



URBANISATION AND DEPRIVED CHILDREN EDUCATION IN INDIA: EMERGING IMPEDIMENTS

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ABSTRACT

In contemporary years, there has been an incremental realization that urbanization is set to accelerate with India's transition to faster economic growth, but there is still an inadequate understanding about the need to plan for urbanization. As a result, the urban centres became a source of exclusion of many sections in the manifold. Frequently, the children are one of most affected section with exclusion from their basic rights in rapid expansion of urban centres. At this point, the major concern is relatable to the deprived children in urban centres. For the most part, the urban government is unable to ensure the right of education of children who are in very deprived conditions in urban slums. Predominantly, the governments have much responsibility in discharging basic rights to all sections with an inclusive approach. In the whole phenomena of urbanization, the children, particularly from deprived experience, occupies very crucial part in policy discussion of both government and research domain. While it has been a major challenge to the government in urban centres of India. The present paper makes an attempt to assess the challenges in providing education for deprived children in urban centres of India. It, further, focuses on what are the immediate areas of attention by the government and researchers for betterment of educational opportunities of the children.

Key Words: Urbanization, Deprived Children, Education, Policy Challenges.

Introduction

Over the last few decades, the prompt growth of urbanization is contemporary all over in the world and it is considered as a progression representing the upsurge of urban centres in quantity as well as in the population occupying in these centres. Because urbanization viewed as an influential 'master' course of long historical duration, current vitality and even vigorous future result, it is not uniform or one-dimensional. As indication for this, the world's urban population increases every year by almost 6 million (United Nations, 2008). By 2050, 7 in 10 will live in cities and towns and the world's urban population increases by approximately 60 million people in every year (United Nations, 2014). It indicates the intensity of urban extension and also cautions the state attention in framing proper policy apparatuses to address the needs of the massive mobilization of the population in the urban centres. However, the origin and growth of urbanization evidently found in the western world, where urban population proportion is about 75 per cent, its growth is on excessive phase in developing countries (Sharma, 2015).

Differing to the optimistic facet of urbanization, it has several other important dimensions that collectively and individually produce macro and micro effects on the society and everyday life of people particularly on relegated sections. Because the progression of urbanization creates division between rich and poor and it also let them to persist excluded from mainstream society in accessing of elementary privileges. As it is well established fact that many of these people making the move to urban centres do so in search of jobs and better lives, millions end up living in slums, and conditions for the urban poor are going from bad to worse. Today, one in six urban citizens in India lives below the poverty line (Ratan, 2016). Despite of other challenges, ensuring basic education to every child, which is guaranteed by the constitution of India, is a major challenge in urban centres particularly excluded vicinities such as slums. Since children are highly vulnerable section among urban deprived populations and their education is under great threat. As a result, they remain let off from participation, in the development process of society.

In this context, the enquiry arises that how urban governance in India is capable to address the educational needs of urban deprived children in India. There is visible scarcity of effective urban governance to address the challenges of education for deprived children in developing countries like India compare with western societies. This situation arises the interrogations about the possibility of inclusiveness of all sections of people, particularly children in the process of development of urban areas through ensuring education rights of every child. In recent years, the upcoming smart cities mission of the government, which aimed to create services citizen friendly become an emerging phenomena. But this mission has the greater challenge of ensuring education to the vulnerable children in the urban centres. However, the development of urban centres in any country can be successful when they have ability to facilitate all basic rights to all sections with an inclusive approach. Particularly, constitutional rights such as basic education is one of the prime duty of the government. In India, the exclusion of children, particularly in urban centres, from basic education is a very common phenomena with various reasons.

The Status quo of Education in India

The recent few decades have observed remarkable expansion of basic education opportunities all over various developing countries including India. Due to the significance part of education in all sorts of development on any nation, the basic education received at most prominence in government developmental agenda. Accordingly, the development planners in India made basic education as an integral part of the national development perspective plan for achieving the objectives of growth with equity and social justice. In 1949, the Constitution of India focused the state to deliver education up to the age of years to all children. In 2009, the Right of Children to Free and Compulsory Education (RTE) Act, 2009 was endorsed through the Indian parliament. These six decades have seen profound changes in the landscape of school education in this country. This has been particularly so with reference to the provision of elementary education and the role of the state and markets in safeguarding that all children complete at least eight years of schooling. At the time of independence in the late 1940's and for at least four decades after that, there seemed to be an accord both in policy dissertations as well as in prevalent resourcefulness that the duty of providing elementary education for all children up to the age of fourteen places with the state. Further, the State had a special responsibility where the

