

Report
Webinar on
Effect of disaster on life and education on
“Children of weaker sections of society due to increased economic
vulnerabilities”.

Dated 6th March 11 am

Introduction

As per the Indian Constitution, access to education is a fundamental right of each child of the country as enshrined in the Right to Education Act (2009). The National Policy on Children (2013) reaffirms the Government of India’s commitment to the realisation of rights of all children (below 18 years) in the country. The Policy has identified survival, health, nutrition, education, development, protection (including in response to emergencies/disasters) and participation as the undeniable rights of every child and has also declared these as key priority areas. The government has launched a scheme known as Integrated Child Development Services (ICDS) which provides food, preschool education, primary healthcare, immunization, health check-up, and referral services to children under 6 years of age and their mothers. For the education of children in the age group of 6-18 years, “Samagra Shiksha Abhiyan” is the Flagship scheme by GOI.

The Government of India released National School Safety Policy guidelines 2016 to ensure safety of the school and the children. Emergency education responses should be harmonised with and should strengthen national education programmes, including early childhood development, formal school education programmes, and vocational and livelihood programmes. These responses should include national and local education planning, administration, and management as well as physical infrastructure and in-service teacher training and support. Emergency education responses should work with education authorities to build a better system for the future, strengthening an inclusive education system for all children, the pandemic Covid-19 has spread over whole world and compelled the human society to maintain social distancing. It has significantly disrupted the education sector which is a critical determinant of a country’s economic future.

According to the UNESCO report, it had affected more than 90% of total world's student population during mid-April 2020 which is now reduced to nearly 67% during June 2020. Outbreak of COVI-19 has impacted more than 120 crores of students and youths across the planet. In India, more than 32 crores of students have been affected by the various restrictions and the nationwide lockdown for COVI-19. As per the UNESCO report, about 14 crores of primary and 13 crores of secondary students are affected which are two mostly affected levels in India. Though it is an exceptional situation in the history of education, COVID provided an opportunity to come out of the rigorous classroom teaching model to a new era of digital model. But latter on all realized that the lockdown has taught so many lessons to manage with the emergence of such pandemics. Thus, COVID created many challenges and opportunities for the educational institutes to strengthen their infrastructure (Pravat, 2020a). Some of the challenges are as follow:

- Increasing psychosocial issues of children.
- Less access to digital education in absence of equipment or poor connectivity.
- Increase in dropout rate due to economic issues of family as unit.
- Children are forced in child labour, trafficked or early marriage.

Facts and observations

It is reported that almost 30 percent of child marriages are accounted for by four states in this region (Bihar, Jharkhand, Odisha, and West Bengal). Simultaneously, flood-prone areas are increasingly expanding, and the frequency and magnitude of flash flooding events will likely increase in the coming years. Thus, there is a link between early marriage and natural disasters and argue that natural disasters that cause economic destruction can increase child marriage prevalence. Early marriage diminishes different aspects of women's well-being, such as education, health, labour force participation, and their children's human capital. Therefore, while early marriage, in the face of an economic shock, may seem optimal from parents' perspectives, it entails high long-term costs for the young couple, especially the bride. Thus, institution of marriage as a channel through which disasters may have a long-lasting impact on women. In addition, the loss of livelihood during the COVID-19 pandemic will push many young people into early marriage, especially in already poor households; reports already suggest child marriage incidence has increased in the past few months. From a policy

perspective, it is critical to recognize that if disaster insurance or low-cost credit is readily available, the affected households will have ways—other than the dowry tradition—to plan recoveries after experiencing an economic shock, thereby weakening the link between natural disasters and child marriage.

Annual Status of Education Report released by the non-profit Pratham in October indicate that there was a sharp increase in the number of children in the 6-10 age group who were not enrolled in a school—from 1.8% in 2018 to 5.3% in 2020—found the. The survey recorded a spike in smartphone ownership among rural households, from 37% in 2018 to 62% in 2020. But in poorer states like Uttar Pradesh, Rajasthan and Bihar, where digital access is anyway poor, it found that less than a quarter of the enrolled children received any learning material.

Another survey of over 1,500 public school teachers spread across five states by the Azim Premji Foundation indicate that almost 60% of children were unable to access online learning methods, and 70% of the parents found online classes to be ineffective for learning. The teachers' survey also revealed that in at least 80% of the cases, only an hour or less per day was spent by teachers per grade on online classes.

The study recommended the urgent reopening of schools in a phased manner with adequate provisions for health and safety and flagged that “parents are both dissatisfied with online learning solutions and eager to have their children back in school. “Inequities in education along class, caste and gender lines have always existed, but the pandemic has worsened it tremendously. Thus, there is urgent need to discuss on above issues.

