MAPPING OF FUNDAMENTAL EDUCATION RIGHT FOR POOR CHILDREN WITH HIDDEN NEEDS BEHIND

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Abstract: This paper is concerned about the education right for the underprivileged/poor/socially deprived children. Having education is fundamental right for such children. But giving free education is not enough done for this kind of children. Family circumstances for the study at home, proper nutrition, travelling charges to go to school daily and other expenses likely to be negligible but not for such children are a number of factors which contribute a lot to fulfill the educational needs. This paper highlights the hidden needs arisen behind the facility of free education for an underprivileged child. These needs should be fulfilled for the successful completion of education and making worth this fundamental right.

Keywords: socially deprived, fundamental right, poverty

I. Introduction

The UN issued a statement of commitment to action to eradicate poverty in June 1998 signed by the executive heads of all UN agencies (Langmore, 2000). It argued that poverty eradication “is the key international commitment and a central objective of the United Nations system”. Fundamentally, poverty is a denial of choices and opportunities, a violation of human dignity. It means insecurity, powerlessness and exclusion of individuals, households and communities. It means susceptibility to violence, and it often implies living on marginal or fragile environments, without access to clean water or sanitation (UN Statement, 1998).

According to UN General Assembly Definition of Child Poverty, January 2007 “Children living in poverty are deprived of nutrition, water and sanitation facilities, access to basic healthcare services, shelter, education, participation and protection. Absolute poverty is defined as ”a condition characterised by severe deprivation of basic human needs, including food, safe drinking water, sanitation facilities, health, shelter, education and information. It depends not only on income but also on access to services.”

Overall poverty takes various forms, including ”lack of income and productive resources to ensure sustainable livelihoods; hunger and malnutrition; ill health; limited or lack of access to education and other basic services; increased morbidity and mortality from illness; homelessness and inadequate housing; unsafe environments and social discrimination and exclusion. It is also characterised by lack of participation in decision making and in civil, social and cultural life. It occurs in all countries.
A. Continuum of deprivation
In order to measure absolute poverty amongst children, it is necessary to define the threshold measures of severe deprivation of basic human needs for:
1. food
2. safe drinking water
3. sanitation facilities
4. health
5. shelter
6. education
7. information
8. access to service

B. Continuum of Rights
- Social Deprivation
  Social deprivation refers not to poverty, but it is the reduction or prevention of culturally normal interaction between an individual and the rest of society.
- Right to Education
  The right to education is a fundamental human right. Every individual, irrespective of race, gender, nationality, ethnic or social origin, religion or political preference, age or disability, is entitled to a free elementary education. This right is explicitly stated in the United Nations' Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR), adopted in 1948:
  The right to education improves the quality of life. Education operates as multiplier, enhancing the enjoyment of all individual rights, freedoms where the right to education is effectively guaranteed, while depriving people of the enjoyment of many rights and freedoms where the right to education is denied or violated."
  The human right to education entitles every individual to:
  1. Free and compulsory elementary education, and to readily available forms of secondary and higher education
  2. Freedom from discrimination in all areas and levels of education, and to equal access to continuing education and vocational training
  3. Information about health, nutrition, reproduction, and family planning

II. Educating Poor or Underprivileged Children
Children are entitled to a free, quality basic education. Recognizing this entitlement, world leaders made the achievement of universal primary education by the year 2015 one of the Millennium Development Goals. School attendance, especially for girls, is far from universal, and many children drop out of school before completing their primary education. Many children who do attend school receive an inadequate education because of poorly trained, underpaid teachers, overcrowded classrooms, and a lack of basic teaching tools such as textbooks, blackboards, and pens and paper.
  In many developing countries is that governments lack either the financial resources or the political will to meet their citizens' educational needs. In response, poor parents in some low income countries have organized and paid for their children's education themselves.
  The disparity between sexes is even more dramatic. Girls figure disproportionately among the children who do not attend school in all low-income countries. In many other countries, boys and girls attend school in roughly equal numbers, and, in some, the male-female ratio slightly favors girls.

