

Janshala in Jharkhand: An experiment with community involvement in education

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Education has been identified as one of the primary agents of transformation towards development. However, low level of literacy and education is one of the major challenges facing most of the underdeveloped countries. Active community involvement and participation has emerged as an effective mechanism in improving the sustainable level of education in many of these countries. This paper analyses the crucial aspects of community participation in education and supports its importance by reviewing the basic framework and outcome of Janshala – a Government of India-UN program in Jharkhand, India. Though community participation is not a panacea for addressing all barriers, the Janshala experience in Jharkhand and cross country experiences involving community in educational programs indicate that the active involvement of the community has facilitated in identifying community specific education issues and formulating effective strategies to address those barriers by mobilising resources within the community.

Education, development, community, participation, Janshala, India

INTRODUCTION

Education increases the capacity of people to realise their vision of society into operational realities, enabling them to become self-motivating agents of social change, serving the best interests of the community. Improved access to primary education yields tangible benefits by developing the skills of the people, it expands livelihood opportunities and increases their earning potential and thus helps in tackling the problem of poverty. Awareness and empowerment brought about by education encourages public participation in decision-making and solves the problem of degradation of the environment, improves nutrition, reduces birth rates, and improves health and living conditions in the society. For this reason education is considered the primary agent of transformation towards sustainable development.

One of the major challenges facing most underdeveloped countries is the low level of literacy and education. In the year 2000, developing countries – mostly in South Asia and Sub-Saharan Africa – accounted for 94 per cent of the total 104 million out of school children (school-age children who were not getting the basic education), of which 57 per cent were girls (World Bank, 2004). Government initiated programs in these countries have often been found not to be very successful in enhancing education levels. Lack of resources and management deficiencies have been the major impediments for the governments in providing the community with adequate educational delivery, fully equipped school buildings, teachers and instructional materials.

On the other hand, experiences of countries that have sought active community participation in implementing education programs have met with considerable success in achieving sustainable improvement in educational levels. Community participation has been recognised as an important

and significant strategy for an efficient and effective utilisation of limited resources in order to identify and solve problems in the education sector and to provide quality education for children.

The first section of this paper looks into the crucial aspects and the role of community participation in education and supports its importance by reviewing the basic framework and outcome of the Janshala program in Jharkhand, India.

Section 2 emphasises the importance of education for sustainable development. Narrating the cross-country experiences it also elucidates the effectiveness of community participation in achieving the goal of universal primary education. Janshala experience of community involvement in education as a supportive mechanism for improving the education level is discussed in Section 3. Section 4 concludes by summarising the main findings of the paper.

EDUCATION AND COMMUNITY PARTICIPATION

Education and Development

Considering that education is dynamically interrelated to every aspect of social and economic development [the economic benefits of education (higher wages, better productivity, use of technology); the impact of education on population (growth, health, and social well-being); and the relationship between education and democratic society (participation in policy issues and decision making processes)], it should therefore occupy the topmost importance in all community development programs and activities (See Figure 1 and Box 1).

