreed to the Melbourne Declaration on the Educational Goals for Young Australians, which outlines future directions and aspirations for Australian schooling and supports the National Education Agreement, and the National Assessment Plan (NAP), which measures progress towards the Goals. The NAP is centred around literacy and numeracy tests (collectively known as NAPLAN) administered yearly to students in grades 3, 5, 7 and 9; additional national sample assessments in science, civics and citizenship and Information and Communications Technology (ICT) literacy which are administered every three years, and participation in international assessments: the Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA) and the Trends in International Mathematics and Science Study (TIMSS). Now that both the national curriculum and NAP have been developed, Australia is working to ensure that the two systems are aligned, creating common educational standards for all students. In 2011 the Australian curriculum was adopted. Developed in a rigorous, consultative national process by the Australian Curriculum and Assessment Reporting Authority (ACARA), the Australian Curriculum sets consistent national standards to improve learning outcomes for all young Australians. It sets out, through content descriptions and achievement standards, what students should be taught and achieve, as they progress through school. It is the base for future learning, growth, and active participation in the Australian community.

Australia’s marginalised groups

The Melbourne declaration identified educational goals aimed at increasing equity in the Australian school system. These were:

- To ensure that the learning outcomes of Indigenous students improve to match those of other students;
- To ensure that socioeconomic disadvantage ceases to be a significant determinant of educational outcomes
- Reduce the effect of other sources of disadvantage, such as disability, homelessness, refugee status and remoteness.

This paper will examine policies and programs aimed at achieving these goals, and will present evidence that, despite best attempts, little progress has been made.

BRAC Initiatives and their Impact in Tackling Educational Marginalization

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The Government of Bangladesh is committed to provide basic education to all children in the country. Some affirmative action's have been taken in line with this commitment. Stipend to poorer sections of students, fee-exempt education and free textbooks to all students are among the major initiatives. As a result, school enrolment rates have increased a lot even as drop-out rates have declined. The gender gap in access has also been eliminated. However, a section of children continue to remain out-of-school.

BRAC launched two very special initiatives to address educational marginalization. One of these was for the extreme poor households while the other was for children from remote rural locations. The first one was an asset transfer programme for extreme poor households where BRAC intensively nurtured the targeted households for two years with subsequent follow up action. There was an education component to it, which sought to enrol the children of programme households in existing schools and supporting them in continuing their education till completion of primary education. The second one was purely an education programme in eight marginalized sub-districts. Here, BRAC itself opened its non-formal primary schools and cooperated with local NGOs to operate similar schools. Studies reveal that school enrolment has significantly improved in both the cases as a result of the BRAC initiatives. While the BRAC strategies worked in these cases to enhance enrolment, it was not possible to bring all children to schools. The programmes were costly compared to BRAC's general programmes. The need of households for having their children engaged in income- generating activities , unattractive school environment, inadequate expansion of programmes are some of the barriers in the process.

Unheard voices of the Indigenous people living in Bangladesh

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In a country of more than 16million people coming from diverse origins , 75Adivashi tribes dwell in the hill tracts as well as plain lands. Although in terms of total population they are about four million, their contribution to the liberation war and the national economy is noteworthy. These people have been continuously struggling to retain their culture, religious beliefs, tradition, land management and governance for years. A major portion of plain land Adivasis (1.5 million) live in the northern part of Bangladesh, – particularly in the Rajshahi division, stretched across 16 divisions. There is a section of Adivasis also living in Mymensingh – mostly Garos, while another significant portion lives in the Chittagong hill tracts – Chakmas, Murong, Marma, Boum etc.

This paper is an attempt to focus on the various policy initiatives undertaken by the government to address existing challenges and the implementation gaps that continue to widen inequity within the country.

With regard to access to education, 67 percent have never gone to school. Although the National Education Policy clearly provides for access to education for all children and visible demonstration of tolerance and respect towards all groups, irrespective of gender, ethnicity or religion, there is a drop-out rate of 40 percent within the first six months.

Education of Marginalized Groups in Bhutan: Policies, Programmes and Challenges

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The EFA Global Monitoring Report 2010 defines marginalization as “a form of acute and persistent disadvantage rooted in underlying social inequalities”. The most disadvantaged sections of society are considered to be girls and women, hard-to-reach groups like ethnic minorities and highlanders, poverty prevalent villages, individuals with disabilities, rural populations, those afflicted by HIV and AIDS, and children of street working parents. They are always marginalized because of their social difference, economic disadvantages and different forms of disability.

Marginalization in education is a global phenomenon and remains as the greatest challenge to many countries. If education is focused on the market principles of demand and supply in the labour market, it will only become a means of increasing social disparities. It will affect specific population groups with different forms of disability, older age and inadequate qualifications and experience. Not considering affordability of education will also adversely affect the economically disadvantaged groups. Considering affordability of education is one of the most appropriate means of addressing equity in providing education, as it is the main cause of marginalization in many parts of the world.

Marginalization is one of the main causes which creates poverty. Education is, therefore, only the means of breaking the vicious circle of poverty. It is very important to use all the means of motivation to provide education for all those marginalized groups. These could include providing a system of special measures, mainly in areas of equitable education through social protection, economic provisions, improving access and quality, infrastructures, security, etc.

The paper will identify marginalized groups in Bhutan and its causes, and review and explore National and State policies and interventions which supports education of marginalized groups, especially in improving equitable access, facilitating participation in school education and to overcome socio-economic constraints of availing education

services through facilities and financial provisions. Furthermore, the paper will assess programmes, initiatives, incentives and additional provisions for education of marginalized group from the 11th Five Year Plan of the Government, National Action plans and other strategic plans and trace their impact by reviewing available studies on specific aspects on marginalized group of people. It will also identify challenges and issues faced by the marginalized groups as well as the government in providing educational opportunities for marginalized groups in terms of policy- related matters, administrative problems and issues in implementation of programmes. There could also be a number of good practices in the country, either in terms of policy framework or in terms of implementation of available policy goals through programmatic interventions.

The Socially and Economically Marginalized in Fiji

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Fiji

The Fijian government has, in the recent past, allocated a substantive portion of its budget into the education sector. This is a testimony to the fact that the government is committed to making education accessible, affordable and equitable to all students in Fiji.

These reforms in the education sector have consolidated the government’s efforts to build and support social cohesion in schools. The Ministry of Education, Heritage and Arts has secured the second highest allocation in the 2015 budget. This is to ensure that every parent’s dream come true and for every student to enter primary, secondary and universities without worrying about paying fees. The Ministry of Education will be responsible for the development of all Fijian students to their full capacity so they can secure a better future. (Reddy; 2015)

This paper has tried to identify school- aged children in informal settlements who are not attending school. In addition, it is also identifying the challenges faced by these children, parents and guardians despite the free education initiative taken by the government. This is the marginalized group, who are socio-economically disadvantaged in Fiji.

The increase in squatter settlements in urban areas and the migration of families from the rural to the urban centers are problems affecting the quality education provision. This has a major impact on education services in trying to meet the needs of these populations in places where they reside.