III. User payments
When children cannot go to school because their parents cannot afford user fees, not only is the situation unfair and socially unjust but it can also be economically inefficient. Many school costs—such as the physical infrastructure and teacher salaries—are fixed, and allowing an additional child to attend would not increase them. This is especially true in rural areas in low-income countries, where the one-room schoolhouse with one teacher and one chalkboard is a common sight. It costs little or nothing to put one more child into such a school.
  Of course, quality will decline after some point, as the teacher's attention is divided among more pupils.
  In principle, a government could monitor the financing of schools through user payments and make the payments progressive by exempting poor families or basing payment on income. This, however, means involving the government bureaucracy—whose very inadequacies forced many parents to assume the responsibility for their children's education in the first place—in the school system.
  It is important to distinguish between the factors influencing the demand for and supply of education. User payments are less likely to increase school attendance when low enrollment is due to a failure of demand than when it is due to a failure of supply. Obviously, when the problem is a failure of supply because a government lacks the means or will to build or staff schools for children from poor families, user payments are one way parents can provide an education for their children. Of course, demand-side influences make user payments
ineffective. If parents are unwilling or unable to put their children in school when education is free, they will not send their children to school when they are obliged to pay for it out of their own pockets.

**Pros and Cons of user payments**

- User payments may increase the quality of education, motivating parents who were previously unwilling to pay for their children's education to do so.
- If demand is inadequate because parents are misinformed about the true value of education for their children, user payments may have a "demonstration effect": when user payments allow more children to go to school, gain skills, and ultimately find jobs, parents of other children may be persuaded that schooling is worthwhile.
- Moreover, when parents are required to pay for their children's education, they are more likely to monitor teacher performance to be sure they are getting their money's worth, so a virtuous circle is created. If payment is voluntary and schools do not perform satisfactorily, parents can take their children out of school, and school administrators will lose some of the funding out of which their own salaries are paid.
- User payments are a means of overcoming a political bias toward urban elites at the expense of the rural poor. They enable poor parents to pay directly for their own children's education instead of subsidizing, through their taxes, the education of rich children.
- User payments for basic education is not more than a temporary solution. User payments are undesirable because they are a regressive tax when school attendance is compulsory. Voluntary user payments are undesirable because children are excluded from schooling if their parents are unable or unwilling to pay school fees.

The effectiveness of user payments will depend on whether the reasons children are not in school are demand-side or supply-side.

**IV. Experiences of socially deprived children regarding school**

All the most disadvantaged urban schools were situated in areas that have very high levels of child poverty and that score high on most deprivation indicators. Children came to school hungry and most of the highly disadvantaged schools ran breakfast clubs to ensure that the children were not too hungry to be able to learn.

**A. Views of children about school**

Family income on children’s ability to learn, even to acquire the language that allows them to learn. Children who live in persistent poverty have slower cognitive and social development, and poorer physical or mental health, than those who live in poverty for a short time only. The role of maternal educational levels is particularly important, especially in the child’s early years. Maternal education can affect children through a range of health outcomes as well as on a child’s cognitive development – and hence his/her ability to learn.

**B. Reasons given by children to go to school**

Younger children (four to six year olds) all saw school as a place to learn for learning’s sake or, as many of them put it, ‘to get smarter’. This view was expressed across urban and rural, advantaged and disadvantaged, Protestant, Catholic and integrated schools. Even at this age, the children seem to have an understanding of learning as a cumulative experience: that learning one thing makes learning another easier. They are fairly clear about what it is that they learn. The list of reasons why they go to school:

- **Answer 1**: To learn.
- **Answer 2**: To learn to read and to write.
- **Answer 3**: To spell.
- **Answer 4**: To play.
- **Answer 5**: To make friends.

The differences between the children in more advantaged and more disadvantaged schools at this age was less about how they experienced school and more about their readiness to learn. While it was clear that they understood the questions being asked, and they had something to say, some struggled to express themselves even in the shortest sentences. These children were different to shy children, who were slow to speak but, when they did say something, were able to put together three- or four-word sentences. But, in older age group, they started to say they go to school to learn so they can get a job when older.