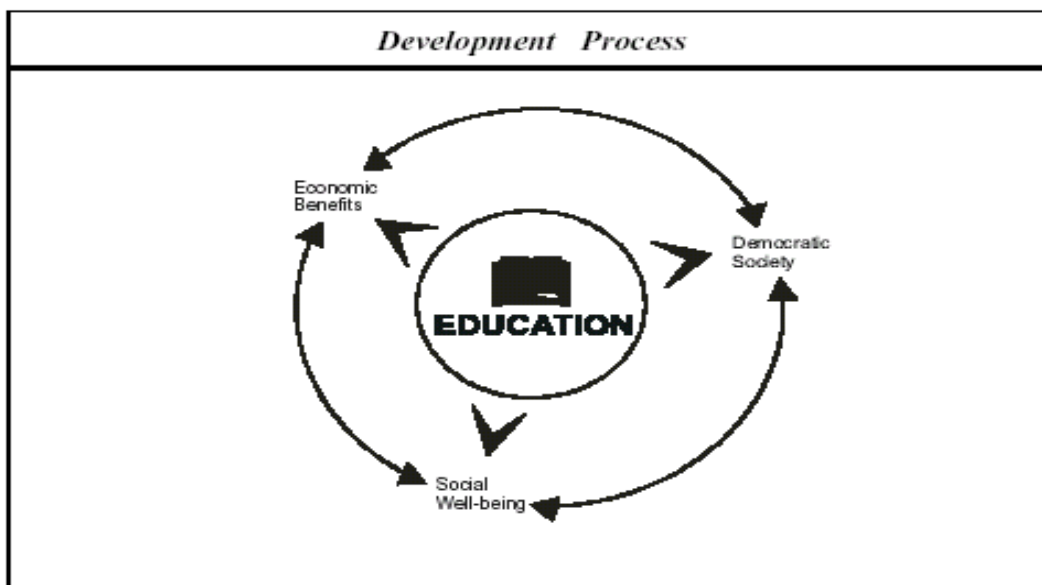


Figure 1. Development process

Source: Basic Education Coalition (2004)

Community Participation for Universal Education

Historically, traditional development efforts and welfare programs aimed at improving the socio-economic conditions of the poor and the marginalised section of society were supply driven, centrally planned and initiated, designed and implemented according to set standards from the top-down, by agencies and institutions, without systematic consultation and involvement of the intended beneficiaries. As a result many programs have been unsuccessful, and services rejected or under-utilised, because they failed to address the people's needs, cater to or respond to local conditions.

In recent times community participation has been perceived as a key mechanism to promote sustainable development. The aim is to encourage people to take decisions themselves, to become agents, rather than being treated as ‘target groups’ or passive recipients of benefits. It is now recognised that programmatic interventions and initiatives have more chance of succeeding if their costs and services are tailored to local conditions and the user’s demand. A community’s need and expectation for quality service has become a central feature of a demand responsive approach.

Box 1: Education and development

Education and Economic Growth

No country has reached sustained economic growth without attaining near universal basic education.

Economic research has found that one year of additional education increases individual output by 4–7 per cent, and countries that improve literacy rates by 20–30 per cent have seen increases in Gross Domestic Product (GDP) of 8–16 per cent.

Heavy investment in primary education and tight management of that investment are the most important factors in the difference between the economic boom in East Asia and the slow growth of sub-Saharan Africa.

A farmer with just four years of basic education is, on an average, 8.7 per cent more productive than a farmer with no education.

Basic education helps in combating the problem of child labour.

Education, Health and Quality of Life

Educated people live longer. Multi-country research has demonstrated that the education of children—particularly girls—is related to lower death rates. Ten per cent rise in primary enrolment rates is associated with an average 10.8-month increase in life expectancy.

Educated women have greater control over their own reproductive lives. They have healthier pregnancies, provide better health care for themselves and their families, and are more aware of preventive measures such as vaccinations. They are able to raise healthier and nourished families. As girls’ enrolment rates increase and child survival rates improve, family size decreases.

Children of mothers with no education are more than twice as likely to die or to be malnourished than children of mothers who have secondary education or higher.

Education, Political Stability, Democracy and Tolerance

Studies by the World Bank and Freedom House have found that countries with higher levels of education have greater political stability and stronger democratic rights.

Source: Compiled from Basic Education Coalition (2004).

That community participation has a key role in sustainable development can be ascertained from the fact that many bilateral and multilateral organisations (such as ADB, DFID, UNDP, USAID and World Bank) and various forums and meetings (such as The World Declaration on Education for All and The World Education Forum) have emphasised it as one of the key strategies to address the challenges faced by the marginalised and disadvantage section of a society.

Realising the importance of community participation in education, the relationship between the two has been articulated in many research studies by devising models, strategies and forms through which a community can be effectively involved in the education process. Williams (1994) has identified three models relating education and community as follows:

- **Traditional community-based education:** In this model, government plays a minor role. Education is deeply embedded in local social norms. Communities provide younger generation of people with education based on local norms/ customs and economic skills.
- **Government-provided education:** In this model, communities have a negligible role. Governments have the key responsibility for providing, regulating and standardising education.