Broad objective of discussion was:

1. Discussion on varied impact of disasters on health, education and psychic of children.
2. Discussion on gaps and challenges to mitigate the impact of disasters on life of children.
3. Protection of rights of child as enshrined in the Right to Education Act (2009) and the National Policy on Children (2013).
4. Proposed policy intervention to safeguard those rights of child.

The programme was inaugurated by the Member, Bihar State Disaster Management Authority (BSDMA) Shri Paras Nath Rai, IPS and, Shri Dr Nitin Malik, Registrar, Dr Bhima Rao Ambedkar University Delhi. Member BSDMA in his inaugural speech spoke about the safety issues of children and the crime happening around in the society, also giving focus to the impact of disasters on life and education of children. Shri Rai explained in detail how flood devastated life of North Bihar inhabitants. How families forced lost their house and livelihood agricultural land. Consecutively families forced to migrate for work



in other states along with their children. This is the point from where students lost the connection with schools and they also started working in unorganised sector. He mentioned that educating a child about his/her safety, hygiene and socioemotional development, gives society dividends in long terms. He appreciated the efforts for choosing such a timely subject in the times of Covid-19 and organizing a comprehensive programme. Registrar Ambedkar university in his inaugural address, emphasized that all schools should develop their school



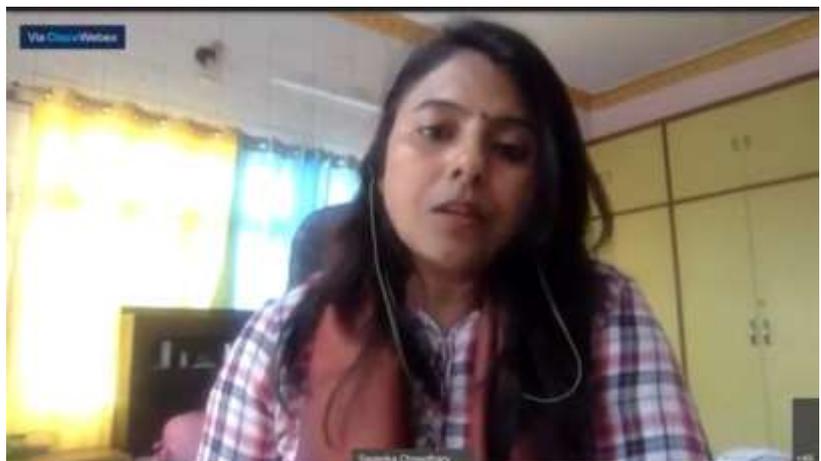
disaster Management plan, through a qualified disaster manager in time frame manner, as per guideline set by the National Disaster Management Authority. He said that it should

be carried out by a qualified disaster manager and translated it on the ground. He further emphasized the need of capacity building among the teachers/education

administrators' community to further the cause of school safety in our mainstreams. He also talked on issues related to their mental and physical health. He appreciated the effort of Zone4solutions in organizing this event. He also highlighted measures that should be taken by the schools such as evacuation drills, fire extinguishers in the corridors and awareness programs etc. Later, Nakul Kumar Tarun, Director, Zone4solution set the context of the programme by highlighting various disaster incidents and their effects on children. He also highlighted why school safety measures need to be incorporated scientifically in our developmental plans and goals. He also said why we cannot make school a safest place. As school are not for only education it is about all around development of a society. The Covid 19 alone forces Indian school to be closed for more than 9 months. We could not be able to protect the Right to education of our more than 50% of students. The inaugural session was ended with the introduction of all speaker to the Chairperson of webinar.

Technical Session, 1

First talk of the day was from SMT Sagarika Choudhry, Syndicate Member, Patna University. She covered various aspects of the impacts of COVID 19 on economy, health, and social sectors across North Bihar and how government



of Bihar responded those challenges. She detailed about various dos and don'ts with respect to managing corona virus, developments undertaken in vaccination, various guidelines from Government of Bihar in this regard. Further, she talked about new schemes of Bihar Government for the education sector and the problems being faced by parents, students, teachers and school administrators during lockdown and later reopening of school phases. She highlighted the need

for maintenance of school buildings to reduce hazards, lack of personal connection with teachers during online mode of education, increasing stress among students, safety measures to be adopted on reopening of schools. She concluded by saying that a focused and holistic approach is required to set the derailed education system on tracks in Bihar. We must ensure the safety of schools and its student/teacher in case of any emergency.

