



ISSN NO. 2320-5407

Journal homepage: <http://www.journalijar.com>

INTERNATIONAL JOURNAL
OF ADVANCED RESEARCH

RESEARCH ARTICLE

Educational Development of Poor Urban, Remote Rural, Tribal and Conflict Afflicted Communities of India: A Case Study of Oil and Natural Gas Corporation

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Manuscript Info

Manuscript History:

Received: 12 January 2014
Final Accepted: 25 February 2014
Published Online: March 2014

Key words:

Education, Girl child, Nanhi Kali, KC Mahindra Education Trust, Himalayan Nature and Adventure Foundation, Roorkee..

Abstract

Of all the creations of God, human life is the most sacred. It has two aspects- the biological and the sociological. While the biological aspects of human life is maintained and transmitted by nutrition and reproduction, the social aspect of human life is maintained and transmitted by education. In the primitive society, the primary needs of man comprised food, shelter and clothing. With the progress of society and civilization, however, these primary needs have been multiplied into six viz, food, shelter, clothing, education, recreation and health. Man is primarily distinguishable from the lower animals because of his education ability. In human life the value of education is immeasurable. The present research paper is an attempt to analyze the crucial role for educational development to the poor urban, remote rural, tribal, dalit and conflict afflicted communities of India by Oil and Natural Gas Corporation (ONGC). It also has done for physically or mentally challenged children and youth, deaf, Kashmiri migrant children and youths in Jammu & Kashmir (J&K) and also for educational programme on corruption in thirty one states and union territories. It is doing commendable work for educational development of the country.

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Introduction

Of all the creations of God, human life is the most sacred. It has two aspects- the biological and the sociological. While the biological aspects of human life is maintained and transmitted by nutrition and reproduction, the social aspect of human life is maintained and transmitted by education. In the primitive society, the primary needs of man comprised food, shelter and clothing. With the progress of society and civilization, however, these primary needs have been multiplied into six viz, food, shelter, clothing, education, recreation and health. Man is primarily distinguishable from the lower animals because of his education ability. He is endowed with intelligence; he wants to remain active, energetic and even original. He desires to go ahead (Taneza, 1998). It is education that lifts people out of the state of chronic poverty in which they are constantly struggling to fulfil basic needs such as these. The truth is that all people have a right to have these basic needs fulfilled, and they also have a right to education. In this regard, the world is not doing very well (Agarwal, ed. 2008). Education has the unflinching capability to give a fillip to pursue the divine path of social justice, equity and status. Education is like a road-roller-if one fails to run it, it will run over him. In human life the value of education is immeasurable. Education is important in its own right and has strong spill over benefits to usher literacy and social cohesion (Taneza, 1998a).

Plato who was the Greek Philosopher (428 BC-348 BC) said, "If you ask what is the good of education in general, the answer is easy: that education makes good men, and that good men act nobly." When Tony Blair was sworn in as the Prime Minister of Britain, he was asked what would be three major areas on which his government would focus. He replied, "Education, education and education (Agarwal, 2008)." GATE's Chairman and CEO, Mr. Glenn Jones, has said "Education is the great hope for the survival of humankind and for the forward progress of

civilization.” The French revolutionary Danton said more than two centuries ago, “After bread, education (Agarwal, ed. 2008a).”

The voice of an indigenous woman of equador is sufficed to evince the importance of education in life: According to World Bank (2000) *“Because we had no schooling we are almost illiterate. Sometimes we cannot even speak Spanish; we can’t add. Store-owners cheat us, because we don’t know how to count or anything else. They buy at the prices they want and pay less. They cheat us because we are uneducated.”* Socio-economic development of a country is one way of reducing the vulnerability of the poor people to refrain from education. There is evidence that poverty is the root cause of illiteracy which can be substantially checked and prevented if there is adequate economic growth process in operation (Suri, 2004: 5).