The Ministry has aligned its initiatives and reforms to the 2013 Constitution of the Republic of Fiji. Initiatives and reforms, that have been launched before 2015 like the transport assistance scheme, zoning policy for urban schools and fee- free grants, have continued to be implemented in 2015. This has eased the burden of paying school fees and bus fares for low- income parents in the informal settlements and villages too.

Moreover, the focus for 2015 will be on the establishment of technical colleges in the education divisions; distribution of milk to Year one students; issuance of the Ministry of Education prescribed text-books, written by the Curriculum Development Unit Officers, to all schools for all students from Year 1 to Year 13; training of teachers on OHS and Basic Counselling Skills; and examinations for Year 6 and Year 10 students. The formation of Technical Colleges will encourage students to develop their career in the technical field, where there is a demand in Fiji and other countries. The recent budget has also proposed that free education will now extend to Early Childhood Education from Term 2, 2015.

The Ministry for Women, Children and Poverty Alleviation also assists students of marginalized families in providing school bags and stationery. However, the state also provides Scholarship Loan Scheme to tertiary students whereby students pay back on their employment subsequent to completion of their study.

The major challenges and issues faced by this marginalized group to participate in education are identified as transport, meals, uniform, stationery, peer influence, family and health.

The government or Ministry of Education has challenges and issues also in providing educational opportunities for this marginalized group. Such issues include late issuance of bus vouchers; teachers’ role in monitoring attendance and attitude towards these marginalized children; and school counselling for tackling bullying and peer influence.

Targeting the most vulnerable children in the society cannot be done by the MoE or schools alone; community organisations play a vital role too. The Ministry should develop standards and procedures to provide a minimum standard for organizations that work with schools. The Ministry of Social Welfare can also come on board to undertake their own assessment and provide necessary assistance. Outreach Programmes for the community could be organized by District Education Office in collaboration with other key sections of MoE and the schools. Chronic absenteeism by these children is a major problem so FEMIS will be a useful tool to highlight this data but this will only be useful if teachers and school

management follow up with the students directly and develop strategies to engage them effectively in schools.

It is noted that poverty of parents and parents’ educational level (ignorance of parents) pose a real challenge to the initiatives taken by government towards providing free education to all the children in Fiji. Support from parents has been an issue that continues to affect the quality and retention of children in schools. If Fiji as a nation has to grow in wisdom and strength, then every child should be able to realize his own highest possibilities. (Reddy; 2015).

Educational Advancement of SC and ST Children in Karnataka

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The paper tries to sketch the schemes meant for the school going children belonging to SC and ST category in the state of Karnataka. The schooling in general has expanded in the state and so have the enrolments. The access factor has also received good amount of attention with schools being made available within the vicinity of the villages Habitations. The enrolments of these students in the recent past have been examined along the information relating to the dropouts of the same children. Though we cannot link the performance of such schemes to these indicators, it would be useful to understand the behaviour of such indicators. The data shows that the dropouts for STs are much higher than SC students which warrant a greater study to design ST friendly schemes.

Education of Marginalized groups: Policies, Programmes and Challenges

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Education plays a vital role in the development of the nation. Sustainable development will be possible only if all section of the society get sufficient opportunity of education and development. Those who are far from the mainstream of education should also get proper opportunity. The Government has a role in this context to make policies and programmes for the marginalized section of the society.

Uttar Pradesh one of the states in India has the largest a population of about 200 millions comprising different social groups which 21 percent belong to Scheduled Castes, 45 percent to other backward communities (OBCs) while 18.5 percent are Muslims. The sex ratio is 912 females (940 at National level) for 1000 males, as per 2011 census data.

In Uttar Pradesh, elementary education covers Classes 1 to 8 and the age group 6-14 years. Primary education is up to Class 5 while upper primary is from Class 6 to 8. There are 165 thousand primary schools and 75000 upper primary schools wherein 36 million children are studying. The state has a high percentage of socially disadvantaged groups, which includes Schedule Castes, Other Backward Classes with special focus on the girl child and Children with Special Needs. This paper focuses on the educational facilities and incentives for SC children.

After the launching of Right to Education, the state has developed Right of Children to Free and Compulsory Education Rules 2011. Under this, U.P. is providing educational opportunity to all sections of the society. It is felt that if education is provided to the marginalized sections on par with that of their privileged counterparts, it will lead to the upliftment of the former. There are many programmes as a part of the educational policies for marginalized groups in the state.

- Reservation of 25 percent of seats in Class 1 in recognized schools. The parents or guardians having annual income less than INR 100,000. Are benefited by this

scheme and, those whose income are up to INR 35000/- per annum will have priority.

- The state provides free text books to SC/ST boys and all girls.
- The state provides two sets of uniform to all children
- The state provides scholarships to SC and other weaker sections of the society.
- The state has schemes like Meena Campaign, NPEGEL, KGBV (SC, Minority, BPL) IED etc. for marginalized groups.
- The state has "Beti Bachao Beti Paraho" programme, specially for girl child
- The state has Kanya Vidya Dhan Yojna

The demand in society for education is increasing even among marginalized groups. The successful running of Schools is attracting more children even from marginalized groups. The extension of access to all children facilitated children in joining government Schools. U.P. has almost 100 percent access facility in line with national norms.

The mid- day meal scheme also attracts marginalized groups towards education system. Fulfilment of nutrition requirement motivates parents and children.

KGBV is another programme for marginalized groups. The state has 746 such schools to benefit girls of this section.

The challenges before marginalized group are both economic and social. Many children do not attend the school because of their poor family backgrounds. Even when the education is free they are not able to attend the school. Most children from marginalized groups are first generation learners, with their parents unable to help them in their school activities, which results in their drop-out or low attendance in school.

The Government/administration provides educational opportunities to marginalized groups but due to many reasons, the latter do not benefit fully from the incentives given.

New strategies and innovations are needed to implement for marginalized groups. To obviate social barrier for these learners, special focus is required. The state has identified

villages with SC dense population. The Government provides special focus on these villages which directly benefit SC boys and girls.

Residential School Education and the Marginalized in India

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The marginalized people in India have been facing many challenges in utilizing the opportunities thrown by the economy. Their inability stems from their low self-esteem, limited awareness, and weak achievement motivation. These traits are deeply rooted in the abominable discrimination they have been facing for centuries. Indian Constitution unambiguously prohibits un-touchability and other forms of discrimination. The makers of the Constitution also provided for social inclusion as a State policy by facilitating reservations for backward classes in education and employment.

Education is universally recognized as an important factor that would help the poor escape the trap of poverty. State Governments have policy of universal education with special reference to improving its access to every child and providing incentives like scholarships till they reach post- graduation. Social Welfare Department (also known as Social Justice and Empowerment at the federal level) historically has been taking care of the interests of all marginalized sections of the society. This wing has particularly focused on educational attainment, besides many other rights'- centric policies. The educational policies include the following:

- Establishing hostels for both pre-matric and post-matric students. These hostels act as shelters for school and college- going students.
- Granting scholarship to students from the fifth grade till graduation in any university.
- Establishment of residential schools for the meritorious and talented children from among the marginalized communities.
- Sending some of the students to the best private schools
- Sending a few meritorious students for higher studies abroad under Ambedkar Overseas Fund.
- Provision of books and other essential amenities to all those admitted students.