- Collaborative model: Community plays a supportive role in government provision of education.

Colletta and Perkins (1995) describe various forms of community participation which include (a) research and data collection, (b) dialogue with policymakers, (c) school management, (d) curriculum design, (e) development of learning materials, and (f) school construction.

Coppola, Luczak, and Stephenson (2003) have also pointed out that community participation can be in the form of financial, material, and labour – varying from sending children to school and attending meetings, helping in school construction, managing schools and paying teachers' salaries. Community ownership and commitment helps in making the program more substantial and sustainable so that it becomes a support and enabling system for community self-help.

Thus, community participation in education is being envisaged as an efficient strategy to achieve many objectives, including increasing the relevance and quality of education, improving access and coverage, identifying problems reflecting local priorities and developing relevant curriculum and learning materials, improving ownership, local accountability and responsiveness, ensuring sustainability, reaching disadvantaged groups, mobilising additional resources and building institutional capacity. The support of all segments of the community helps in achieving quality educational outcomes.

Country Experiences with Community Participation in Education

Various cross country experiences – Ghana (Agarwal and Hartwell, 1998), Malawi (World Bank, 1995), Nepal (UNDP, 2003), Indonesia (Dwyer, 2004), Pakistan (Anzar, 1999), Uganda (UNDP-OHCHR, 2004), and many others – have indicated that community participation and the management of education projects and activities, have helped in addressing the barriers that impede the process of achieving universal primary education.

Obstacles in education

Some of the obstacles in education are detailed below:

- **Lack of infrastructure:** A major obstacle to achieving the goal of universal primary education is inadequate educational infrastructure and services due to the lack of resources with the government both in terms of material and manpower. There is a shortage of teachers and schools; some remote areas either have no schools at all or if the schools do exist then poor roads and lack of transportation make them inaccessible. The condition of most of the schools is pathetic. Either they are being run from dilapidated structures or at some places there is no structure or shelter for children and they even lack basic amenities such as blackboard, chalk, chairs, desks or floor mats, and clean drinking water.
- **Functional deficiency:** There is an acute shortage of trained and qualified teachers and high absenteeism among teachers further worsens the situation. The classroom environment is not very conducive for studies as the student-teacher ratio is very high, resulting in overcrowded and congested classrooms. Parents view the formal education structure as irrelevant for their children's future because the school curriculum is not framed in terms of the local environment and culture; teaching processes are based on rote memorisation rather than being activity based.
- **Ignorance:** Uneducated parents are ignorant of the long-term benefits of educating the children in enhancing the economic condition, improving health status and the overall welfare of the family. Parents have a lackadaisical attitude towards education, as they are not aware of the value and relevance of education to their lives.

- **Poor socio-economic conditions:** Poverty is a major constraint to educational access. It is impossible for marginalised households to make investment in education in the form of school fees, costs of books, uniforms, meals and transportation. Most of the children from poor families contribute to family income either directly by working as labour or indirectly by contributing in doing household chores. Parents feel the opportunity cost of education – in the form of a child's foregone earnings and on-the-job work experience – is high and this prevents them from sending their children to school. Malnourishment, poor health conditions are also significant factors contributing to low enrolment.
- **Gender discrimination:** There are many socio-cultural and economic barriers that impose restrictions on a girl child to attend school. Parents view a girl child as a liability and see limited economic benefits in educating her, for girls after marriage leave the family whereas a male child is considered to contribute financially to family income in future and support the parents as they grow old. Girls in traditional societies are entrusted with household chores and thus have to shoulder responsibilities like looking after younger siblings, cooking, cleaning and fetching water. Issues of safety and security due to the fear of a growing menace of sexual harassment and exploitation deter the parents from sending a girl child to school. Lack of female teachers is an important reason for girl students to drop out; parents are more willing to send their daughters to school if there are women teachers.