About the Company

Oil and Natural Gas Corporation (ONGC) is a public corporation. It is a multinational oil and gas company and state owned corporation of the Government of India. Its headquarter is situated in Tel Bhavan, Dehradun in India. It is one of the largest oil and gas exploration and production (E&P) companies of the world. It is one of the only seven *Maharatna* status companies of India. It has been recognized as the *world’s No.3 in Global E&P companies*. ONGC’s vision is to be a global leader in integrated energy business through sustainable growth, knowledge excellence and exemplary governance practices. It is the only Indian energy major in *Fortune’s Most Admired List 2012*. ONGC have critical in the development of several backward regions of the country.

ONGC has been playing an important role in strengthening the fabric of society. This flagship corporation in India's corporate world has a finely tuned sense of moral responsibility towards the community where it operates and the country at large. Local population is benefited most as a result of the operations of the corporation in the region. It generates employment and business opportunities, which in turn improves the overall economy of the region and the living standards of the community. Its operations provide the necessary boost required for the industrial growth of the region (Community Development, 2010).

Objectives

The specific objectives of the research paper are:

1. To find out the educational development of poor urban, remote rural, tribal, dalit and conflict afflicted communities of India role played by ONGC.
2. To find out the educational development through various projects and schemes in several region of India role played by ONGC.
3. Also to find out the educational development for physically or mentally challenged children and youth and also for deaf in several region of India role played by ONGC.
4. To find out the educational development programmes for Kashmiri migrant children and youths in (J&K) role played by ONGC.
5. To examine the educational programme on corruption in thirty one states and union territories role played by ONGC.

Methodology

The data for this study has been collected and compiled from both primary and secondary sources. Following steps were taken to carry the present study.

1. The primary sources of data include a report on a partial list of Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) Success Stories of ONGC and secondary sources of data include books, journals, magazines articles, newspapers, and published and unpublished articles from internet etc.

Discussion

1. Nanhi Kali Project for Educational Development:

In many parts of India, the arrival of a baby girl calls for mourning rather than celebration. Abandoning them at birth or marrying them off as children is a common practice. Looked upon as huge economic burdens, it is hardly surprising that many Indian families don't see the point in investing in their education. Government of India statistics reveal that only three out of ten girls who enter Std. Ist complete Std. Xth. While enrolment rates of girls are improving marginally in India, dropout levels remain alarmingly high. At primary school level, over 45 per cent of girls dropout of school and this increases to over 73 per cent by the time the child has reached Std. Xth. Research has shown that reasons for this dropout may be as minor as the girl child not being able to afford a dress or uniform to go to school and could include more complex factors like girls taking on the responsibility of household chores at a

very young age as a result of gender stereotyping. Successful education of the girl child has been repeatedly acknowledged as effective mechanisms to break this inter-generational cycle of poverty, myths, social norms and social evils. Research conducted in developing countries has shown that a literate female population is linked to reduction in population growth rates. On the other hand, illiteracy, breeds ignorance and fear and only increases her helplessness to be exposed to lifelong abuse and exploitation (Nanhi Kali Why, 2012).

Background for undertaking the project:

Project Nanhi Kali was initiated in 1996 by the K.C. Mahindra Education Trust (KCMET) with the aim of providing primary education to underprivileged girl children in India. Anand Mahindra, the founder of Nanhi Kali, believed that educated women form the foundation of a modern secular society and felt that there was a strong correlation between the existing societal ills in India such as spiraling population rate, dowry deaths, caste system etc., and no education of the girl child. He believed that empowering the girl child with education would result in huge benefits for the nation in the long term. Studies conducted in developing countries have shown that this is true and today, even the World Bank has acknowledged that there is no investment more effective for achieving the millennium development goals than educating girls. According to the World Bank, some of the benefits associated with girls' education include reduction of child and maternal mortality, improvement of child nutrition and health, lower fertility rates and improvement in economic production.