However, as the per capita income of the poor showed upward trend, parents started preferring their children to go to affordable private schools in rural areas. With this, the hostels started losing their relevance. Nevertheless, the scholarship continues to cater to the needy students. Today, AP and Telangana state scholarship program called “e-pass” has become a national model.

However, the drop-out rates in day- schools, where the children of the most marginalized study, continued to be very high in spite of many attractive schemes due to many structural issues. Volatile budgetary controls made other programmes also unattractive to the beneficiaries. Lack of supportive environment at home, unavailability of credible information about employment opportunities, and absence of inspiring role models in their communities heavily contributed to the unabated drop-out rates. Such ill-fated youngsters became ideal raw material for human trafficking, child labor, and insurgencies with child soldiers. Amidst all this gloom, residential schools emerged as a viable and powerful alternative to nurture the dreams of the disadvantaged.

Emergence of Residential School Education

The Southern states Andhra Pradesh and Telangana decided to break the vicious cycle of poverty and ignorance by relocating the marginalized children to a better environment for the purpose of education. Thus was born the concept of residential education, with the objective of providing better education to the meritorious and talented children among the marginalized student population. Although these schools were started with Telugu language as medium of instruction, later all the schools were converted into English medium schools, with the latter emerging as a powerful driver of social mobility. Children are admitted into these schools through a simple entrance examination. These schools have become so popular that only one out of every five students is admitted into the fifth grade.

These residential schools are located outside the villages/towns in a secluded location. Each school is a complex that is provided with a school building, a dormitory, kitchen-cum-dining hall, staff quarters, and a playground. Once they join the schools, the students are

allowed to meet the parents only once a month and they are allowed to go home only during vacation. Teachers stay in the campus to hand-hold the students in both curricular and co-curricular activities and provide care (including healthcare) round-the-clock. Another notable feature in this system is that the State government bears the cost of entire education. After the graduation from XII grade, the government provides the students both shelter in post-matric hostel and scholarship till they complete post-graduation.

Shaping of Successful Students

Students’ transformation from sceptical observers to die-hard go-getters is largely attributed to the unique school environment. Since there is a pervasive felt need for better education, the response for annual enrolment campaigns has been overwhelming. The teachers, besides curricular activities, also play the role of mentors and parents by inculcating right values with great care everyday. A conscious effort is made to keep students focused on their goals continuously. On passing out from the institutions, these students exude confidence with motivation for higher achievement. The graduation rates of these schools have been consistently higher than the state average. It is observed that likelihood of enrolment of the students of residential schools into colleges/universities has always been higher than the regular government-funded day-schools. No wonder these institutions have produced many senior civil servants, engineers, doctors, teachers, nurses, sportspersons, mountaineers, and entrepreneurs. This incredible success has suddenly spurred the demand to set up many more institutions in the state.

Easy scalability

Replication of AP or Telangana model in any state or country is stunningly simple and highly rewarding. To begin with, these schools have to be formed into a society to have greater autonomy in policy and implementation. Essential requirement to start any residential school is availability of 7-10 acres of land that can accommodate all the components of the school. These schools shall have assured budget in the form of grant-in-aid from the government for seamless flow of salaries for teachers and essential amenities

for students. While selecting the locations, preference should be given for the constituencies/blocks where there is relatively higher density of marginalized castes or communities like SC, ST, and OBCs. Selection of teachers has to be done on the basis of their qualifications, ability to teach and play multiple roles in a secluded and controlled setting. Salaries of these teachers shall be higher than that of their counterparts from other schools.

Residential education may not cover entire needy population of marginalized sections in this country, but it certainly caters to the needs of talented, but poor children in the communities. These children, when nurtured in a safe, stable, and structured eco-system, grow as leaders who can not only uplift their families, but also lead their communities into a bright future. There is no scarcity of students with survival instinct among the under-served populations. State only needs to establish *sustainable green houses* to make them the fittest.

Overcoming Marginalized Status of Girls by Addressing Inequality in Education: Policy Support and Challenges

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Those who are sidelined from the mainstream are Marginalized Groups. Marginalisation excludes them from equal opportunities of participation in the development and socialization process. Causes of marginalization, with special focus to India, could be any of these : Sex (Girls, transgender), Caste (SC/ST/OBC), Class (Economically weaker), Location (Geographically difficult/Remote e.g. North- East, rural belt), Religion (Religious Minorities e.g. Muslims), Physically and Mentally Challenged, nature of Job (nomadic population), unusual circumstance (people/children living in war/terrorism- affected areas, having AIDS, children of prisoners or parents having AIDS). Some could be doubly marginalized and, thus, more deprived if causes are multiple e.g. a girl being mentally challenged. Marginalisation needs to be eliminated as it excludes empowerment. It takes away the right of an individual to participate and is contrary to the ideology that individual differences and diversity are a source of richness, and not a problem. The systems, however, have to become more flexible to address a wide range of diversity and the responses have to be often innovative. The marginalization can be addressed in many ways, with the measures including educational, economic, legal, political, social, emotional, psychological; an appropriate combination of these is, undoubtedly, more effective. This paper focuses on gender as cause of marginalisation and education as a strategy to address their marginalised status. As we analyse the policy support, we see that the policies are interweaving other measures too as there is also legal and economical support. Questions, however, emerge, such as, despite the provision of Constitutional/legal rights, is a marginalized person able to exercise her/his rights? Creating a support system is often not sufficient as empowerment is basic to making any support system functional and the onus of empowerment often rests more on others than on marginalised individuals themselves. This is even more true in the case of girls because of their social subordination. A critique into the long journey commencing from the landmark report of the Committee on the

status of women in India (1974) to the impetus accorded to girls' education and women empowerment by the NPE 1986 and its POA, the National Perspective Plan for Women (1988-2000), and the National Policy for the Empowerment of Women (2001) reveals that the factors responsible for the subordinate status of women are patriarchy and social perceptions of gender biased roles e.g. of boy as a bread- winner, bearer of family lineage, heir and manager of family business and resources, provider and sustainer during the old age; and that of a woman as a mother and wife. Although given prime importance in various national and international policies and declarations of which some positive outcome can also be seen, girls' education still suffers from glaring gaps. The very approach to girls' education needs to be reviewed. The National Policy of Education (1986) states 'the growth of our population needs to be brought down significantly over the coming decades. The largest single factor that could help achieve this is the spread of literacy and education among women (1.13, pg. 4). A number of national and international documents ignore the holistic approach to girls' education, relating it with fertility control, decreased infant/child mortality rate, better family care and nutrition, decreased expenses on healthcare etc.. Looking at education through a gender- based lens reiterates the age- old belief that women are primarily responsible and instrumental for child and family welfare, thus assigning to them an indirect, invisible and passive role in the economy and national development. The education system should not encourage what appears, at the first sight, as an advantage to the girls but in reality proves to be actually a stumbling block for their progress towards gender equality (CABE Committee Report, 2005). The differential approach to the education of boys and girls, per se, jeopardizes the chances of girls to get equal opportunities. These, directly or indirectly, influence the nature and level of education offered to girls and make it gender stereotyped. The policy provision, Act, economic support initiatives have overcome their marginalisation to some extent and, yet, the challenges are many. The paper critically analyses the policy support, recent initiatives taken at the central and state levels visa- a- vis challenges in overcoming marginalization of girls through education, also taking into consideration the double/multiple marginalization of girls if they belong to an already vulnerable strata. It also touches upon how far we are to

create an environment where every girl is able to exercise her right to quality education and attain her full potential.