Community participation in overcoming obstacles

Community participation has proved to be an effective approach in addressing the above identified socio-economic and cultural barriers by defining program initiatives for local conditions, framing and designing relevant, realistic, and flexible curricula catering to the area specific socio-economic needs, thus enabling the children to fulfil their responsibilities (economic and household) and simultaneously study (see Box 2).

Box 2. Program intervention designed to local needs

The Alternative Basic Education for Karamoja (ABEK) in Uganda - a non-formal learning program - was formulated in close consultation with local communities as per the requirements of the pastoral lifestyle. The program has been successful in bringing the children into the education fold by closing the gap between the formal system and the semi-nomadic lifestyle by evolving a system of flexible time-table which allows the children to do their household chores, curriculum has been formulated for the local context, facilitators have been selected from within the community to take classes.

The Karimojong community (pastoral and semi nomads) had earlier rejected the formal education system, first because the children had to do household chores and, second, because education was looked upon as not being relevant to the survival needs of the community.

Local communities have also helped to fill gaps where governments are unable to provide education services by efficient use of limited resources, and making a substantial contribution in improving education quality and access by developing infrastructural facilities – that is building proper classrooms and toilets, providing furniture, textbooks and blackboard, and establishing new schools and constructing approach roads to school thereby providing easy access to schools for beneficiaries of unserved areas (see Box 3).

Institutionalisation of local groups and committees has increased efficiency, accountability and responsiveness (see Box 4). Women representation in these groups and involvement in decision-making has been very significant in bridging the gender gap in school enrolment by acknowledging and addressing the issues pertinent to girl child education.

Box 3. Infrastructure development through community participation

World Bank aided primary education program (1995) in Malawi sought active community participation in constructing primary classrooms and associated infrastructure. The community was mobilised through orientation workshops and, once the government had identified the area for the school, thereafter it was the responsibility of the community to select the site and complete its construction. Thus, by evoking a sense of ownership among community members the basic infrastructure was developed in an efficient manner.

Box 4. An initiative to provide equal opportunity for girls in education

COPE (Community Owned Primary Education) a UNDP funded primary education program in Nepal through active community participation has been able to provide equal opportunity for girls in education who would have otherwise been left home to look after younger siblings or to do household chores. Of the nearly 9,000 students enrolled in 120 COPE schools, 52 per cent are girls, with 63 per cent belonging to the disadvantaged groups. All the COPE schools have been built by mobilising the local resources and are being managed and monitored by local community members and local governing bodies.

Thus to make a substantial inroad towards attaining the goal of universal primary education it is imperative that all interventions should have community participation as a core strategy. In order to ensure universal education and sustainable improvement in the quality of education it is necessary to bring the community closer to the school system.

COMMUNITY PARTICIPATION AND THE JANSHALA PROGRAM¹

Background

The Janshala Program is a collaborative effort of the Government of India and five UN agencies – UNDP, UNICEF, UNESCO, ILO and UNFPA – to provide program support for the ongoing efforts towards achieving Universal Elementary Education in India. The term *Janshala* consists of two components i.e. ‘*Jan*’ (refers to the word ‘Community’) and ‘*Shala*’ (refers to the word ‘School’). The combination of these two words refers to the ‘Community School’. The total area covered under the program is 139 blocks spread over nine states – Andhra Pradesh, Jharkhand, Chhattisgarh, Karnataka, Madhya Pradesh, Maharashtra, Orissa, Rajasthan and Uttar Pradesh. The main objectives are:

- to enhance and sustain community participation in effective school management and the protection of child rights;
- to improve performance of teachers in the use of interactive, child centred and gender sensitive methods of teaching in multi-grade classrooms; and
- to improve attendance and performance of ‘difficult- to- reach’ groups of children, especially girls among them.

Janshala in Jharkhand

The poor literacy and education scenario characterises Jharkhand, the 28th state of the Indian Union, which came into existence after the bifurcation of Bihar in November, 2000. From the census in 2001, the literacy rate of the state is as low as 54.1 per cent against the national average of 65.4 per cent. The literacy rate among women and tribal groups is even lower. The drop out rate particularly among girls and tribal students is very high. Given that the state has a low level of literacy (Table 1), especially among the women and tribal peoples, and a low level of economic

¹ To assess the effectiveness of the Janshala program in attaining its objectives, the external evaluation study of the program in Jharkhand was carried out by the authors on behalf of XLRI. The findings reported here are based on this study.

and social development, it constantly requires intensive interventions and support from the government and various organisations working for social causes.