Technical Session 2

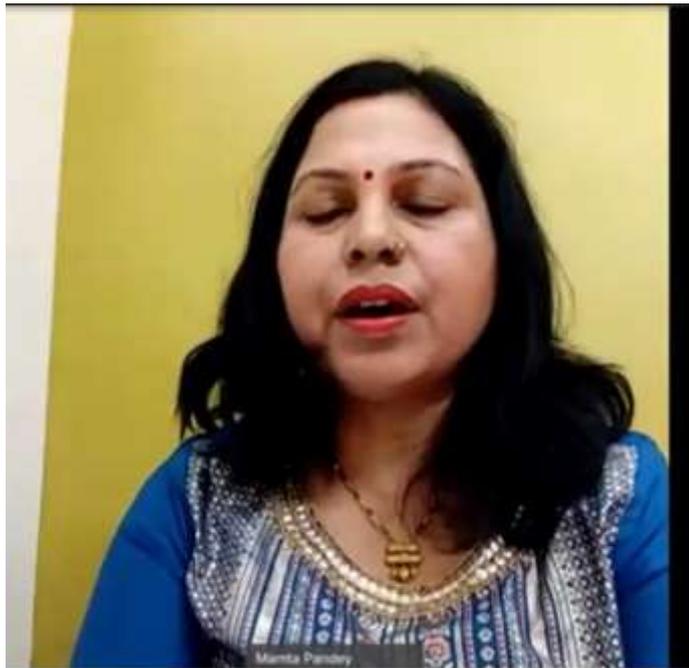


Shri Nitish Priyadarshi, Assistant Professor Ranchi University gave the second talk of the day on how students and parents are fighting jointly with COVID19 to keep learning process on. While talking he said Jharkhand is comparatively has less resources. The communication network is still not at

par to other part of country. So, obviously online classes are not meant for students residing in and around the forest. He talked in detail for education basics of Disaster Management and the Institutional Mechanism in this regard in our country. He highlighted important provisions of the DM Act, 2005, and said students should know their right about education. Shri Priyadarshi concluded by mentioning various example of Jharkhand how his student got deprived from quality education due to Disaster. He also emphasised that we should not make unnecessary pressure on students. The loosed curriculum will be recovered easily. We should focus on safety and security of educational infrastructure of the state.

Technical Session 3

Ms Mamata Panday, secretary, women conference Nainital presented the situations of economically weaker sections of hills. She said most of empty villages get filled up as lockdown initiated across the country. Migrants' workers returned with their children to village. Student get disconnected from their schools and teachers. She said some of students were blessed who managed reading material on



WhatsApp but most of students lost their education. She told classes were organised and transmitted on National TV by government of India, but students were not aware. Many houses of hills do not have TV. Parents are waiting for to start their job in cities/towns. Probably there after these children will start learning.

Technical Session 4

Shri Ravi Kumar, Director B. R. International school Fatehpur presented the effect



of COVID19 on students of Fatehpur and around. He said the constituency is the most backward constituency of Bihar. From Member of Parliament to Member of Legislative Assembly and downwards Gram panchayat every representation is reserved. So, you can understand the economic status of area. He said still some of parents are depending on the produce of Gurpa forest. The most economically weaker section students were studying in Govt school. Students were getting meals, books and even

clothes hence they were affording education. As this school entered lockdown mode just after a week student start supporting in father work. Sometime students found working at farm, tea shop and in cleaning of Dhabas. He also elaborated about little better financial backgrounds students. He said these students were studying at private school of the area including BR International. These parents were having regular income either from work at Railway Station or in local market. Lockdown deserted both sources of revenue and hence income of family stooped.

He said state government has asked to reopen the schools including private schools. It is found that attendance at govt and private schools are very low. He said we can understand why attendances are low at private schools. Because parents lost their fee-paying capacity. Similarly, govt school students are engaged in some job work. If a family whose priority is food and cloth at this point of time how they can leave even meagre paid job? He said please come on ground and see the picture roughly 8-10% students will never return to government school. Because some of students went out of station to earn livelihood.

Technical Session 5

Ashish Panda, Consultant, NIDM spoke in length on the mental issues of the students. He spoke on need for Psychosocial Care for Children. He mentioned various facets of psychological needs, importance of family, responsible adults, encouraging teachers and safe environment in the schools and neighbourhood for holistic growth of a child. He emphasised that disparity in support of a girl student and boy student of same family. He said as per data available only



18% girl child is having a smart phone while 36% of boy student has it. Why a girl student will not come under stress. He spoke about maslows need of hierarchy pyramid, role of schools in helping children reach to the top of this pyramid, Sigmund Freud's famous theory of unexpressed emotions later turning out into ugly episodes, several reasons/types of mental illnesses right from bullying, sense of rejection, depression, bipolar disorders, suicidal tendencies and mechanisms to observe them, trying to rectify them through support, help, talk, medication and therapies etc. He concluded by emphasizing about teaching children for being body positive, health food intakes, making friends, sharing their griefs and concerns of fear with family, trusted adults and teachers, roles of schools in broadening horizons of children, building their characters, making them problem solvers and in the end realizing their full educational, societal and mental potentials. Tree of life, value system and various quotations on life, children growth and positivity were highlights of his talk.