Education and Development of Marginalized: A Case of Scheduled Tribes in India

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India has the single largest tribal population in the world numbering 102 million (2011 Census) while constituting 8.6 per cent of the total population of the country. There are 574 individual tribal groups, with diverse socio-cultural life in different parts of the country. Most of the tribal communities have their own language that is different from the language spoken in the state where they live. There more than 275 such tribal languages but without script. The tribes in India are at various levels of socio-economic development, with different degrees of exposure to modernity and social change. One of the distinguishing features is that the majority of them live in scattered and small habitations located in remote, hilly and forest areas of the country.

Recognizing that STs count among the most deprived and marginalized sections of Indian society, a host of welfare and developmental measures have been initiated for their social and economic development, particularly for their educational development. Special policies and programmes have been adopted to provide equal opportunity, to overcome socio-economic constraints and also to motivate people to participate in education. The policies and programmes include free education at all levels, flexible norms to provide access to schooling facilities, preference in appointing local teachers, provision of incentives and support materials, scholarships to overcome economic hurdles, special institutions like hostels and residential schools

Access to elementary education has significantly improved in tribal concentrated areas in most of the states, although there are variations among the states. Small size, poor quality and inadequate infrastructure, irregular attendance of teachers, a large gap between the number of children enrolled and the actual attendance of students characterizes the schools in tribal areas. The literacy rate among ST has increased steadily from 29.60 percent during 1991 to 58.96 percent in 2011. The educational progress of STs varies widely among different states and among different ethnic groups.

The content of textbooks, medium of instruction, the school schedule, vacation and holidays adopted in most states remain far from the socio-cultural and linguistic needs of tribal people. Interestingly, majority of parents have significant levels of awareness about special provisions for education of the tribes and also on how education is important and beneficial to the children, family and the entire community at large. Quite intriguingly, parents attribute lack of interest in education both among children and parents mainly due to poor facilities, irregular functioning of school, alcoholism among parents and even among children, poverty and having to do baby-sitting. Evidently, the parents demonstrated a high level of expectation from education. Their perceived returns from education include occupational mobility into the government sector, economic development, better life style, social-upliftment, better ability to negotiate with developmental agencies and non- tribes. They also placed a high premium on education with the help of highly philosophical arguments. Ironically, despite the parents attaching such importance to education, they still could not dispense with the opportunity cost of children’s and engaged the latter in non- academic activities like cattle - grazing, collection of forest produce, paid labour (for plucking cotton/chilies/coffee seeds etc) , cultivation, household work , baby- sitting etc. Thus, parents could not show commitment towards the education of their children due to failure of the education system, poverty and social issues like alcoholism. The governments need to focus on improving the delivery mechanism of education in tribal areas besides convincing them rightly of the long- term benefits of education. There is also a need to compensate the opportunity cost of their children.

Equity and Inclusion in Education in India: Policies, Programmes and Challenges

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Issue of equity and inclusion in education in India is inextricably linked to the nature of diversity of the Indian society and corresponding socio-economic disparities. India represents one of the most diverse countries of world in terms of socio-cultural and economic composition of population. India represents not only a complex case of diversity but also deep rooted inequality corresponding with differential location of groups and communities. There appears to be substantial degree of convergence between diversity and inequality. Convergence of diversity and inequality is evident in variety of contexts. Inequality in educational opportunities is one such site of convergence. Inequality of educational opportunities is linked to variety of social locations such as caste, tribe, religion, region, language etc. It is also determined by one's class position measured in terms of income, occupation and residential location. The convergence of diversity and inequality poses serious problems in the way of transforming the professed constitutional principle of equality of opportunities into practice. It may be recalled that equality of educational opportunities is one of the most important professed principles of constitutional democracy in India. The state is constitutionally obligated to ensure that no one is discriminated and excluded merely on the ground of social origin and location. This guarantee becomes important given the nature of Indian society. Creating a condition of equal opportunity for access and participation in education has necessitated active intervention of the state through an array of public policy and programmes in education sector. Towards this endeavour, the State in India, at various levels and its myriad institutional forms, has initiated a number of policies, programmes and actions. Despite state's endeavour and intervention towards expansion of educational facilities through a number of policies and programmes, intergroup disparities in educational attainment and unequal access to educational facilities at all the levels and sectors of education remain a serious problem. The goal of attaining equality in educational opportunities in its

substantive sense and enhancing the space of equal participation of all irrespective of their social belonging and location remain to be realised.

One can easily identify intergroup and intra-group disparities in education. Scheduled Castes, Scheduled Tribes, non creamy layers of Other Backward Castes, Muslims, and Girls constitute major sections of Indian society who lag behind the others on various indicators of educational development. Many ethnic and linguistic minorities also face situation of exclusion in education on account of their geographical location or surrounding population of majority communities. Among many others, social belonging, socio-cultural identity, economic status, geographical location etc are important determinants of educational access and participation.

Keeping in view various impeding factors of equal access and participation different kinds of enabling provisions and affirmative action programmes have been initiated over past many years both at the level of the union and the state. Intervention of the union government through variety of centrally sponsored schemes and incentives along with state specific programmes have been instrumental in terms of creating enabling environment for the marginal groups be it SCs, STs, OBCs, ethnic and linguistic minorities or girls. The attempts have been directed towards bridging the social, gender, geographical locational gaps in access and participation of groups in education. The gap has not been bridged to the extent that it requires but the achievements cannot be just brushed aside.

It is in this context that the paper attempts to capture the issue of equity and inclusion in education in India through the lens of policies, programmes and challenges.

Education of Marginalised Groups: Policies, Programmes and Challenges in Indonesia

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Indonesia is one of the most populous countries in the world, accounting for a total population of around 250 million, of which 60 percent live in Java Island. The rest of the population live in around 13.000 islands have over 700 languages and belong to 1.340 ethnic groups. Median age of the population is 28.2 years. By 2014, Indonesia’s poor population i.e. those with per capita income of upto Rp 302.732 per month numbered 28.28 million (12%). In the context of the 30 percent of the population with the lowest well-being, there are about 75 million people who lived below the poor line. In order to cater to children’s education, Indonesia has the formal and non-formal education systems. Based on Law No. 20 of 2003 on National Education System, the formal education starts with two years of pre-school, followed by six years of primary school, three years of junior secondary school (JSS), three years of senior secondary school (HSS), and up to nine years higher education (1 – 4 years’ diploma programme, 4 years’ bachelor degree, 2 years’ master degree, 3 years’ doctoral degree). Non-formal education is held equivalent to formal education.