education of historically disadvantaged and neglected social groups was concerned. Nevertheless, since the 1990's and particularly after the turn of the last century, advocacy for the private sector in elementary education and specifically for the schooling of the poor has been gaining ground. Beside this, what has also emerged globally is a discourse around education as the key pathway out of poverty but one that requires an overhauling of the public system of education and bringing in market principles to ensure efficiency in schooling and better performance by children. In addition, a clear role for the private sector in the education of the poor in developing countries is being monitored out by powerful advocacy linkages as part of reforms in school education. India is being projected as a key market for the education business. Together, these trends have critical implications for the right to education of poor children and indeed for the very purpose of education. Children belonging to families at the bottom of the economic hierarchy are educationally at risk, which is reflected in relatively low school enrolment rates. Usually, geographies of poverty and deprivation include poor settlements or slums and shanties and segregated habitations in urban areas (Nambissan, 2013). It is easy to regard them simply as victims of forces beyond their control. But as they grow, children often play an active role in shaping their lives.

Education as Human Capital Facet and Defies

Whereas the Human Capital Theory (HCT) which is concurred by Becker and Mincer, also emphasized that formal education is highly instrumental and necessary to improve the productive capacity of a population (Woodhall, 1997). Its major assertion is that the investment in human capital will lead to greater economic outputs. Based on Western and East Asian experiences that the human capital theory and education systems work beautifully for the development of individuals and nations; especially developing nations (Olaniyan and Okemakinde, 2008). In modern times, education and health care are the key to improving human capital and ultimately increasing the economic output of the nation (Becker, 1993). Therefore, the provision of formal education is seen as a productive investment in human capital, which the proponents of the theory have considered as equally or even more equally worthwhile than that of physical capital. Further the effective human resources are possible that how urban governance capable to serve basic needs such as education to all sections.

In spite of the adoption of ‘mission mode’ with strategies like SSA and RTE act to achieve the goal of universalization of elementary education (UEE), the out of school and dropout rate of children continues to be high. There are 11.4 million ‘out of school’ children in India (UNESCO, 2014). Most of these out of school and drop out children are growing in urban areas with multiple deprivations (Tsujiya, 2009). Unfortunately, the data of urban deprived children those who are out of school, is not available with any of concern government bodies. This condition leads to remain children unrecognized by both the state and civil society policy approaches. Consequently, education for all is still an uncompleted task and the overall picture of education in India implies that educational opportunities and attainment of the urban deprived children are much lower than for the affluent sections of the population (Cassen, 2014).

India’s Urban Slums and Children

The growth of urbanization in India is overflowing with some remarkable statistics that the number of people residing in urban India has risen five times since 1960’s, the net population increase is now more in urban areas than in villages and is expected to grow to 600million by 2030 (Census of India,2011). It will eventually have a 50 per cent share in the total population by the decade of 2040-50 and the share of urban India in the Gross Domestic Product (GDP) will also grow to 75 per cent by 2030 (Government of India,2014). It can be observed that the 21th century is going to be India’s ‘urban century’. However, there are abundant reasons for increase of urban population by natural growth and these reasons include migration from rural to urban centres in search livelihood option. But the overcrowded population in urban centres not only create environmental challenges, but also cause to infrastructure strains (Hust, 2005). Most of this population is living in unrecognized settlements known as slums and they are, often, being excluded from the basic rights and benefits of the government. Usually, the governments are also not given much priority in policy formulations for the slum population as they use do for the rest of the population in urban centres. Subsequently, the relative neglect of the urban poor is also reflected in the policy or programme interventions made for alleviation of urban poverty,

their ambient and reach and funds assigned to them when compared to rural poverty (Saxena,2014).

As per the government of India, there are 377 million urban Indians of which 32 per cent are children below 18 years of age in around 49,000 slums (Government of India,2011). In specific, about 7.6 million children are existing in slums in India and they organize 13.1 per cent of the total child population of the urban areas of the 26 States/Union territories reporting slums (Ministry of Housing and Urban Poverty Alleviation of India,2012). For basic understanding, slum abode is one way in which to theorize and characterize urban deprivation (Nolan,2015). In urban centres, the poor are increasingly forced to relocate to the periphery of the city as they emerge for the advantaged (Sengupta, 2012). Usually, these relocations which can be called as slums does not access to basic facilities including education of reasonable quality provided by the state. As it is well established reality that children of slums are most significantly affected ones in the process of urban exclusion. However, the populace of urban slums, most significantly children, are being excluded from their basic services such as education due to poor urban governance and policy neglect.

