



Education of Socially Disadvantaged Children

The current issue of the newsletter focuses on 'Education of Socially Disadvantaged Children'. This issue includes articles written in the above context by various experts and researchers from different member-institutions from China, India, Malaysia, Pakistan, Philippines and South Korea. Apart from these articles, the issue also includes a section of important news and events in the context of these member-institutions.

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The current newsletter starts with an article from China which discusses the educational situation of disadvantaged children of the country and the measures adopted by the Ministry of Education, together with relevant departments, the Party Central Committee, local governments and schools at all levels to focus on building a high-quality student funding system, and ensuring that no student is dropped out of school due to family financial difficulties. The article enunciates that in the past ten years, more than a billion students have been brought under the purview of state funding.

The second and third articles, both in the Indian context, discusses the progress that has been made by the country in terms of the education of socially disadvantaged children. While the former underlines that the Central as well as the State Governments have rolled out several policy initiatives in order to ensure equitable access in education, especially for the disadvantaged groups, the latter elaborates on the equitable and inclusive provisions in education policies in place to promote an inclusive education system. It traces these policies to the formative years of the country post-independence. The education policies of 1968 and 1986 focused on promoting the socio-economic and educational needs of the SCs and STs with special provisions. However, the fact that ensuring equity is one of the major areas covered under the NEP 2020 proves that there is still a long way to go in addressing this issue.

Written in the context of Malaysia, the fourth article discusses the context of the Malaysian Education

Blueprint 2013-25, which outlines the action plan for inclusive education. The blueprint that has been prepared by the Malaysian Ministry of Education is committed to moving more students with special needs towards the inclusive education programmes and raising the overall quality of the provisions.

The subsequent article has also discussed the situation of socially disadvantaged children in Malaysia with special focus on the challenges faced by students in the state of Sabah. The article further elaborates the education system in Sabah which is also home to socially disadvantaged students who face unique challenges in accessing quality education, and suggests potential solutions to overcome these challenges and ensure a brighter future for these students.

The sixth article uses an anecdotal evidence to bring out the ground reality of the educational needs of diverse socially disadvantaged groups, including girls, transgender, children with special needs, and refugees in Pakistan. The author underlines that there is an urgent need to design a new education strategy to ensure that no student is left behind.

The next article discusses the patterns of marginalisation that still exists in various aspects of the Philippine society. The author notes that marginalised children in Philippines include those coming from financially poor circumstances, those who are forced to work, children with disabilities, children in areas affected by conflict, children in remote areas and children from indigenous groups. There have been concerted effort towards bringing these children under the purview of the schooling system, from the part of various branches of the government. However, there is still a need for multi-sectoral and multi-dimensional efforts, with strong collaboration between and among stakeholders, to counter the societal and environmental factors that influence the development and education of marginalised children.

The last article is in the context of South Korea and traces the policy initiatives undertaken by the South Korean government towards bringing socially disadvantaged children within the school and education system. One of the major efforts in this direction was the Education Welfare Investment Priority Area Support Project (renamed Education Welfare Priority Support Project in 2011), which has been in place since 2003. Recent developments like the Covid 19 pandemic, has exposed further rifts and gaps in the educational sector. It is in this light that the Ministry of Education is launching the "Student-Customised Integrated Support" policy, aiming to provide integrated and customised support to disadvantaged students facing complex difficulties.

The articles included in the current issue have drawn upon the issue at hand on a broad level – both in terms of acknowledging its seriousness as well as charting the course of action towards countering and eliminating it. Several measures and policies have been planned and undertaken by each country to alleviate these issues. While the results of these initiatives have been varying in their rate of success, there is no denying the fact that the concise discussions of the policies provided here will enable the stakeholders in comparing and contrasting their approaches and fine tuning them as per their own specific circumstances. It also has to be mentioned with added emphasis that all the countries have made an earnest effort towards the elimination of inequalities and discrepancies faced by socially disadvantaged children in accessing schooling and education, in their own respective societies

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Education of Socially Disadvantaged Children in China

The Ministry of Education, together with relevant departments, thoroughly implement the decision-making and deployment of the Party Central Committee, in supervising and guiding local governments and schools at all levels to focus on building a high-quality student funding system, adhere to the promotion of accurate funding in educational support, and ensure that “no student is dropped out of school due to family financial difficulties”. Presently, student funding is mainly covered by the government, and supplemented by school and social financing. In terms of the funding approaches, student funding is primarily obtained from gratuitous grants and supplemented by paid funding. The student funding mostly goes to students experiencing hardship, and some go to those having excellent academic records, as awards. Student funding covers 28 Central Government-funded projects and combines “award, support, loan, exemption, pay, supplement, and the reduction”. Student funding has supported 150 million people a year and has reached an annual amount of more than 260 billion yuan.