Gross Enrolment Ratio (GER) was 104.20 percent for SD/MI, 89.18 percent for SMP/MTs, 67.88 percent for SMA/SMK/MA, and at 18 percent for university level. Meanwhile, the Nett Enrolment Ratio (NER) was 92.43 percent for SD/MI; 70.73 percent for SMP/MTs , 51.35 percent for SMA/AMK/MA and 13.28 percent for university.

Marginalised groups in Indonesia are the people or community groups facing various types of difficulties covering economic, cultural, geographical, and other public services including education.

There are some policies to provide education for marginalized groups. These are: The Indonesian Constitution UUD 1945, Law No. 23 of 2002 on Child Protection, Law No. 20 of 2003 on The National Education System and the decrees from Ministry.

Many programmes have been launched to increase the number of children enrolled in education from among marginalised groups. Such programmes include scholarships to poor students (BSM), Programme Retrieval, Indonesia Smart Card (KIP), School Operational Cost Assistance (BOS), Education Operational Cost Assistance (BOP), incentives for teachers in remote areas (Gudacil), a one-stop education development (SATAP), enacting a non school conventional (SMPT; Programme Packages A, B, C; “Sistem Guru Kunjung”; SD Pamong, SD Kecil), inclusive education, and Undergraduate Teaching in areas lagging behind, forefront, Remote (SM3T). Policies and programmes have reduced the burden of parents in financing their children’s school education.

Economic factors of families poses a major constraint for marginalised groups to participate in education. Lack of proper road infrastructure, inavailability of means of transportation, and the Government not fully meeting the expenditure on education in private schools by way of fees and other requirements result in children from marginalised groups not participating in education. Unequal distribution of teachers, both in a qualitative as well as quantitative sense, also is a cause of the participation deficit of children from marginalized groups in education. Meanwhile, from the government’s side, the decentralization issue in education poses a challenge considering that sometimes the policies and programmes of the Central Government are not in line with those of the Local Government.

The new strategy to increase participation of marginalised groups in education is to start development from the suburbs, villages, remote areas, border, eastern Indonesia. These areas are the areas that are lagging behind in various sectors of development. The new President also launched the compulsory education until Senior Secondary level.

Equal Access to Education in Malaysia

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Malaysia has made great progress in education on many fronts, including increased access to pre-school and primary education. The most critical challenge in Malaysia is to ensure access for all to a complete, free, good quality and compulsory primary education. In this mission, Malaysia had targeted the group of poor families in urban and rural areas, children living in remote areas, children with special education needs, the indigenous population and undocumented children, children living in plantation estates and refugees. Malaysia has also outlined a number of initiatives in order to achieve the goal including Financial Support Programmes to help the families who could not afford to come and finish their schooling as well as providing a programme for special children called Programmes Targeting Special Education Needs Students. In addition, Malaysia has devised a most unique and interesting strategy through its Special Programme for the Orang Asli and the Penanthat, as a comprehensive programme to help aboriginal children with their education. These strategies include The K9 Comprehensive Model School, Training of indigenous teachers and also the design of a special curriculum of Orang Asli (KAP). In addition, Alternative Education Programmes (AEP) for street children, undocumented children, and children of plantation workers besides the School for Street Children (BJK) also performed for homeless children. And lastly, there is a special school catering to undocumented children through the programme for Undocumented Children. Due to the commitment of the National government to achieve the goal of every child completing basic education, there has been a steady growth of both intake and enrolment of students in primary as well as secondary education. The intake rate has increased from 95 percent in 2000 to close to 98 percent in 2013, but with substantial annual fluctuations. As a result, the number of children not entering Grade 1 has declined to fewer children. However, the targeted efforts to reach some of the marginalized groups through specially designed programmes had a positive effect. Despite all the initiatives, number of children

particularly street children could not be enrolled in basic education. The challenges to face the special education for Orang Asli too needs a multi-dimensional approach that calls for attention to the curriculum, pedagogical skills of teachers, the social-cultural environment and how to reduce the risk factor of this Orang Asli to drop out from school. But for sure, Malaysia is committed to reaching out to the poor and other disadvantaged groups for improving their access to quality education.

Education Policies for Marginalized Groups in the Maldives

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Maldives consists of 1192 islands grouped into ring-like atolls; 188 of these islands are currently inhabited by people, with a country population of 341,256. Over one-third of the population reside in the capital city of Male’, an area that is less than two square kilometres. Due to the geographical nature and structure of the country, as well as its population distribution, Maldives faces unique challenges in providing services to the community, including that of education.

The education system in Maldives has undergone many changes through the years. Historically, Maldivian children would go to houses called ‘*edhuruge*’ where they would learn the national language ‘*Dhivehi*’ as well as Arabic. This semi-formal method of schooling was superseded in 1945 by traditional schools named ‘*maktab*’ in each inhabited island, which covered lower primary level education. In 1960, two English medium schools were established in the capital city of Male’ and, in 1978, two government schools were established in each atoll.

Although there has been an increase in the amount of educational institutions in the atolls, the two atoll schools in each region are still the best available options for students in those regions to attain high quality education. As such, children often travel from their resident island to the ruling atoll island in order to attend one of the two atoll schools. Furthermore, many families decide to move to the capital city of Male’ and/or send their children to Male’ in order to attain the best quality of education. Such migratory trends for the pursuit of education make these students more vulnerable, as they are forced to live away from their families which carry its own risks; young girls and women may also be placed at additional risk in such circumstances. Although there is no significant gender disparity in student enrolment in the country, the difficulties linked to travelling and/or moving to another island may reduce the options available for girls to get a better education. Consequently, young girls and women in rural communities are a marginalized subset in

terms of their access to education, and the regional disparities in education indicate that people living in rural communities are a marginalized group.

People living with disabilities are a marginalized group in Maldives, in terms of education. Special needs classes are provided in three public schools in the capital city, and special needs’ units are found in atolls, which are overseen by the National Institute of Education (NIE) of Ministry of Education. However, early identification and comprehensive assessment of people living with disabilities are lacking in the country, which makes it more difficult for them to access specialized education services. As such, students go through the education system without getting the support that they need to excel in their studies.

Another group of students, who often do not get the support needed, are low achievers. Often, these students stop coming to school regularly and/or drop out of school altogether. There are no general policies in place for long-term absentees and there are difficulties in obtaining data about actions taken in cases of long-term absenteeism. The lack of guidelines in helping long-term absentees reintegrate into the education system is an obstacle for such students in attaining an education. This is also the case for juvenile delinquents, who struggle when they come back to school. The lack of school-based policies for such students hinders them from actively participating in class and they often exhibit long-term absenteeism and low achievement as a result. Consequently, students’ who are low - achievers or long-term absentees or juvenile delinquents are another group of marginalized people.