Moreover, the benefits in the form of reduction of abuse and exploitation of females are huge. So, it was with the dual objectives of impacting the nation's development through education of the girl child and encouraging Indians to "give back" in a focused manner that Anand Mahindra began Nanhi Kali, a sponsorship programme, where individuals could support the education of a girl child in India. Since 2005, the project is jointly managed by KCMET and Naandi Foundation, which is an independent and reputed nonprofit organization which has an objective of providing ten years of quality education to girls from economically disadvantaged families. Nanhi Kali project is working with 21 NGO's implementation partners at the grass root level to ensure that the girls receive academic and material support. The K.C. Mahindra Education Trust regularly monitors the Non-Government Organizations (NGOs) giving technical inputs where ever required to ensure that quality education is being imparted to all the Nanhi Kali's (Nanhi Kali About, 2012). Corporation is actively associated with Nanhi Kali. The project has been successful in reaching out to 28,000 beneficiaries so far. The realization that girls constitute more than 3/5th of total out of school, primary school age population in the world has got the issue of girls. Female children are generally neglected and exploited at an early age. It is only through education that the girl child can arm herself to the independent and self-reliant.

Scope of the project:

Naandi is working with communities in the states of Andhra Pradesh, Karnataka, Andaman & Nicobar, Madhya Pradesh, Chhattisgarh, Rajasthan and Maharashtra in India (Report: A partial list of CSR Success Stories of ONGC, 2011).

Impact of the Nanhi Kali Project:

1. Project Nanhi Kali currently supports the education of over 70,000 underprivileged girl children from poor urban, remote rural, tribal and conflict afflicted communities in Maharashtra, Andhra Pradesh, Rajasthan, Chhattisgarh, Madhya Pradesh, Karnataka and New Delhi and Haryana. Outreach efforts have also been initiated in Tamil Nadu.
2. The project has witnessed a significant increase in both enrolment of girls and attendance of girls in schools.
3. Dropout rates of girls have been reduced to less than 10 per cent within the programme as compared to national level figures of 30 per cent at primary level and 70 per cent at the secondary school level.
4. Further assessments done by a third party have reported an increase in learning outcomes ranging from 40 per cent improvement in tribal Chhattisgarh, 78 per cent in Mumbai slums within a period of a year. (Nanhi Kali About, 2012a).

Objective of the project:

The goal of Project Nanhi Kali is to support the education of 1 lakh by March 2012. Empowerment of women is possible only by focusing on participation of boys and girls in the educational process. Education of girls has not been emphasized due to cultural and social stereotypes girls who restrict girls from attending the school. Initiative has been taken up through Nanhi Kali to provide education to female children.

Details of selection of target population:

Following criteria is adopted to identify the beneficiary:

- Girl children who are enrolled in any government school. Out of school children are also encouraged to enroll in school through bridge courses.
- Girl children belonging to the poorest section of the society (family income being below Rs.18, 000/- per annum).
- Girl child who is a first generation learner.
- Girl children belonging to dalit, tribal and migrant communities.
- Eldest girl child and girl children with many siblings.
- Girl children from female house-holds.
- Disabled girl children.

Implementation of the project:

In stage first, beneficiaries are identified. In stage second, the value of education to the child, parents and the community is affirmed. Regular contact with the school is maintained to track the child's attendance, academic progress, health status and social skills. Direct support in the form of note books, stationery, uniforms, examination fees and learning material is provided. Capacity building of children is done.

Extent and role of the communities:

Teaches are sensitized to address the community on general disparities and assert the awful necessity of educating the girl child (Report: A partial list of CSR Success Stories of ONGC, 2011a).

Long-term sustainability of the project:

1. Project Nanhi Kali is a participatory project where any individual or corporate can sponsor the education of a disadvantaged girl child for only Rs. 2,400 a year for a girl studying in Std. Ist to Vth or Rs. 3,600 a year for a girl studying in Std. VIth to Xth. (*Nanhi Kali About, 2012b*). The corporation has partnered with Nanhi Kali to sponsor fifty students from Class Ist to VIIth and another fifty students Class VIIIth to Xth.

