Upholding Right to Education: Placing Quality Education in a Right Manner with NGOs Initiatives

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Abstract

The fundamental right to education is enshrined in Article 21-A of the Indian Constitution. NEP 2020, emphasizes inclusive education in various ways, aiming to provide equal learning opportunities for all students, regardless of their abilities or disabilities, within mainstream educational settings and society at large. Early identification is a proactive approach crucial for ensuring that students with diverse needs receive the necessary support for their academic and personal growth.

The present research paper delves into the Practical Approach that requires NGOs to support financially and academically for the Zilla Parishad Schools, Maharashtra through needs-based Projects.

The present research paper is structured as follows:

- *Introduction*
- *Research Methodology*
- *Concept of identification and intervention in NEP 2020*
- *Role of NGOs in identification and intervention*
- *Inclusive Practices expected for ZP Project by NGOs*
- *Strategic Part of the Model School Project*
- *Benchmark Set*
- *Evidence of Success Measurement for the Model School Project*
- *Major Challenges, Suggestions*
- *Conclusion*

Introduction

The overarching goal of education is to prevent academic gaps, especially at the pre, primary, and secondary school levels, where the stakes are particularly high. Early identification of learning difficulties is imperative to proactively address and mitigate the emergence of substantial academic disparities. Failure to intervene in a timely manner can result in increasingly challenging gaps, potentially leading to prolonged academic struggles. Enhancing

inclusivity is key to fostering a culture that acknowledges and embraces the unique abilities and challenges of learners. Timely support serves as a beacon of hope, allowing us to identify and assess a student's diverse learning needs effectively. This approach ensures that tailored assistance is provided, addressing potential challenges at an early stage, and accommodating the diversity within the classroom. In the context of promoting inclusive education as advocated by NEP 2020, the effective collaboration between the wider society and the academic sphere is of paramount importance. Such collaboration is essential for acquiring practical solutions and enhancing the overall quality of education.

Research Methodology

This research paper serves as a testament to the success story through NGO participation for ZP Schools in Maharashtra. The research methodology employed aims to explore the identification and intervention efforts of NGOs in the context of NEP 2020.

Research Objectives

- To comprehend the existing teaching, learning, and evaluation methodologies in the target schools.
- To observe the collaborative initiatives needed to be contributed from NGOs, and the scaling up of project-based participatory practices.
- To suggest the evaluation methods to measure the impact of these practices on student engagement, academic performance, teacher professional development, and overall well-being.

Research Design

In this research paper, we employ a mixed-methods approach, incorporating both qualitative and quantitative data collection and analysis techniques. The study spans a three-year timeframe from the project's inception to the present, with a focus on comprehensive data gathering and analysis. Pre- and post-implementation assessments have been conducted to measure changes in student engagement, academic performance, and attitudes towards project application.

Data Collection Methods

The primary participants in this research include students, teachers, and members of the NGOs funded project in Wardha. Qualitative data is collected through the experiences and perceptions of all project participants. The NGOs staff and administrators have provided valuable insights in the qualitative aspects of the research. In-depth interviews were conducted with a select group of teachers, students, and NGOs staff to gain insights into their experiences, challenges, and suggestions. Classroom observations were carried out to directly witness participative teaching and learning practices in action. Researchers observed and documented checklists covering classroom dynamics, teaching strategies, and student participation.

Data Analysis and Interpretation

Statistical software was utilized for data analysis, employing descriptive statistics to summarize data and inferential statistics to identify correlations and trends. Interview transcripts and observations were thematically analyzed to provide suggestions for further improvement and the overcoming of challenges.

Ethical Considerations

Consent was obtained from all participants, and the confidentiality and anonymity of participants were ensured in the reporting and sharing of research findings.

Limitations

The research study may be constrained by the project's duration and available resources, potentially limiting the depth and scope of the research. Generalizing the research findings may be limited to the specific school and context, with potential external factors influencing students' performance and behaviour being a limitation.

Expected Outcomes

This research aims to shed light on the effectiveness of participative teaching, learning, and training practices in specific schools within the context of financial and academic support from the NGOs. It also offers recommendations for improvements and serves as a reference for other schools and NGOs interested in similar initiatives that align with the collaborative academic core of NEP 2020.

Future Research

Suggestions for further research may include longitudinal studies to assess the long-term impact of participative academia with best practices and comparative studies with schools not involved in such programs. Additionally, the study's outcomes can be used to propose recommendations for scaling up these practices in similar educational institutions. This study may inspire further research adoption of such projects in diverse educational environments.