This report will focus on the aforementioned marginalized groups in Maldives and the issues that they face in gaining access to education. It will also look at the current policies and programme implemented in the country that aim to ensure that marginalized communities gain equal access to and active participation in education, and analyze the extent to which such work has achieved its objectives. This report will further focus on the country-specific challenges faced in working in this area. In conclusion, this report aims to provide an overall picture of the education policies for marginalized groups in the Maldives.

Inclusive Education in Myanmar

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The structure of the education system and the core responsibilities of the MoE are laid down in the Basic Education Law (1973). Basic education consists of primary, middle and high schools in a 5-4-2 structure. Primary education is of five years' duration (Grades 1-5). Entry to primary school is at age 5. However, in practice, there is both underage and overage enrollment, especially in rural schools. Middle schools (lower secondary) comprise four grades (6-9). High school (upper secondary) comprises grades 10-11. Thus, Basic Education in Myanmar is an 11-year cycle (not including ECE). According to 2014/15 data, over five million students were enrolled in primary schools and over 20 million in lower secondary schools. If upper secondary enrolment is included, about one million children are in Myanmar's basic education schools.

Based on the Salamanca Statement, Myanmar is now trying for the inclusion of these excluded groups like physically and intellectually-challenged children, children belonging to ethnic, linguistic and religious minorities, children living in poverty/ slums, street children, child victims of trafficking, drug addiction and children in correction centres, children affected by HIV, etc. and children with special needs.

According to the First Myanmar Basic Disability Survey (2008-2009), the national disability prevalence of Myanmar is 2.32 percent (1,276,000 persons) out of general population (about 51 million), and one in every two persons with disabilities (PWDs) has never attended schools. Myanmar has initiated Inclusive Education for children who are mentally or physically handicapped, deficient in sight and hearing, or socially excluded and those who have difficulty attending school or who have dropped out of school before completion of education. They are accepted in basic education schools as well as in the NFPE programme, at monastic schools in addition to special schools for the blind and the deaf. In AY 2011-2012, there were 9,738 students with disabilities in basic education primary schools, 11,536 in basic education middle schools, and 47 in basic education high schools.

If they live in a large city, they may attend specialist government schools, which are well meaning but segregate them from their larger peer group. There is also the option for attending private schools, but in the absence of government financial support for either such children or such schools, the latter remain out of reach for most families. They may be allowed to attend mainstream schools, but there is no obligation and schools can refuse an entrant if they feel they cannot support them. If a child is accepted, then there is little support given as schools have no funding or special training to genuinely accommodate those with disabilities.

Myanmar adopted all-inclusive education in 2001 and this policy was reinforced by Deputy Minister. The Education for All National Action plan, started in 2003, aimed for all children having access to free and compulsory education by 2015. It is clear that this goal has not been achieved. Moreover, Myanmar education system does not adequately provide for children with disabilities. A 2010 survey, conducted by the Ministry of Social Welfare, found that almost half of those with disabilities in Myanmar never attended school. Both regionally and globally, Myanmar is falling further and further behind on the issue. Poverty is a major challenge for Myanmar. Findings from the *Integrated Household Living Conditions Survey in Myanmar (2009-2010)* showed that 26 percent of the population is living below the national poverty line. The new government, which was formed in March 2011, has initiated reforms in various sectors. In June 2011, the government introduced a Rural Development and Poverty Alleviation Strategy, which reaffirmed the commitment to lower poverty levels from 26 percent to 16 percent by 2015 in line with the Millennium Development Goal (MDG) 1. The newly- formed Myanmar Council for Persons with Disabilities, an independent body, appears set to become an important national voice, bringing together groups from around the country. The government appears supportive of disability rights and inclusive education. In 2011, it ratified the International Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, which places disabilities and inclusive education within a human rights context. In line with the Framework for Economic and Social Reform (FESR), which was formulated in 2013, educational reforms are being implemented. The government has increased education expenditure since Academic Year (AY) 2011-2012,

while striving for free and compulsory primary education, and has launched free lower secondary education recently. A new law on the rights of persons with disabilities is being drafted in parliament, with inputs from disability activists, and is likely to incorporate inclusive education. There is also hope that the amended National Education Law will address the issue.

In conclusion, in view of the National EFA Goals and strategies, many education projects and activities have been implemented for the development of education sector. While focusing on ‘free and compulsory primary education’ and ‘free lower secondary education’ at present, Myanmar will make continued efforts in future to improve access to quality education in accordance with the basic principles and policies laid down in the new National Education Law after it is enacted. Therefore, all school age of children, especially, marginalized groups will be able to study in compulsory primary education coming years.

Education of the Marginalized groups: Policies, Programmes and Challenges

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Nepal has an educational structure that comprises basic level education (Grades 1 to 8) and secondary level education (Grades 9 to 12). Pre-primary or early childhood development and education is considered as the programme in education for pre-school children (aged below five years). The higher level education is university education that covers from bachelor's level to research level. The statistics relating to enrolment and completion in different levels indicate serious disparities that exist between the privileged and under-privileged groups. The under-privileged groups comprise the socially-excluded and marginalized groups.

Non-formal education also plays an equally important role in increasing the literacy rate. This type of education is undertaken through conducting literacy classes, and through alternative modes particularly targeting the marginalized and deprived groups as the Country's Human Development Index (HDI) is determined by educational status of the people.

There are five categories of Indigenous Nationalities of Nepal; Endangered Group, Highly Marginalized Group, Marginalized group, Disadvantaged Group and Advanced Group.

The Constitution of Nepal (1990) provides for non-discrimination among citizens with regards to all services and entitled rights, including the right to education. Based on the Constitutional proclamation against discrimination and the right to education, the government has declared different policies to provide the opportunity for education to the marginalized group. Provision of free education, scholarship programme, food for education programme, oil distribution, child-friendly school environment are some of the major initiatives of the government to increase the enrolment of marginalized and girl children in school. In addition to these, alternative education provision, literacy classes and distance education are among the other initiatives that stand to benefit the marginalized and excluded groups. There are clear directives and mechanisms in place to implement the policies and programmes. Different level committees are envisaged for regulating the programme.

With these policies and provisions, enrolment in pre-primary, primary and secondary levels has slightly increased. However the improvement in completion rate, continuation of education at different levels is yet to reach a satisfactory level. The attainment in the school varies across ecological belts, and from region to region as well as in different social groups. Even within the elite group too, girl children are deprived from education due to cultural beliefs, economic status, security perspectives are perpetuated as challenges of educational attainment in spite of underpin the government policies and programmes. Though the government has made efforts to attract the marginalized and excluded group, hand-to-mouth plight of poor families, access to school, quality education are other major challenges that inhibit the involvement of the group in the educational programme.