Methodology used for monitoring progress on the project and feedback:

Progress is monitored monthly, quarterly and yearly by Nanhi Kali. The corporation has monitored the progress of the girl child by retaining the profile of the students and their living environment of the beneficiaries which are sponsored by the corporation.

Learning from the project:

Empowerment of women can come only by making an effort towards making them and supporting all the initiatives to promote education among girl child. This only can ensure development of an economy. However, the entire community needs to be sensitized towards this issue.

2. ONGC's Nature Study-cum Adventure Camp for Special Children and Youth:

Background for undertaking the project:

Mainstreaming the physically or mentally challenged has been the endeavour of the corporation. With this in view, Nature Study Cum Adventure Camp for the Physically Challenged Children and Youth-2008 is being supported by the corporation since 2003. The main objective of this camp is to bring these challenged children and youth close to nature and thereby help them to rediscover their hidden talents and capabilities so as to make them self-confident at the end of the course. The participants despite their disabilities get motivated to surpass their limitations. Himalayan Nature and Adventure Foundation (HNAF) has been carrying on this event since the beginning of the foundation. The joint movement between the corporation and HNAF has given this event a major success. The mission of HNAF has achieved a great deal of help having been supported by the corporation.

Scope of the project:

In the year 2006, this camp was organized at *Upeer Kopish* forest, village *Darjeeling* and this was organized by Himalayan Nature and Adventure Foundation (HNAF) at *Siliguri*. The camp and physical training, trekking, providing knowledge of trees watching birds, getting accustomed to the surrounding hills and rivers, knowing about equipments of adventurous sports and camp manners. The wheel chair bound participants were taken for a day out. Nature gains were emphasized. Participants also performed songs, dance, drama, etc.

Details of selection of target population:

Total 95 participant's along with 26 escorts participating in the camp.

Implementation of the project:

It was a five days camp with activities varying from nature gains, rock climbing, fire making, knots, drawing, quiz, camp fire and other cultural activities.

Extent and role of the communities:

Campers from various parts of the country participated at this camp.

Long-term sustainability of the project:

ONGC has been associated with this initiative since the year 2003 and considers it an opportunity to enable the disabled to enjoy the resources of nature.

Methodology used for monitoring progress on the project and feedback:

The photographs and the CDs of the programme are sent to the corporation to observe the desired results of associating with this initiative.

Learning from the project:

The corporation's association with such initiatives provides opportunity to serve humanity in its real sense. Effort was made to make such persons overcome their disabilities and enjoy the resources of nature i.e. flora, fauna and other wealth of nature. With the help of their so called sixth sense, which is a gift of God, they were able to perform the activities very well. The visually impaired, with their feelings, knew about the trees and leaves, with the sound of birds whistle they knew the kind of birds, with the sound; they had an idea of natural objects like mountain, fountain, rivers etc. The orthopedically and wheel chair bound campers were taken high in the hill, which is ridiculous activity in their thinking. They enjoyed nature sitting in the laps of mountains. The mentally retarded and hearing handicapped, with the help of specialized persons were given the best of the natural and adventure activities. All these campers were all out disciplined and they overwhelmingly enjoyed the nature. The escorts and the guides from the concerned institutions were remarkably happy seeing the changes of these campers at the end of this five day's camp. At the closing day the campers, their guides and escorts performed cultural programmes at the camp fire ceremony.