Concept of Identification and Intervention in NEP 2020

The National Education Policy (NEP) 2020 represents a comprehensive overhaul of India's education system, aiming to introduce significant reforms. It highlights various strategies for collaborative education policies, including:

- School Complexes and Clusters: NEP 2020 recommends the establishment of school complexes and cluster structures to facilitate the sharing of resources, knowledge, and best practices. This step is geared towards enhancing the quality of education and infrastructure in schools.
- Collaboration among Stakeholders: NEP 2020 promotes partnerships between educational institutions, civil society organizations, and industry, with the goal of elevating the overall quality of education.
- Academic Credit Bank: This concept enables students to earn, accumulate, and transfer credits for courses across different institutions and fields. It fosters collaboration among educational institutions and facilitates credit transfer and mobility.
- Multidisciplinary Approach: NEP 2020 encourages collaboration between diverse academic disciplines, resulting in a well-rounded and holistic education.
- Teachers Training and Professional Development: The policy underscores the necessity for continuous teacher training and professional development. Collaboration between training institutions and schools is encouraged to ensure that educators are well-prepared and up-to-date with the latest teaching technologies.
- Use of Technology: The policy aims to promote the creation of digital platforms and resources for interactive and collaborative learning, thereby enhancing the use of technical skills.

Role of NGOs, Maharashtra in Identification, and Intervention

With a rich history and contribution of NGOs that are dedicated to provide value-based higher education in Wardha, Maharashtra. By offering both financial and academic support to Zilla Parishad Schools, NGOs advocate for inclusive education. Their commitment to teacher training within real-world educational settings aligns well with the principles of NEP 2020 and has made a significant impact on the academic landscape.

Inclusive Practices of the ZP Project by NGOs

The ZP Project, known as the Model School Project of NGOs, is an outcome of corporate social responsibility (CSR) practices and was initiated long back by server's corporate houses. With the significant portion dedicated to infrastructure and equipment, including the provision of computers needed to provide to these ZP schools. The quality enhancement roadmap encompasses teacher training, which is evaluated through student feedback.

Strategic Aspects of the 'NGOs School Project

- Collaborative Framework: In line with the principles of NEP 2020, NGOs encourage collaboration between institutions, academia, and schools. This collaborative approach bridges the gap between social needs and educational practices, integrating them into real-world educational settings. Few NGOs serve as an exemplary model with various collaborative activities for both teachers and students, including regular training programs and biannual residential camps.
- Professional Development: Aligned with the emphasis on continuous professional development in NEP, NGOs provide valuable insights and training to support educators in implementing effective early identification and intervention strategies, particularly in primary and middle schools.
- Monitoring and Evaluation: NGOs place importance on continuous monitoring, evaluation, and feedback mechanisms. This ensures the identification of areas for improvement and refinement. The impact of collaborative initiatives is regularly assessed, and feedback from educators is sought to adapt and refine interventions effectively.

Benchmarks Set by the NGOs

The data and practices of the NGOs validate innovations in early identification and intervention, including:

Collaborative Frameworks

Establishment of formal mechanisms or partnerships that promote ongoing collaboration between academia and schools. This is achieved through formal agreements, research consortia, or joint initiatives.

Network and Communication

Maintaining a network with open and regular communication channels to exchange ideas and updates, fostering joint activities.

Collaborative Research Projects

Engaging in joint research addressing specific issues related to inclusive education. These projects work with educators to design and conduct studies with practical implications for real-world classrooms.

Professional Development Workshops

Organizing workshops and training sessions that bring educators and academicians together to explore research-based strategies and interventions in classrooms.

Teacher-Researcher Partnerships

Fostering partnerships between teachers and academics for collaborative action and the adoption of findings in classrooms. This includes developing understandable and actionable plans for all stakeholders.

Action Research

Encouraging educators to actively participate in action research within their own classrooms, offering guidance and support to address classroom challenges. This also involves adapting academic research to suit the needs and constraints of real-world educational settings.

Sharing Resources

Promoting the sharing of resources, data, and tools in a win-win scenario for the education sphere. This can range from basic lesson plans and assessment tools to various intervention strategies.

Evidence of Success of the NGOs Model School Project

Collecting evidence of the project's success is a crucial step before proceeding further. It is essential for all stakeholders, including educators, parents, students, and the community. This evidence should take the form of both qualitative and quantitative data, demonstrating the achievement of project goals. The success of the project is effectively reflected in its positive impact on academic performance, school climate, and overall student well-being. Being nominated for the Best School award at the state level serves as a testament to the success of the schools, a result of the project undertaken by NGOs, achieved in just a short span of three years. Attaining educational objectives and securing a leading position while ensuring quality education are remarkable outcomes of this project. Other key indicators include:

