

## An Awareness Programme for Improving the Socio-Economic Status of Culturally Disadvantaged Children

Dr. Anitha N. [1]

### Abstract:

*This paper tries to explain the awareness programmes for improving the socio-economic status of culturally disadvantaged children. In most classrooms, there are some children who are socio-culturally deprived and under privileged. In recent literature the term socially disadvantaged or simply 'disadvantaged' is used to refer to these children who are economically, educationally, linguistically or socially disadvantaged. A disadvantaged child is identified as one who confronts a sustaining inadequacy of basic necessities of life. main programme An interactive class on career development:- It is conducted with the help of a slide show. A brain storming is held on feasible ideas of income generating activities at self-employment level. An interactive session with a discussion on benefits of self-reliance:- Here the participants are convinced that the resultant positive social mobility with heightened self-esteem will bring out a positive change in their lives. Class on the effective ways of saving money:- Discussion using a prompts such as newspaper cuttings and video clips; interactive session and brain storming techniques are used as the classroom strategies.*

**Keywords:** awareness programmes, socio-economic status, culturally disadvantaged children

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### I. INTRODUCTION

Education is one of the most important inputs that influence the all-round development of any nation-economic, physical, social, cultural, ethical and spiritual. Jean Dreze and Amarty Sen (1995) have observed that education enables people to build up their capabilities, there by broadening their entitlements and facilitating expansion of freedom, which in turn is the primary and principal means of development. Enlightened citizens are the most valuable asset of a society; it cherishes the pursuit in preservation of democratic ideals and human values. Today, all nations are heading towards this goal, the developed, developing and backward nations are investing their precious resources in over increasing measures to provide avenues for education, because proper education to the masses can only help them attain this long cherished goal. According to Wilfred Carr (1998) The purpose of education in a democratic society is to prepare the child not only for a 'good' life but also for a 'socially efficient' life.

Education aims at bringing changes which will affect the lives of students is a relevant, concern for all educators. In the case of disadvantaged children, the challenge is even greater. The livelihood that these children will overcome the handicaps of poverty in rural as well as slum are as seems to be related as to how effectively the school personal assist them. However, the education system prevailing in the country is historically destined to confront many problems emerging from within. It is true to state that no system can stand aloof and insulated from the influences of its socio-economic matrix the social inequalities and developmental unevenness in the country get reflected in the educational

system. The difference between students who are 'first generation' and those from an educated home background, between the socio-economically sound and socio-economically poor and the urban and the rural is manifest on various parameters such as performance, achievement, sustenance etc.. Parameters like poverty, limited education, poor social background are involved in the concept of cultural disadvantage. When it comes to culturally disadvantaged children, it is understood that they have fewer opportunities than the average children, as they belong to lower socio-economic group. Lack of these opportunities coupled in the various terms of threats brings about low academic performance and behavioural degradation in their life. These in turn will put these children in to an inescapable group of personal problems. Also the socio-economic conditions to which they are born and brought up reflect the environment dimension of the phenomenon.

In most classrooms, there are some children who are socio-culturally deprived and under privileged. In recent literature the term socially disadvantaged or simply 'disadvantaged' is used to refer to these children who are economically, educationally, linguistically or socially disadvantaged. A disadvantaged child is identified as one who confronts a sustaining inadequacy of basic necessities of life. Another characteristic of such a child is that he or she is subject to environmental stresses which are detrimental to his or her well-being. Such children are denied the basic and universal rights of children. Apart from the genetic inadequacies, they are handicapped by their socio-economic circumstances also. They are so constrained by the socio-economic

<sup>[1]</sup>Principal, Fathima Memorial Training College Pallimukku, Kollam

circumstances of their lives. The socio-economic disadvantages prevent them from developing their natural and basic potentialities. It is a fact that the impoverished resources and social environment retard the natural development of the individual. This is evidently proved by the fact that the enriched environment compensates the detrimental effects of earlier deprivation.

Disadvantaged students, particularly those who are economically disadvantaged and living in urban settings, may have the following characteristics.

1. They may live in overcrowded home situations.
2. They may tend to stay within their immediate environment, which often lacks stimulation needed for a healthy life.
3. They may have little experience with successful adult models.
4. They may have few personal experiences which are successful and be conditioned for failure.
5. They may lack the opportunity for membership in appropriate youth organisations.
6. They may lack money for clothing appropriate to weather conditions or teenage fashions.
7. They may receive an education which does not meet their need for occupational training which frequently seems unrelated to their world.
8. They may experience segregation and discrimination.

## II. CONSTITUTIONAL PROVISIONS REGARDING DEPRIVED SECTIONS

Indian constitution accepts the ideals of democracy. It considers education as the prime responsibility of the state. Article 15 of Indian constitution states prohibition, discrimination on grounds of religion, race, caste, sex or place of birth. The sub section (4) of Article 15 states "Nothing in this article or in clause (2) of Article 29 shall prevent the state from making any special provision for the advancement of any socially and educationally backward classes of citizens or for the scheduled castes and scheduled tribes".

Article 29 and 30 of the constitution give fundamental rights to the individual in connection with education and cultural development. According to Article 29, every Indian national, living in any part of India will have the right to maintain his own specific language, script and his culture.

According to Article 30, every minority community will have the right to establish and maintain educational institutions of its own choice, irrespective of whether the minority is a linguistic or religious one.