3. ONGC's Roorkee School for the Deaf:

Roorkee School for the Deaf is the first school for the deaf in India located on the campus of a hi-tech institute IIT Roorkee and managed by its faculty and experts. The school has an excellent team of highly qualified, trained and dedicated teachers. Some of whom have been trained in the best of the training institutes in India and abroad. The school for the deaf is run and managed by IIT Roorkee. Mostly the faculty members of IIT Roorkee are the members of the management committee and at the same time are rendering their services voluntarily to run the school as a "*Community Supported Model*" in which donations from individuals and organizations in both cash and kind mainly to meet the expanses of the school. The corporation impressed and inspired by the voluntary services of the faculty members decided to support this noble initiative of IIT Roorkee by extending a grant. The school has tried to educate and trained the deaf children of Roorkee and several other villages and town around Roorkee. They were trying to train them in all the independent living skills which they require to lead a normal healthy life. The school undertakes the following activities for the deaf:

- **Modern equipment scientific approach-** OHP, LCD projector, computers, internet, TV/VCR, camera and associated software.
- **Speech therapy in addition to the normal speech and auditory training equipment-** The school also has the latest computer aided speech development system.
- **Vocational training along with academic education-** The school students get vocational training in the areas of typing, work processing, reprography, arts, craft, photography, gardening cooking, catering, carpentry, screen printing and tailoring etc.
- **Research based model-** Students and faculty of IIT actively undertake R&D activities for the benefit of the deaf children such as development of assistive devices educational technology, teaching aids and software etc.

The corporation has extended the support to create the infrastructure for a more useful learning environment on scientific lines like installation of modern computers and accessories with the requisite software.

4. ONGC's Educational Programme with Kashmiri Migrant Children in Migrant Camps:

Kashmiri migrants were living in different camps for the last sixteen years in Jammu and Udhampur in (J&K) and other parts of the country. They were forced to run away their familial homes and fire places leaving behind everything because of the terrorism in Kashmiri valley. As a result, these are compelled to live in claustrophobic ambience of camps without being able to enjoy the basic rights and carefree childhood. Some of these children have lost their parents to the bullets of terrorists. In this context, an organization called Socio-Service Art Group approached the corporation for conducting programmes on educational, developmental and rehabilitative nature for the Kashmiri migrant children and youths. The corporation readily agreed to support the programme to wipe off the socio-economic deprivation and susceptibility of these children because of the tragic phenomenon known as migration. It was proposed to hold four educational workshops in four different camps of fifteen days duration in which each has got benefits around 800 Kashmiri migrant children and youth. The programme included educational dramatic and performing games; interaction with musicians; drawing. Post the workshop it was found that the children were a lot less stressful, showcase their talent and connected with their nostalgic moments.

5. ONGC's India Corruption Study 2007:

The corporation has supported a project by Transparency International India, New Delhi, titled "*India Corruption Study 2007*" which has covered all thirty one states and union territories and the focus has been on rural India. The aim of this study is to sensitize the people of India against all pervasive corruption faced on day to day basis by the common man and recognize the good work being done in particular department and states where corruption levels have decreased and to share those success stories with other departments. The corporation was the first to incorporate the integrity pact which is now being followed by other Public Sector Undertakings (PSUs) (Report: A partial list of CSR Success Stories of ONGC, 2011b).

Conclusion

ONGC has played a very crucial role for educational development through various projects viz, Nanhi Kali, Nature Study-Cum Adventure Camp for special children and youth, Roorkee School for the Deaf, Educational Programme for Kashmiri migrant children and India's Corruption Study 2007 projects. The corporation has supported for the education of 70,000 under privileged girl children from poor urban, remote rural, dalit, tribal, migrant and conflict afflicted communities in several states of Maharashtra, Andhra Pradesh, Rajasthan, Chattisgarh, Madhya Pradesh, Karnataka, New Delhi, Haryana and Tamil Nadu. The corporation has also supported the physically or mentally challenged children and youth for bringing close to the nature and Roorkee School for the deaf by providing a grant and also for conducting educational programme to wipe off the socio-economic deprivation and vulnerability of Kashmiri migrant children and youths and also educational programme on corruption in thirty one states of rural India. So, ONGC is doing commendable work for educational development of the country.

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