Some children see that education is important for more than employment, but for the overall development of a person and to ensure competence in other areas of life. Children in the more disadvantaged schools, however, are more likely to say that school is important for more negative reasons – to avoid problems in their adult lives. Older children in disadvantaged schools were less likely to describe learning as fun than older children in advantaged schools. Children across schools and age groups demonstrated a desire to be more involved in directing their own learning. They wanted more "learning by doing" and for teachers to have more flexibility about teaching methods and timetables.
Children in disadvantaged schools were more likely to view education as a way of avoiding problems in the future.

C. No-uniform day
On no-uniform days, the underprivileged children all said that there was no pressure about the clothes they’d wear on no-uniform day and in only one – socially mixed – school did anyone admit to there being any pressure about the kind of trainers children might wear. But several children mentioned that the child in the social sector house might have problems asking for fine charged by schools for no-uniform day. They’d be relieved because it’d be a fun day and they’re not wearing uniform, so they don’t have to sit and do their tie up, but they wouldn’t be so happy because they’d have to pay just for no uniform.

D. The cost of school
Although education is theoretically free, the cost of sending children to school remains relatively high, especially for families who are living on low incomes. A number of key items that contributes to the real costs of education, including clothes, books, school trips, lunches, transport, sports kit and after-school clubs. As there is free school meal facility, some parents do not apply for FSMs, even though their child(ren) may be eligible, either because ‘their children don’t want it or don’t like’ or for fear of stigma. Those whose children are not entitled to FSMs may nonetheless be living in poverty while in employment.

E. Other expenses
School dinners, juice or school trips are other expenses.

F. School uniforms
The cost of school uniforms, including shoes and bag, was mentioned by some children as one of the costs of schooling. While the parents generally approved of school uniforms because of the ease in getting children ready for school, and their equalising effects on the children within the school, most of the parents were critical of the cost. All put the cost down to the way in which schools contract with particular shops to stock their polo shirts and sweatshirts. Even those not living in poverty – found that the trend in primary schools towards sweatshirts and polo shirts with the school crest makes uniforms more expensive. Several parents of boys also expressed concern about their child’s school insisting on black school shoes. They pointed out that boys can go through shoes really quickly and sometimes the choice is for the child to wear trainers going to school or not to go at all.

V. Experiences of children from different backgrounds and their attitudes to education
- Low income is a strong predictor of low educational performance.
- Boys are more likely to have low results than girls
- Out-of-school activities can help build self-confidence. Children from advantaged backgrounds experience more structured and supervised out-of-school activities.
- Many children and young people who become disaffected with school develop strong resentments about mistreatment (such as perceived racial discrimination). Work with disaffected young people is most effective where it makes them feel more involved in their own futures. Equality of educational opportunity must address multiple aspects of disadvantaged children’s lives.

It is true that school fees and other user payments are a heavy burden for some parents to bear. But, given the alternative—children receiving no education at all—such payments can represent a temporary, if less than ideal, solution to the problem.

VI. Conclusion
- Demand for education is low as poor families must meet their essential needs i.e food and shelter irrespective of additional expenses of tuition, books, transportation and clothing.
- it is inevitable that children from families that are living in poverty will find different challenges at school to those faced by those children coming from families that are not living in poverty or are well off.
- The poor level of speech and language development among youngest children School dinners, uniforms are the biggest costs associated with school.
- Although government policy towards keeping the cost of primary school uniforms as low as possible. Sending children home, or excluding them from trips, if they do not have the full uniform worse the situation faced by children from families living in poverty.
The children in advantaged schools were more focused on education, while those from the poorer schools were more focused on life. Children in disadvantaged schools understood the real costs of going to school and the struggle faced by parents to provide even small amounts of money. Thus, for children growing up in poverty, life itself is a struggle and their keen awareness and worries about non-educational issues – like clothes for non-uniform days, the walk to and from school, vandalism and so on – mean they have less energy to focus on their education. By contrast, better-off children can take life for granted and can concentrate on using education as a way to get on in the world without worrying about material things. This does have an impact on how children experience school.

School trips are important in broadening outlooks and providing new experiences, especially for the children who do not get a family holiday. However, their cost can vary a lot. Some families may struggle to pay for even the cheapest school trips, particularly if they have several children in school. While the younger children did not think too much about the cost of school trips, the older children were aware that they could be a drain on their parents’ budgets.

There is also importance of out-of-school activities for educational outcomes but it is burden for poor children’ parents

References