Table 1. Literacy rates in Jharkhand

Gender	%
Total	54.13
Male	67.94
Female	39.38

Source: Compiled from Provisional Population Totals: *Census of India 2001*

The Janshala Program aims at easing the constraint of illiteracy, with a focus on children of the age group 6 to 14 years, especially girls, child labour, children of socially and economically depressed classes (Schedule Caste (SC) and Schedule Tribe (ST)), minorities, disabled children and children from remote sparsely populated areas. The Program has been implemented in 12 blocks of Giridih district and eight blocks of Deogarh district in Jharkhand. The blocks have been selected on the basis of different indicators such as low female literacy, incidence of child labour, and concentration of ST and SC population.

Community Participation: A Basic Framework

Community participation and empowerment have been identified as the core elements of the Janshala program. One of the biggest challenges facing Janshala functionaries in Jharkhand was to bring the community closer to schools. For this a three-prong strategy (see Figure 2) has been adopted, which consists of formulating institutions, carrying out activities and community awakening drives.

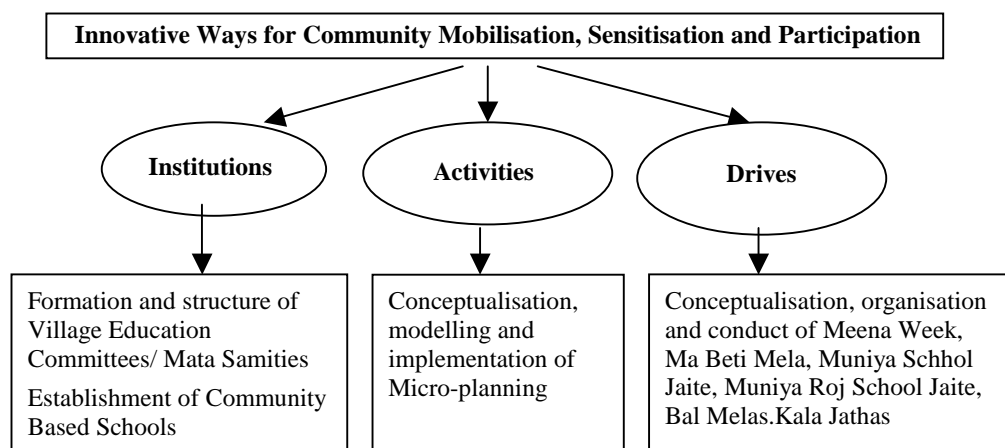


Figure 2. Basic strategic framework for the Janshala Program

Source: XLRI (2004)

Activities for community mobilisation and sensitisation

A comprehensive micro planning process was evolved whereby identified NGOs, parents, teachers, *anganwadi* workers, animators and other community members actively participated. The aim of the micro planning exercise was to assess the socio-economic conditions, educational scenario in respect to current enrolment and non-enrolment status, community attitudes towards education and the existing educational facilities in the area. Thus it is possible to develop and formulate an exhaustive village education plan focusing on effective ways for community participation and mobilisation in school management, teachers' empowerment and education of the underprivileged and other marginalised groups, especially girl children.

Institutionalisation of community participation: Ownership and sustainability

For effective, enthusiastic and sustainable involvement of the local people in school-related activities it is imperative to strengthen the capacities of schools and communities so that they manage their own affairs and ensure complete basic education for all children.

Therefore community participation has been institutionalised by setting up committees such as the Village Education Committee (VEC), Panchayat Education Committee (PEC), Block Education Committee (BEC), Parent Teacher Association (PTA), *Mata Samities* (MS: Mothers' Group), Self Help Groups (SHG), and *Prerak Siksha Samities* (PSS: motivating groups) (see Box 5).