He also emphasised the need of inclusive disaster management plan and translation on ground through a qualified disaster manager.

Technical Session 6



Ms Shivani Bhardwaj, Founder Trustee of SAFF, spoke about the status of girl child in society and why they are more vulnerable than boys. She talked girls are even vulnerable in their home. Why chances of drowning are more than boy. She said we never taught our

girls how to climb a tree. Village girls are died due to its own cloth in water. We always pretend to show we are very protective to girls, but you are making them more vulnerable. If anybody will not know how to say no, how safe oneself from attacker, how to survive in case of emergency she will vulnerable. She also emphasised on safety of girl child in school. She said every school should have a girls protection committee. The committee must be headed by a woman only. So, in case of any issues, she can share her problem. Ms Bhardwaj said we must make

safe our girls' students at school, Home, workplace etc. She said fact is these places are seeming safe but not safe for a girl child. Most of cases are went unreported as it connected to the prestige of a family.

Conclusion and way forward

Shri Nakul Tarun, Director, Zone4soution concluded the meeting by saying that

see schools are not made for only teaching. It's very instrumental in development of overall personality and growth of a student. Its sure that our schools were not safe hence COVID 19 forced us to close for more than nine months. By closing the schools, we just avoided the risk but not mitigated. We must make school Disaster Management Plan through a qualified disaster manager and translate it on ground. Our schools/ colleges should be safest place in India. The lockdown of schools has affected approximately 40 Cr students of India. Only 10 Cr students has been taught online, rest 30 Cr lost their curriculum. Disaster discriminates between affluents and poor students.



Poorest of poor students lost whole curriculum. We feared that they might never return to the mainstream schooling system as they engaged themselves in some menial work for livelihood. Girls' students of economically weaker section faced early childhood marriage. Cases of trafficking of girls from historically disaster affected area has increased. This is opportunity for broker and thoughts. He said in case we can't afford to close our school. Or we are starting poverty cycle of economically weaker section students.

Takeaways from the programme

1. Understanding how school is necessary for development of students especially economically weaker sections girl students.
2. How school can be made 360 degree safe. Knowledge dissemination with respect to School Disaster Management Plan, its preparation methods and various aspects related to school safety in India.
3. Sharing of information with respect to Psychosocial Aspects of Children Safety, Fire Safety, Stampedes, Earthquakes, Emergency Medical support and first aid mechanisms etc.
4. Mainstreaming school safety measures and techniques in school on mission mode as COVID 19 is not last pandemic.
5. Preparation of a huge network, databank of school safety planners, managers and stakeholders for future collaborations with schools and educational institutions.

Session Plan

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“Children of weaker sections of society due to increased economic vulnerabilities”.

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Time	Speakers	Topic
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11.00 – 11.05	Nakul kr Tarun, Director Zone4solution	Welcome address
11.05- 11.15	Shri Paras Nath Rai, Member, BSDMA	Inaugural address
11.15. 11.30	Dr Nitin Malik, Registrar, Ambedkar University Delhi	Inaugural address
11.30-11.45	Shri Nitish Priyadarshi, Assistant Professor Ranchi University	Effect of COVID-19 on girl Child of Jharkhand and around
11.45- 11.55	SMT Sagarika Choudhary, Syndicate member, Patna University	Effect of COVID-19 on girl Child of North Bihar and around
11.55-12.10	Shri Ravi Singh, Director, B. R. International School, Fatehpur	Case study Fatehpur and around Gurpa forest
12.10-12.20	Dr.Shivani Bhardwaj Founding trustee , <i>SAFP</i>	Effect of disaster (COVID) on economically weaker section (girl) students
12.20- 12. 30	Mamata Panday, Joint Secretary, All India women conference, Nainital	Effect of COVID-19 on girl child of Hills
12. 30-12.40	Ashish Panda, Faculty NIDM	Effect of COVID-19 in total on education of children
12.40-12.50	Nakul Kr Tarun, Director Zone4solution	Conclusion and way ahead



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Sagarika Choudhary,
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Patna University



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FOUNDING TRUSTEE
SAFF



Nakul kr Tarun
Director
Zone4solution



Ravi Singh, Director
B. R. International
School, Fatahpur

*Expresses the Gratitude of the Following
Guests For Webinar*

Thank you

The meeting was attended by 190 participants across the country. Out of 70 were the female participant and 120 were mail participants. Similarly, in speakers boards three were the female speakers and 6 were the mail speakers.