Policies and Programmes for Education of Marginalized Groups in Nepal: An Overview

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According to the National Population Census 2011, Nepal has a population of 26.49 millions comprising people from diverse social, cultural and ethnic backgrounds. The census identified 125 social groups, 100 languages, and 59 indigenous nationalities which were considered as the marginalized or disadvantaged groups from the mainstream of national development. This was based on indicators relating to population, language, access to education, economic conditions, social status, cultural and religious minorities, and geographical location. These have been categorized into five marginalized groups such as endangered, highly marginalized, marginalized, disadvantaged, and advanced groups.

There has been noted improvement in universal basic education in Nepal as adequate investment was made to creating child- friendly environment and sustainable improvement of access particularly for marginalized groups. Realizing the primary responsibilities of government to capacitate human resource development initiatives in the changed context, the government of Nepal has implemented various programmes such as extension of equitable access to education, quality improvement and capacity enhancement of marginalized people through the MOE and its line agencies. Important programmes that have been implemented for education access of marginalized groups are: basic or pre-primary education, early child development programme, community participation in school management scholarship programme at different levels for expanding equitable access of students from marginalized groups to improve the rate of retention and meaningful teaching opportunities for female and marginalized groups. Multi- lingual, multi- grade and multi- level teaching, open education, vocational education and training, food for education have been some of the strategies adopted.

The national goal of inclusive education, of universal access to primary education for all people, irrespective of where they live, is met by catering for the basic learning needs of all

and, to that end, it requires more than a recommitment to basic education as it now exists. What is needed is an expansion that transports the basic educational status to an ever-enlarging realm ever surpassing the present resource levels, institutional structures, curricula, and conventional delivery systems by building on the best that are found in current practices.

However, the experiences of the decade indicated that the achievement of the goals was not an easy task at the implementation level. There remain some problems of improving access of marginalized groups to quality education like the inability to make education inclusive in line with expectation, lack of coordination in the work, highly politicized environment, and lack of reliable education statistics of the marginalized groups. The increasing concern for ensuring inclusive, equitable and quality education and making use of available opportunities are also not at a satisfactory level. It is strongly realized that more consolidated efforts and commitments are needed to achieve the goals and targets of education of marginalized groups. Thirteen Three Year Plan Approach Papers (2013/14-2016/17) emphasize on ensuring that all children of marginalized groups have quality primary education in a caring and joyful environment and receive primary education especially in their mother tongue without having to feel prejudices in the form of cultural, ethnic or caste discrimination. Besides, the Approach Papers also stress the need for schools and educational places to have gender balance in terms of teachers' posts and students' enrolment. It is envisioned that almost all adults will not only become literate but will also link education with a way of life by establishing inter-linkages between skill and work. This can be achieved through adopting a variety of appropriate vocations that are contextual and directly beneficial for the youth and adults.

The people belonging to marginalized communities constitute a larger proportion of the population. As such, the major challenges in meeting the goal of universal access to education include reaching out to marginalized and disadvantaged communities who inhabit in inaccessible areas, removal of inter-group disparities and addressing specific problems of different deprived groups, bonded labour, conflict affected people, endangered ethnic, occupational groups.

Transparency in the Targeting and Management of Pro-poor Education Incentives

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What are the best ways to ensure that scholarships, conditional cash transfers, free school meals, and so on, actually reach their intended beneficiaries? This presentation based on the results of a recent research project conducted by IIEP assumes that different models of design, targeting, and management of pro-poor incentives can prove more or less successful in maximizing efficiency, transparency, and accountability, and in minimizing the likelihood of errors, fraud, and corrupt practices.

Comparing the cases of seven projects implemented worldwide, it will demonstrate that some models may pose greater challenges to transparency and accountability than others (namely, targeted, in-kind, locally managed, or community-based). At the same time, these models may be the most adequate for local needs, especially if there are budget constraints, a vast and diverse territory, or demand for food at school.

It will argue that deliberate actions taken to confront related corruption risks, such as simplified targeting, legal definition of responsibilities, local transparency committees, school display boards, appeals mechanisms, informal whistle blowing, and social audits, among others, are of greater importance than the adopted incentive model. It will conclude by highlighting the value of "mutual accountability systems", where all actors are mutually accountable and subject to checks and balances.

Marginalized Learners in the Philippines: A Slow Journey Out Of the Fringes

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Throughout the developing world, considerable inequities exist with regards to access to quality of basic education, with students from poorer families, young people from the rural areas, and minority and specific ethnic groups often at most risk of being excluded from the system (UNESCO, 2010). Bringing education to these out-of-school and marginalized children is a major goal under EFA. In the Philippines, the reality that many segments of society are still marginalized and disadvantaged has posed serious challenges to the achievement of EFA. These are the children from the indigenous peoples, the Muslims, the boys, those from poverty-stricken families, the ones affected by natural disasters and conflicts, those with disabilities, the street children, the working children, those who live in remote areas, the ethno-linguistic minorities, and the migrants. Children from these sectors are prone to becoming unprepared for school, unschooled, insufficiently schooled, and poorly schooled.

The current overall Philippine policy environment for the education of the disadvantaged, however, is a supportive and enabling one. Relevant Philippine laws have laid the foundation for the adoption of a rights-based approach in education that not only recognized education as a basic right of all citizens but also provided mechanisms for inclusive education, respect for cultural and religious differences, and the recognition of the unique learning needs of children in difficult or special circumstances. Numerous Department of Education (Dep Ed) Orders ranging from broad to specific policy statements have also underscored the government’s resolve to provide all types of learners with access to education regardless of delivery mechanisms, address the disparity between girls and boys in school, protect the learners from all forms of abuse and bullying, and establish a conducive and child-friendly learning environment. Other programs were introduced to improve internal efficiency such that systems and processes at all levels get to be redefined, streamlined and standardized. These reforms have put the welfare of the learners at the center. The government has also implemented convergent initiatives such as the

Conditional Cash Transfer program that combine basic education, technical-vocational education, higher education and poverty alleviation into a single, quality-assured framework. These initiatives utilize an inter-agency approach in addressing specific sectoral problems. The Department of Education likewise advocates for community-based education activities and conducive learning environments through policies on child protection and on child-friendly school system, among many. Innovative and non-formal initiatives have also been instituted and upscaled by the Department of Education – some in partnership with non-government or private organizations -- in order to reach out to more marginalized and underserved children. One of these is the *KaritonKlasrum* or the Pushcart Classroom as popularized by Efren Penaflorida, CNN’s 2009 Hero of the Year.

There are also intensified efforts to implement the EFA catch-up or acceleration plan. This plan, as formulated and executed by the Department of Education (DepEd), has broad major strategies such as focusing on ‘reaching the unreached’ through special education delivery programs; adopting operational ‘inclusive education’ policy by establishing Madaris education as a sub-system in the current education system, and implementing the National Indigenous Peoples (IP) Education Policy Framework, among others; and broadening the reach of the Alternative Learning System (ALS).