Box 5. Mata Samities: An innovation to involve women in education

Formation of Mata Samities (mothers' group), an all women's group, is a significant achievement of Janshala towards the empowerment of women by involving them actively in the program interventions. These groups have been entrusted with the responsibility of managing and running the Community Based Schools and have proved to be effective in addressing the problem of gender discrimination.

Emphasis has been on giving due representation to all sections of the society in these community groups. For effective and efficient management of schools and to evolve and develop a feeling of ownership towards building up a sustainable educational system, the Janshala program has emphasised the training, strengthening and empowering of the community groups and community members on various aspects of school functioning, management, maintenance, monitoring and other issues regarding education. Empowered with training, these community groups are actively working on school improvement, enrolment and retention of children in primary schools and alternative schools by regularly visiting the schools for overall inspection, and also to ensure that both teachers and students attend school regularly. They also help in bringing out-of-school children to the school as well as track down absentees, improve access by setting up Community Based Schools (CBS) and alternate schools. In addition to this, they promote gender equity by ensuring that girls get the opportunity to go to school, evolving an integrated and holistic social development approach, which converges educational and developmental activities and resource inputs by all agencies and ministries, as well as supporting initiatives for the marginalised groups and children with special needs.

Drives for community sensitisation, support and participation

Systematic and specific drives and campaigns such as *Bal Melas*, Sit and Draw competitions, exhibitions and performance by *Kala Jathas* were organised for sensitising the community and increasing their awareness about the importance of education and thereby developing responsive attitudes among community members for active support and participation.

In order to address existing discrimination against the girl child in her access to educational facilities, and generate awareness on issues like girl child enrolment and her rights, Janshala functionaries conceptualised innovative approaches and methods such as *Meena Week*, *Ma Beti Mela*, *Muniya School Jaite*, *Muniya Roj School Jaite* (see Box 6).

Box 6. Drives for enrolment of girls

"*Nuniya school jate*" (girl goes to school) and "*Nuniya school roj jate*" (girl goes to school everyday) have been two very successful enrolment drives addressing the issue of girl child education and the drop-out girls respectively. The members of community groups-VEC, MS in Deoghar district along with Janshala functionaries indigenously developed these motivational drives to generate awareness among the community members

Assessment of the Janshala Program

Effective implementation of the above mentioned programmatic interventions have facilitated the process of evolving the ignorant and backward communities into realising the importance of education, empowerment, ownership and self sufficiency in developing their capabilities and skills, improving their livelihoods and increasing their earning potential.

Methodology and data base

General methodology

The assessment of the Janshala program by the external evaluation study team was done through extensive sample survey. In order to make a detailed qualitative and quantitative assessment, both exploratory research methods (Focus Group Discussions), participant interviews and observations and conclusive research methods (secondary data analysis and survey research using questionnaires) were used.

Sampling method and sample size

One block each, of the first phase blocks, from both the Janshala districts (Mohanpur from Deoghar district and Bengabad from Giridih district) were identified for the purpose of evaluation. A method of stratified random sampling was used for selecting 15 villages from each of the identified blocks to make a detailed assessment. From each sample village, a community group, namely, VEC or MS was selected. The study proposed to select two schools from each village. However in most of the villages there was only one school. From each identified school the study had proposed three teachers but it was observed that in most of the villages there was only one teacher handling all the classes. Five students (3 girls and 2 boys representing different sections of the society – SC, ST, OBC and Minorities) from each identified school were considered for the interview. Two parents (1 male and 1 female) of the students from the identified schools from each village were contacted for obtaining the requisite data. The matrix of the actual sample size is presented in Table 2.