Article 46 deals with the promotion of educational and economic interests of SC, ST and other weaker sections. It states "The state shall promote with special care, the educational and economic interests of the weaker sections of the people, and in particular, of the scheduled castes and scheduled tribes and shall protect them from social injustice and all forms of exploitations".

The Education Commission 1964-1966 in the chapter VI entitled, 'Equalization of educational opportunity and social

change' very aptly observed, "One of the important social objectives of education is to equalize opportunity, enabling the backward or under privileged classes and individuals to use education as a lever for the improvement of their conditions. Every society that values social justice and is anxious to improve the lot of the common man and cultivate all available talent that ensure progressive equality of opportunity to all sections of the population. This is the only guarantee for the building up of an egalitarian and human society in which the exploitation of the weak is minimized." The commission further stated, "The education of the backward classes in general and the tribal people in the particular is a major programme of equalization and of social and national integration. No expenditure is too great for their purpose".

Part III of the Indian constitution defines fundamental rights in context with right to equality, right to freedom, right against exploitation, right to freedom of religion, culture and educational rights and right to constitutional remedies. These rights not only reflect the nations concern for the well-being, safety and security of the general public, but are also enforceable by the courts. Ramamurti Committee in its report titled 'Towards an Enlightened and human society-NPE 1986 -A Review criticized the government for not paying attention to the right to education to fulfill the constitutional directive. The report further commented that "Now time has come to recognize 'Right to Education' as one of the fundamental rights of the Indian citizen for which necessary amendment to the constitution may have to be made and more importantly conditions be created in society such that this right would become available for all children of India".

Most of the culturally disadvantaged children are from poor socio-economic background. Poverty, poor income of parents family problems, poor home environment, lack of facilities, lack of motivation from parents poor health conditions, poor study habits, lack of interest in studies etc. are due to the poor socio-economic status of culturally disadvantaged children. The most important of them is the poverty of the parents. The way the money is spent for home needs is also a criterion. Another important factor is the poor occupational status of the parents. Unemployment or underemployment of the parents is also an ameliorating factor in this respect. Poor housing, inadequate diet and poor clothing also contribute to this grave condition. In the light of all these factors, the present paper tries to prepare an awareness programme for improving the socio-economic status of culturally disadvantaged children.

## III. AWARENESS PROGRAMME FOR IMPROVING SOCIO-ECONOMIC STATUS OF THE CULTURALLY DISADVANTAGED CHILDREN

This programme is with an intention to motivate the culturally disadvantaged learners and their parents to get involved in possible and feasible income generating activities in order to meet the prevailing financial inadequacies at home. The learners are provided a proper vision of career and an optimistic view that a fruitful work life is possible. The benefits of participating in self-employed income generating

are self-reliance, self-esteem and heightened social mobility. They are given adequate information of various government and non-governmental funding agencies that are likely to assist their projects ideationally and financially. The skill of accessing such services is also essential for the learner.

The main objectives of this awareness programme are

- I. To motivate the participants to find out their own potentials for a very productive work life.
- II. To provide knowledge and information to the parents and learners with regard to income generating activities at self-employment level.
- III. To make them equipped with knowledge and skill accessing public services in this area.

The awareness programme consists of the following activities

- a. An interactive class on career development:- It is conducted with the help of a slide show. A brain storming is held on feasible ideas of income generating activities at self-employment level.
- b. An interactive session with a discussion on benefits of self-reliance:- Here the participants are convinced that the resultant positive social mobility with heightened self-esteem will bring out a positive change in their lives.
- c. Class on the effective ways of saving money:- Discussion using a prompts such as newspaper cuttings and video clips; interactive session and brain storming techniques are used as the classroom strategies.
- d. A class on the idea of wise spending. An effective strategy is used for the transaction.
- e. A class on the concept of earning while learning- examples from daily life and news reports are shown to the participants for motivating them.
- f. Also dignity of labour, stories from different sources and biographical sketches of great People are presented. Also idea of self-help and helping family is presented
- g. Involvement of Community :- Educational empowerment and economic empowerment are the two sides of the same coin. Functioning of strong PTA in the institution can help a lot by arranging various programmes and economic activities, which can be helpful in providing self-employment opportunities.
- h. Awareness programmes on self-employment programmes for mothers:- Programmes such as paper making, preparing jam and jelly, pickle making, carpet weaning, making jute products, interior decorations, flower making, decoration of seminar halls, offices, shops etc.
- i. Arrange awareness programmes to parents about the process of taking loans and grants from banks and co-operative societies.
- j. Give them awareness about the different extension services like aganvadi workers, grama sevika, child welfare project officer and other non-governmental organisations with the help of this money, they can start work which is economically viable. Also they can buy the raw material for their work. Also these organisations encourage them to repay the debts in time.

- k. Awareness class on the importance of learning and earning. Earn while they learn and learn while they learn. Students can do part-time jobs after their school time and help parents in their daily works.

#### IV. CONCLUSIONS

Through all these awareness programmes we can provide the culturally disadvantaged children and their parents an idea about the different income generating sources, self-employment, dignity of labour and the financial assistance by our state and central government for the disadvantaged sections of our country. Thus by improving their socio-economic status, their learning conditions can be improved. Better socio-economics status and better home environment increase the self-confidence of the culturally disadvantaged learners and thereby increase their achievements.

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