Urbanization as space for Exclusion of Children

The urban areas are home to diverse groups. As a result, the urban experience is all too often one of poverty and exclusion. About one third of the World's urban population lives in slum conditions(Nolan, 2015). It shows that how the urban deprived set up such a disregarded category. In fact, the urban areas are branded by affluence, modern living styles, having access to latest technologies, high educational attainment and high level of income, the marginal groups remain to suffer from the lack of adequate living standards and access to basic services such as education, health and so. The urban poor and bordering groups certainly lack say in the corridors of power and henceforth not much attention paid to their needs. On the other hand, the experience of childhood is increasingly urban. Over half of the world's population, including more than a billion children now live in cities and towns (UNICEF, 2014). While the cities have long been associated with employment development and economic growth, hundreds of millions of children in the world's urban areas are growing up amid scarcity and deprivation. The state of

the world's children 2010 provides examples of struggles to advance the urban actualities that children confront and recognizes broad policy actions that should be included in any strategy to reach excluded children and foster equity in urban settings riven by inequality. But the recent comprehensive estimate suggests that children born into existing urban populations account for around 60 per cent of urban growth. Numerous children, yet, are denied very basic rights such as education and too many are forced into hazardous and exploitative work as an alternative of being able to attend school.

The destitution suffered by children in poor urban communities are often obscured and thus continued by the statistical average on which development programmes and decisions about resource allocation are grounded. Because averaged inflammation everyone together, the poverty of some is obscured by the wealth of others. One consequence of this is that children already deprived remain excluded from essential services. Where complete urban data are available, they reveal disparities in children's rates of survival, nutritional status and education resulting from unequal access to services. Overall, hundreds of millions of children in penurious urban neighborhoods and informal settlements threaten daily violations of their rights despite living close to institutions and services. In many countries, children living in urban poverty fare as badly as, or worse than, children living in rural poverty when it comes to undernutrition and under five mortality. Especially in slums, where public education options are scarce, families face a choice between paying for their children attend overloaded private schools of poor quality or withdrawing their children from school altogether. Even where schooling is free, ancillary expenses such as uniform, classroom supplies or exam fees, for example – are often high enough to prevent children from attending school.

Theoretical Understanding (or) Significance of Education in Urbanization

Indian society suffers from substantial inequalities in education, employment and income based on caste and ethnicity (Desai and Kulkarni, 2008). The past century has been characterized by a massive worldwide educational expansion. Increasing complex economies demand a better educated workforce. Moreover, in a globalizing world culture, nation-states are increasing expected to take over the duty of educating citizens (Meyer and Soysal, 1992). The move towards achieving the UEE has to be chartered out in a way that various forms of inequities do

not accentuate in the interim period, but rather constantly reduce gender, regional and social inequities in accessing education and in participation and achievement levels. The perpetuation of many forms of disparities in educational development is an ongoing concern of policy planners and program managers, but not enough success has been achieved to reform the system to respond to these challenges effectively (Ali, 2002). The models of mass education have not been able to attract the marginal and left-out group of children. The urban poor constitute such a marginalized category. In urban areas, there are sections of people who have access to latest technologies, high levels of income and best educational attainment. On the other hand, there are certain sections of children who strive to lead lives without basic needs and meaningful education to them is the greatest challenge with deprived economic conditions (Edmonds et al. 2009). The urban poor and marginal groups certainly lack say in the corridors of power and hence not much attention is paid to their real needs (Yuan et al. 2013).

On the other hand, the urbanization has been given much significance in developing countries like India in view of them as economic growth engines and better facilities providers. Recently, the government of India has emphasized the need of urban development and it has to be seen as an opportunity rather than a threat to the society (Sanyal, 2015). With this objective, Smart Cities Mission (SCM) came into existence with the ambition of optimal utilization of resources to make cities more efficient, sustainable and people-centric. On the contrary, urban areas of many developing countries like India are failing in equal distribution of resources among all sections of the society and this condition is becoming worse due to the absence of proper policy perspectives in cities and towns (Varis, 2002). As a result, many sections of the urban population are living under very distress conditions which subsequently exclude them from mainstream urban society due to lack of effective urban governance. However, children are the most vulnerable portion among the urban population. Out of a billion children living in urban areas, approximately 300 million are suffering from exclusion or are at risk of exclusion (UNICEF, 2012). There is also a common assumption that urban children are better off than rural children, healthier, better educated and with access to a wide range of services and opportunities. But the reality is that hundreds of millions of urban children live in deep poverty, their rights such as education neglected andreaming as deprived children.

