

Report of Group –I

Thematic Area 1: Child Protection and Education System

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Context : JJC has taken various initiatives in coordination with MCDs, Department of Women and Child Development, Directorate of Education, Health Department to ensure that children who drop out of schools can be enrolled into formal system of education. It was found that a number of children drop out of school after Class-V when they have to be enrolled in Govt. School from the MCD Schools and thus this issue becomes important.

It is also relevant that some of the children may have dropped out sometime in the past so they need to be imparted age appropriate learning to enable them to join formal classes.

It is now felt that focus also needs to shift to children who have never been admitted to school. Delhi has a huge migrant population which compounds the problem. The ultimate vision is to ensure that the objectives of the RTE are achieved and all children are in school.

Another important aspect while ensuring that children are in school is taking steps for their protection, both in respect of child abuse and substance abuse. Again at the directions of JJC surveys have been carried out and it was found that a number of children were taking drugs. Once the children are identified, rehabilitation and providing them de-addiction treatment become crucial.

During the course of deliberations, several problems were highlighted:

1. Schools not being very attractive due to which even after admission it becomes difficult to retain the children in school.
2. Lack of willingness amongst parents to send children to school.
3. Absenteeism from school and no mechanism to monitor the same.
4. There is no definite place where the street children congregate which makes their identification difficult.
5. Attitude of teachers towards students especially emotional abuse faced by children who are from CCIs. Children are also thrown out of school if they become victim of offences or perpetrators or get into substance abuse.
6. Lack of security in school, it was pointed out that in 1750 MCD schools catering to 10 lakh children, there were no security guards in school during the day time and anybody could walk into the school and even the children could go out of the school.
7. Easy availability of intoxicating substances in the vicinity of the schools, schools being located in market areas.
8. Lack of awareness and sensitization in all quarters.
9. Lack of infrastructure and staff.

Strategy and Plan of Action:

1) Mapping was emphasised in respect of children

- who are school drop outs
- who are not going to school at all
- who are in substance abuse
- who are abused and traumatized.

It was stressed that ward level mapping has to be strengthened and Cluster Resource Centres under the Sarv Shiksha Abhiyan may be roped in. In fact there has to be convergence of agencies concerned, MCD, Directorate of Education, Anganwadis, DCPU, Police, NGOs should all be part of the mapping exercise rather than each of the bodies acting on their own which would ensure that no children are left out.

2) The information and data so obtained should be put in public domain so that NGOs can also pitch in and work with the parents who are unwilling to send the children to the schools.

3) Convergence meetings to be held at District level of all stakeholders to evolve strategies for the districts.

4) Making schools attractive for children and curriculum more interesting and activity based.

5) Evolving a mechanism by which absenteeism of children from schools can be brought to the notice of their parents.

6) Access to counsellors is mandatory so that they can interact with the children and make them aware about sexual abuse and substance abuse and ensure that the children remain in schools.

7) Security to be beefed up in all the schools.

8) System of providing age appropriate learning through STCs to be strengthened. Number of STCs to be increased.

- 9) Identification of street children and resorting to mobile schools, street schools to ensure education for them.
- 10) Ban on having shops selling intoxicating substances within 100 meters of schools to be strictly enforced.
- 11) Greater awareness and sensitization needs to be created in the schools.
- 12) Training of teachers on substance abuse, sexual abuse prevention.
- 13) District Task Force to check menace of drugs needs to be set up/ strengthened.
- 14) Better infrastructure and staff need to be provided.
- 15) Block Level Committee under the ICPS to be activated.
- 16) Having Melas, Outreach programmes in the community to enrol children in schools.
- 17) There is need to keep children engaged even after school hours so that they do not indulge in substance use or anti-social activities for which the Yuva Programme of Delhi Police could be used and other alternatives also need to be looked at.
- 18) Non formal education and vocational training also needs to be strengthened.
- 19) Monitoring systems have to be put in place so that instances of sexual abuse do not take place.
- 20) The number of drug de-addiction centres has to be increased and proper rehabilitation and follow up has to be ensured in respect to the children in substance use/ abuse.