However, despite all these policy and program initiatives, many children continue to suffer from their inherited disadvantages because structural disparities and unequal power relationships that are associated with wealth, ethnicity, language, disability, location/geography and religion, are still not being adequately addressed. As the population of the Philippines continues to rise, the number of poor families has as well. Poverty is aggravated by the onslaught of natural disasters and human-induced conflicts. The share of education relative to the GDP is still low. The implementation of the law and policies continues to be a challenge. Thus, in order to sustain and further the good initiatives and the gains thus far, the government and the many education stake holders need to be committed in ensuring that the educational system is of quality, is relevant, and is more inclusive.

The Education of Marginalized Groups in Korea: Policies, Programme and Challenges

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In Korea, the school system covers six years of elementary school, three years of middle school, three years of high school, and four years in university. The Nursery schools or kindergartens are operated for children aged 3 to 5 years and covering the pre-elementary school period. There is also a provision for lifelong education after the higher education. With regard to education policies in Korea, elementary and middle school education are compulsory. In addition, the policy on the equalization of high schools has been enforced since 1974 for providing equal opportunity in education.

In Korea, marginalized groups include multi-cultural families, North Korean defectors, and the disabled, people from rural communities, maladjusted students, and low-income groups and so on.

The education of marginalized groups was not a matter of concern until 1990s. And subsequently, the term 'education welfare' has begun to be used. In the early 1990s, when the national income reached approximately \$5,000, education welfare polices started to be enforced with the objectives of fair distribution of education opportunities and compensation for marginalized groups. And, since 1997, after the foreign exchange crisis, education welfare policies supporting disadvantaged groups have been carried out continuously. Many policies for this purpose have been initiated by the government.

For the disabled, the Korean government has established and increased special education institutions, enhanced vocational education, and strengthened the system of special education administrative support centre. In addition, for the education of low- income families, the government has expanded support for industry- affiliated schools, classes and school expenses. The government has raised education awareness for educationally- alienated groups such as drop-out students, strengthened career path education for students not going to next-level-school, and offered supplementary classes for students

with underachievement.

The reasons for being categorized as marginalized group in education are as follows:

- Given education opportunities, their conditions or situations are unfavourable for their learning.
- There is little meaningful learning for them in the process of education; and as a result, they are likely to become academically underachieved, disadvantaged to attend next-level-school, and, eventually, excluded from employment opportunities because they are unable to fully develop and use their competence from undergoing such processes of education. Not all the people from low income groups and people residing rural areas can be considered as marginalized group for education. However, they are in a disadvantaged situation, especially during their childhood and adolescent phases.

The Korean government has been making sustained social and political efforts for marginalized groups. Nevertheless, many issues still remain. For example, the government still has to bear considerable social cost due to unsatisfactory investigation and identification of current status or for the establishing of insufficient facilities and support systems and so on.

New strategies adopted to have equity and secure fairness in education include the Project for the Priority Region of Education Welfare Investment. The main task of this project is to provide programmes for learning, cultural experience, emotional psychological development, and caring services, based on the diagnosis of learners from marginalized groups. With regard to fairness, it implies occurrence of mutual communication in teacher-student and student-student relationships. In the case of students from marginalized groups of education who are inarticulate or show unstable attitudes, they are likely to encounter difficulties in mutual communication at the educational venue. In this situation, to help their mutual communication with various groups is to seek a way of integration.

The second strategy is the vitalization of air and correspondence middle and high schools.

In fact, many policies which help drop-out students to continue their studies have some limitations (despite their many positive functions), such as the limited budget or problems with recognition of the learning experiences.

Suggestions have been made to consider individual child needs to provide meaningful learning experience.

The marginalized groups of education should be addressed as a subject and not an object of the policy. One should understand the marginalized groups of education from their viewpoint. Based on such understanding about their lifestyle or culture, we should help them to be respected as a subject, and not as an object, and to experience meaningful learning.

Secondly, an integrated support system should be established. The Ministry of Education and Ministry of Health & Welfare have brought forward a variety of education welfare or social welfare policies in order to address the gaps in quality of education opportunities and academic achievement.

Thirdly, the policies for marginalized groups should be established as a system, and not as a kind of project. Currently, identifying marginalized groups and providing support programmes are considered as an additional task. Necessary systems are to be implemented to help meaningful learning experiences of every student through after-school activities. It would promote mutual communication and integration of all the members of school. This is not only for disadvantaged learners but also all the people in general. The fair system, that guarantees integrated relationships with mutual communication, would enhance public awareness as well as have a positive effect on the learner group.

Education of the Marginalized Groups: Policies, Programme and Challenges in Sri Lanka

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Sri Lanka, with 92.3 percent of literacy, occupies highest position in South Asia and is one of the countries having high literacy in Asia. Education plays a major part in the life and culture of the country. Despite the availability of wide facilities in formal education, it is evident that there are children from marginalized groups in Sri Lanka who are unable to get the full benefits of this system. Children from the indigenous community, culturally-affected groups, war- affected children, children in the natural disaster areas, socio – economically disadvantaged groups, plantation community and also children with special needs are the vulnerable groups in Sri Lanka.

In an effort to overcome problems and challenges, the National and provincial governments have adopted several policies for marginalized groups such as: free primary, secondary and tertiary education in state institution from 1947 without socio – economic gender differentiation; free text books for grade 1 to grade 1; free uniforms for all school children; subsidized transport facilities to school children; compulsory education for 5-14 age groups; compulsory attendance committees; provincial, zonal and division- wise Non-Formal Education Units; school mid-day meal programme implemented in disadvantaged schools; protection of the rights of person with disabilities(1996); National policy on disability for Sri Lanka; a unit was established in Ministry of Education and National Institute of Education to cater to vulnerable groups; awareness programmes to identify disabilities; established nine special Education Resource Centres; established vocational training institutes.

While providing these facilities, a number of problems and challenges had been encountered. These included health and nutrition issues of children from marginalized groups, hazards of staying in remote habitations having wild animals and elephants, need to walk long distances to reach educational facilities, shortage of teachers and lack of

incentives for them to teach in the remote and difficult areas, disparities in infrastructure facilities, and inequitable distribution of teachers.

Some of the measures that need to be adopted are: a) implementation of compulsory education regulation up to 16 years; b) develop teacher as a facilitator who empathises with children; c) Revisit and formulate the national level policy for special needs’ children d) Affirmative action measures to address the disparities in education levels of marginalized children e) Increased financial provision for marginalized groups f) Introduction of proper monitoring mechanism g) Adopt curriculum and materials to promote critical thinking on social and cultural issues h) Implementation of labour laws effectively to prohibit child labour i) Measures to provide education opportunity for street children j) Enhance child- friendly activity based participatory teaching for joyful learning k) Make arrangements for developing of programme to ensure equitable distribution of resources for disadvantaged places l) Motivate related officials to implement programmes for marginalized groups m) Implement catch- up programmes to assist vulnerable groups.

The issues in relation to the level of the vulnerable groups have been clearly discussed. The common issues on socio-economic factors as also other factors should be thoroughly discussed in order to educate marginalized groups.