Looking at the severity of this global problem, children in the urban areas must be the immediate priority, but it is ignored with the absence of proper policy approach. Providing education could be one of the urgent priority because education is a key to the development of not only an individual but also the nation as whole. As it is well known that educated citizens could act as productive human capital, which require for every country which dream to become developed one. As far as India is concerned, the situation is getting worse day by day. Urban deprived child's growth and relative lack of attention to urban poverty, has possibly intensified multi-dimensional deprivation, including deprivation of education (Wang, 2012). In 2015, the United Nations adopted the new Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) that succeed the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). The SDGs outline a new and aspiring worldwide effort to reduce poverty and hunger, improve health, enable equality and much more and all these progress cannot possible unless all children receive a quality education. According to UNESCO, 171 million people could be lifted out of poverty if all children, in poor and developing countries, are provided basic education (Global Partnership for Education, 2015).

Dearth of Urban Governance

At this juncture, urban governance plays a vital role in formulating and implementing innovative policy approaches with the aim of providing access of basic needs to deprive people particularly children in urban localities. But cities, in most cases, are becoming fragmented spaces: gated areas for wealthy citizens, 'abandoned spaces' for the poor (Blinkert, 2004). Deprivations in well-being are becoming concentrated; lack of basic services, access to education. Due to this reason, the urban governance has gained importance from decentralization processes in majority of the world's countries. Urban local bodies have new mandates concerning economic development; previously limited to local infrastructure and social policies (Ramachandran, 2006). In India, meaningful reforms have to happen that enable true devolution of power and responsibilities of the states to the local and metropolitan bodies according to the 74th amendment. This is because by 2030, India's largest cities will be bigger than many countries today. India's urban governance of cities needs an over-haul. India's current urban governance is in sharp contrast to large cities elsewhere that have empowered mayors with long tenures and clear accountability for the city's performance (Kundu, 2003). India also needs to clearly define

the relative roles of its metropolitan and municipal structures in its 20 largest metropolitan areas. With cities growing beyond municipal boundaries, having fully formed metropolitan authorities with clearly defined roles will be essential for the successful management of large cities in India. This authority of policy formulation and effective implementation of them could provide an inclusive space in accessing basic services to all segments in urban societies. In present scenario, it is question that how urban governance in Indian are effective in identifying the challenges of deprived section and draw the needed course of action for their welfare.

What are the Aspects to be focused on Research and Policy Domain?

Based on the literature, three major challenges that can identify related to the dynamics of urban development, governance and education of deprived children. *Firstly*, is the scarcity of accurate data on the major changes that are going on the urban sector? The capacity to generate accurate, systematic and reliable data is a challenge that is not limited to urban centres. *Secondly*, how to plan for the provision of education to the increasing urban deprived children and particularly the children in the informal settlements and slums of the growing cities and towns in India? *Thirdly*, are the cities and towns have adept urban governance to provide education to deprived children in urban settings of India? These three issues are inter-connected and has to be addressed together in order to ensure to the education for urban deprived children.

Conclusion

The expansion of urbanization has, along with economic development, equally effect the children of slums in urban centres due to lack of policy interventions and other challenges. In fact, hundreds of millions of children and young people struggle to subsist in the same cities and too many spend their childhoods working rather than going to school, and living under threat of eviction or on the street, where they are at risk of violence and exploitation. Looking at the severity of this comprehensive problem, ‘children in the urban world’ must be the immediate priority. As far as India is concerned, the situation is getting worse day by day. Moreover, the governments are aspiring to build smart cities which aimed to make facilities available smarter than earlier to everyone with inclusive approach. At this juncture, the policy makers and the researchers with mutual co-ordination, hast to focus on few essential aspects. These are key areas in which action is required, if the needs and rights of the poor children

education are to be fulfilled. These are: to develop accurate data to understand the scale of problem; to identify and remove the barriers of inclusion; to put children first by broadly pursuing equity in urban planning, governance and service delivery; to promote partnerships between the urban poor and the government; to ensure that everyone works together to provide education for the urban deprived children. Without ensuring the right of education of urban slum children, the goal universalization of schools education or Education for All [EFA] cannot be attained in India. Finally, the conditions and challenges for education of children which mentioned above cannot overcome, if lack of data and understanding about the problems of poor continue to persist at various levels.

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