- Improved Academic Performance: Calculated by comparing test scores before and after the implementation of specific initiatives, as well as positive trends in standardized test scores and improved student attendance.
- Student and Teacher Satisfaction Surveys: These surveys provide valuable insights into the effectiveness of the school-upheld projects. Higher satisfaction levels create a positive school environment.
- Improved Attendance Rates: A strong indicator revealing improvements in student engagement and commitment to their education. Reduced absenteeism signifies the project's effectiveness.
- Reduction in Behavioural Issues: A decrease in disciplinary incidents and behavioural issues serves as a strong indicator of the success of school-upheld projects. This also contributes positively to improving the overall school climate and student behaviour.
- Engagement of Parents and the Community: Tracking records of parent and community involvement show that it often fosters greater participation in the education process, such as increased attendance at parent-teacher meetings, school events, and community outreach programs.
- Quality Evidence: Throughout the project's duration, data stories, testimonials, and case studies illustrate the positive impact with personal and compelling narratives of success.

Major Challenges and Suggestions for Successful Implementation of the Model School Project

Education is not only a fundamental right but also the cornerstone of a prosperous and developed society. Recognizing the importance of education, numerous NGOs have actively engaged in initiatives aimed at sustainable and high-quality education and to establish an exemplary educational system by providing funding and academic support. However, this noble endeavour is not without its challenges. The major challenges observed during the implementation of the Model School Project include:

- Financial Sustainability: While the Model School Project ensures financial sustainability at the initial level through funding and support, the long-term financial viability of these schools can

be uncertain. Such projects often rely on external funding sources, making them susceptible to fluctuations and uncertainties in funding that can impede their ability to maintain and improve the quality of education. It is imperative to develop a strategic plan that includes internal resources and fosters mutual coordination among such schools. Seeking alternative sources of funding beyond NGOs, exploring extra government support, corporate partnerships, and community-driven initiatives can enhance financial stability.

- Infrastructure and Resource Constraints: Many schools supported by NGOs still grapple with infrastructure and resource limitations, primarily manifesting as inadequate staffing and classroom space, outdated teaching materials, and a deficiency of technological resources. Overcoming these challenges necessitates substantial investment and long-term planning.
- Community Engagement: It has been observed that involving the local community in the project is essential for its success. However, achieving community engagement can be a challenging endeavour. Convincing and educating the community about the benefits of the Model School Project requires ongoing efforts and awareness-building.
- Responsive Teacher Training and Retention: Another significant challenge lies in ensuring that teachers are adequately equipped to employ innovative methods and remain motivated. Implementing training programs and incentives is necessary to attract and retain quality educators, which can impose a financial burden on the project. The creation of internal resources and collaboration with similar institutions can help address this challenge.
- Practical-Oriented Curriculum Adoption: The Model School Project often entails the implementation of new and innovative teaching methods that may not align with traditional curriculum standards. Adapting the curriculum to incorporate modern techniques while meeting the requirements of formal education can be a complex and time-consuming task. Promoting a culture of advanced learning and practical orientation among both teachers and students offers a potential solution to the curriculum adoption challenge.
- Monitoring Engagement and Evaluation: Measuring the effectiveness and success of the Model School project is critical. However, designing appropriate evaluation tools and consistently monitoring progress poses a challenge. Gathering and analysing data on student performance, teacher effectiveness, and the overall impact of the project primarily requires resources and expertise. Implementing a self-regulatory mechanism in a technology-based format can help streamline this practice.
- Culture and Socio-economic Diversity: Model School Projects often operate in culturally and socio-economically diverse environments. Tailoring methods for entire institutions involved can be complex, as there is no one-size-fits-all approach. Finding a common framework that is applicable to all, at least at a certain moderate level of activities, can strike a balance between inclusivity and efficiency in such diverse settings.

Conclusion

The NGOs demonstrate a positive work-culture and continuous feedback system that bring about encouraging changes in the adopted ZP Schools. As a part of the NGOs contribution through CSR fund on promoting sustainable development in six core areas outlined in NEP 2020. These evidence-based practices aid policymakers in making informed decisions that lead to positive improvements. There is a pressing need to foster the formation of professional learning communities, bringing together teachers, administrators, and authorities.

By implementing such practices, the collaboration between research institutions, academia and schools becomes not only beneficial but also essential in real-world educational settings, enhancing the quality of inclusive education as encouraged by NEP 2020. The strategies and action plans set by the NGOsare tested on the roadmap for fostering quality education.

The NGOs Project supports institutions facing significant challenges. Overcoming these challenges is crucial to ensuring that the Model School Project reaches its full potential in transforming education and providing a bright future for students while uplifting society. Addressing these challenges and implementing these strategies can help the Model School Project evolve into a sustainable, effective academic model with a positive impact on the academic sphere. These evidence-based practices also help policymakers in decisions that lead to positive improvements in academia.

NGOs play a significant role as a key driver in shaping and improving the rural based education system, serving as a tool for enhancing quality of education in line with NEP2020's goals for inclusive education.