Table 2. Matrix of actual sample size for at the village level units in two districts

Units	Giridih	Deoghar	Units	Giridih	Deoghar
Total Schools	17	15	Total Students	85	74
- Government	9	11	- Male	37	35
- Non Government	8	4	- Female	48	39
Total Teachers	27	32	- SC	27	15
- Male	23	27	- ST	7	14
- Female	4	5	- OBC	26	28
Total Community Groups	15	15	- Minorities	17	14
- VEC	10	13	- General	8	3
- MS	5	2			
Total Parents	34	30			
- Male	19	15			
- Female	15	15			

Source: XLRI (2004)

Along with the units at the village level the study team also visited and interviewed state, district and block level officials, surveyed Block Resource Centres (BRCs) and Cluster Resource Centres (CRC) and interacted with the BRC and CRC co-ordinators.

Data collection, instrumentation and analysis plan

The Matrix of Observation, Analysis and Tabulation was prepared that captured indicators, sub-indicators and the data sources.

In total, 15 different questionnaire forms were prepared for collecting the data from the Janshala functionaries and the beneficiaries at the state, district, block and village level (see Box 7).

The achievement and the impact of the program was assessed carrying out tabular and cross sectional analysis. The strengths and weaknesses of each aspect, activity and institution of Janshala were evaluated through SWOT analysis.

Box 7. Schedules for collecting information

Quantitative Data		Qualitative/ Descriptive Data
State	(2)	State Profile State Level Interview
District	(1)	District Profile
Block	(4)	Block Profile Block Level Interview Interview of BRC / CRC Coordinators
Village	(8)	Village Profile FGD with Community Members VEC/ MS Profile FGD with VEC / MS Members School Profile Interview of Teachers Interview of Parents Interview of Students

(Number of Formats prepared at each level is indicated in the parenthesis)

Source: XLRI (2004)

Impact of Janshala program: Some findings

Janshala program interventions had extensive coverage and wide impact. However, since the focus of this paper is on the role of community participation, the findings presented below are focused on this aspect. These findings highlight the impact of community sensitisation, mobilisation and active participation on access to school and enrolment.

Extent of involvement of community

The positive attitudinal change of the community towards reconstructing the social fabric by becoming more proactive is reflected in the following ways:

- Community members have provided support in the form of “physical labour” (such as cleaning the schools, constructing approach roads to the schools, painting the schools, furniture repairing); in the form of donation (such as stationary, construction material, sports equipment); and services (in the form of teaching by some educated youth).
- There is lot of enthusiasm among the community members to participate actively in the community groups such as VEC, PEC, PSS, PTA, MS and SHG. This can be assessed from the data that nearly 78 per cent of the community members regularly attended the meetings.

Members of VEC and MS are actively involved in monitoring the enrolment, attendance and performance of children in schools and also in tracking and bringing back the drop out children into the mainstream education system.

- Proactive participation of the community in education is reflected in the very low percentage of parents with drop out children (0% in Deoghar and 15% in Giridih), and a very high percentage of parents sending their children regularly to class (around 90%), attending extra curricular activities and interacting with teachers on issues like attendance and performance (approximately 90%). Parents take pride in acknowledging that their children go to school. Nearly 98 per cent of the parents encourage their children to join school and nearly 75 per cent of the parents monitor their child’s homework.
- CBS are being efficiently run and managed by the members of the MS.

- Approximately 75 per cent of the VEC/ MS and 85 per cent of the community members have indicated to have approached higher authorities with demand for more schools, teachers and better amenities in schools.

Impact on access to schools

- Children have easy access to schools. CBS and alternative schools have been set up with the support of the community in areas, which had no schooling facility. There has been a significant improvement in the access status of unserved habitations in both the Janshala districts (Table 2). This has been achieved due to the efforts put in by the community for it is they who are responsible for establishing, running and managing these schools.

Table 2. Total number of unserved habitations

	Giridih	Deoghar
As on 1/4/02	1708	1169
As on 31/12/03	122	125

Source: Data as made available by JEPC, Ranchi (April 2004)

Extent of Improvement in School Functioning

- Teachers are now more regular in taking classes. Nearly 70 per cent are actively involved in school management activities like designing and organising school functions, cultural and sports activities, school discipline, account keeping, procurement, maintenance and proper utilisation of Teaching Learning Material (TLM) and other school activities. Active participation of teachers has helped in developing a conducive study environment in schools thereby helping in enrolment and retention of children.
- Functioning of the schools has become more streamlined and systematic. There has been considerable improvement in the maintenance of school records, preparation of timetables and regularisation of examinations.

Impact on Enrolment and Performance

- Community involvement has improved the enrolment level substantially contributing significantly in developing a conducive and supportive environment for promoting education.
- During 2002 to 2003, the gross enrolment ratio (GER) increased for both the age groups, namely 6 to 11 years and 11 to 14 years and the percentage of out of school children declined considerably (See Table 3).

Table 3. Gross enrolment ratios and out of school children (in percentages)

	Age Group 6-11 Years		Age Group 11-14 Years	
	on 31.12.03	on 31.10.02	on 31.12.03	on 31.10.02
<i>Gross Enrolment Ratio</i>				
Deoghar	96.8	92.8	91.4	60.5
Giridih	95.7	82.0	74.7	72.6
Average	96.1	86.2	81.0	68.0
<i>Out of School</i>				
Deoghar	3.2	8.6	7.2	39.5
Giridih	4.3	25.3	18.0	27.4
Average	3.9	19.0	13.8	32.0

Source: External Evaluation Study of Janshala, (2004), XLRI (2004), Jamshedpur

- There has been a substantial increase in the enrolment of girls. Percentage growth rate in girls enrolment for the period 1999-00 to 2003-04 is 113 per cent for Deoghar whereas for Giridih it is 3.6 per cent for the period 1996-97 to 2003-04.

- There has also been a significant percentage increase in the enrolment growth rate of marginalised children during the program period. Of the two Janshala districts, the enrolment figures of marginalised children in Deoghar (SC 120%, ST 169% and OBC 91%) are much higher than Giridih (SC 8%, ST 20% and OBC 8%). Declining trends have been observed for out of school marginalised children in both Deoghar (97%) and Giridih (9%) districts.
- Improvement in school functioning has helped in enhancing the performance of the children. An average improvement of nearly five per cent has been observed in the grades of students of both the districts in language and mathematics during the program period.

Sustainability of Janshala Outcomes

Janshala in its endeavour to enhance capacity for community participation in effective school management has been a very successful experiment. By basing the program initiatives on the concept of a demand responsive approach, namely, putting the community at the centre and tailoring all services and interventions according to users' demand and local conditions, it has been able to address very significantly key issues like improving the motivation and self-esteem of the parents, teachers and other community members. Sensitising them and transforming their attitudes towards education the program has been able to overcome social, cultural and economic barriers that adversely affect the enrolment, attendance and performance of school-age children, especially the girl children.

Though the program outcomes connote a progression towards developing a functional educational system, but financial and technical constraints in terms of poor economic conditions, illiteracy, inexperience, lack of continuous training for teachers, community groups and community members may impair the sustainability of the program processes and outcomes once the program tenure is over. To address these challenges the government needs to play a definitive role by providing key inputs, namely, funding, training and technical expertise on a continuous basis whereas the community should be involved in qualitative aspects of the education programs. Thus for the program to be able to achieve the goal of universal primary education and ensure sustainability, it is essential for the government and other relevant agencies to provide a strong commitment and continuous support through organised and systematic actions.

CONCLUSIONS

The outcomes and experience of many other countries indicate that community involvement and accountability have helped in increasing the efficiency and effectiveness of intervention programs aimed at achieving the goal of universal primary education and also ensuring the sustainability of the activities as beneficiaries assume ownership and are enthusiastic to maintain its momentum. Active involvement of the community has facilitated in identifying community-specific education issues and formulating effective strategies to address those barriers by mobilising resources from within the community.

However, since all these countries are economically backward and ignorance is deep rooted, it is not possible for the communities to be able to sustain the program initiatives on a long-term basis without constant external support and guidance. Community participation is not a panacea for addressing all barriers to achieving universal primary education but it has a potential in making a substantial contribution if there is high-level political commitment and a systematic and goal oriented co-ordination among all the stakeholders. A synergetic government-community partnership is needed to achieve the objective of universalisation of elementary education.

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