In the past ten years, the total amount of student funding nationwide has exceeded 2 trillion yuan. Among them, the total amount of financial investment has reached 1.45 trillion yuan, accounting for 72 per cent of the total funds. The total investment funds invested by schools and society have reached 0.29 trillion yuan, accounting for 14 per cent of the total funds. Financial institutions have issued a total of 0.27 trillion yuan of national student loans, accounting for nearly 14 per cent of the total funds. The annual funding amount doubled from 132.2 billion yuan in 2012 to 266.8 billion yuan in 2021. The financial investment increased from 102 billion yuan in 2012 to 200.7 billion yuan in 2021, an increase of 97 per cent. Among those, the central government’s financial investment increased from 62.8 billion yuan in 2012 to 123.8 billion yuan in 2021, an increase of 97 per cent. Financial support has continued to grow, forming a funding model with

government investment as the mainstay, and funds from schools and society as an important supplement.

Over the past ten years, we have fully implemented the policy of “two exemptions and one supplement” for compulsory education in urban and rural areas. The scope of “one supplement” has been expanded from boarders with family financial difficulties to non-boarders. The implementation scope of the nutrition improvement plan has achieved full coverage of the former national key counties in poverty alleviation and development. The coverage of tuition exemption for secondary vocational schools, national inspirational scholarships for higher vocational schools, and state grants has been expanded. The number of national scholarships for undergraduate students has increased. The education subsidy policy for retired soldiers has been improved. Preparatory students and graduate students from scientific research institutes and other types of training units and full-time students enrolled in non-military local students enrolled in military academies are all included in the scope of the tertiary education student financial support policy. In the past ten years, nearly 1.3 billion students have been funded. The number of annual financial support has increased from almost 120 million yuan in 2012 to 150 million yuan in 2021, achieving full coverage of “all school sections, all schools, and all students with family financial difficulties”, as the funding policy lists out.

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Education of Socially Disadvantaged Children in Indian Context

Our constitutional provisions embody the spirit of equality for all, with inclusive policies in place post-independence focussing on non-discrimination against the disadvantaged groups along with provision of equal opportunities as a means to empower them economically and socially. Safeguard measures like the reservation policy in public institutions, along with various schemes run by the government, has supported in the upliftment process. Even after 75 years of independence, a lot of distance needs to be traversed to realise the vision laid down in our constitution. Socially disadvantaged groups in India include the Scheduled Castes (SCs), Scheduled Tribes (STs), Minorities and those from the Economically Weaker Sections. As per the 2011 Census, India has over 201 million in SC category that account for 16.6 per cent of the population, and over 104 million in ST category that account for 8.6 per cent of the population.

Education is the only means of emancipation and advancement for those belonging to the socially marginalised and disadvantaged groups, and there are strong constitutional mechanisms in place in support of educational advancement of these students. But the question is how long we will take to educate these children so as to fulfil our constitutional commitment. The Kothari Commission (1964-66) had outlined that ‘one of the important social objectives of education is to equalise opportunity, enabling the backward or underprivileged class to use education as a means to improve their condition.’ It is important therefore, that equal educational opportunities to every citizen – including those belonging to disadvantaged groups – should be seen as the only way for building a more inclusive and just society.

As a part of the equalisation process, the policy support for education of the disadvantaged groups has been rolled out by the Central as well as the State Governments. The RTE Act 2009 is an inclusive step in mainstreaming those belonging to the marginalised groups, and has several entitlements for those belonging to economically weaker sections. The Samagra Shiksha is an integrated scheme at the school education level for children

belonging to SC, ST, Minority community and transgender. The Special Focus Districts (SFDs), identified on the basis of SC, ST and Minority population distribution along with low levels of school participation and retention, get special focus for improvement. The NEP 2020 also focuses on bridging the social category gaps in access, participation and learning outcomes in both school and higher education. The KGBVs are residential schools for girls belonging to the disadvantaged groups from Class VI to XII. The provision of reservation as per the government norms is also applicable for students with 15 per cent seats for Scheduled Caste and 7.5 per cent seats for Scheduled Tribes reserved in all government run educational institutions across all levels of schooling. Scholarships and fellowships from the school education up to PhD level are awarded to meritorious students belonging to weaker sections. Many other interventions are also in the pipeline as a part of the newly launched National Educational Policy (NEP 2020) to support the upliftment of the disadvantaged groups.

Analysing school statistics, it is clearly discernible that there has been considerable progress in the school participation levels over the last few decades, wherein elementary Gross Enrolments Ratios (GER) for SC students have increased from 53 per cent in 1991-92 to 110 per cent in 2021-22, and GER for ST students have increased from 42 per cent to 103 per cent for the same period. The trends reflect an encouraging picture with improved overall participation rates. An important aspect visible in the 2021-22 UDISE Plus database is that the GER were higher for female SC students across all the four levels of schooling. The number of those leaving the education cycle is highest amongst the marginalised groups, but data trends clearly show that the dropout rates for SC and ST students have declined substantially during the past ten years.

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Equitable and Inclusive Provisions in Education Policies in India

Education is the fundamental right of every child. Indian Constitution promises equal rights to every child in having access to education and to create conducive eco-system for ensuring participation and completion of school education. Translating the constitutional provisions, the national policies and government schemes provide for equitable quality education to all sections of society, including education of the disadvantaged groups.

The disadvantaged groups in India encompass socially, economically and educationally deprived population, mainly comprising of Scheduled Castes (SCs), Scheduled Tribes (STs), Other Backward Classes (OBCs), girls, Persons with Disabilities (PwD), Out of School Children (OoSC), Below Poverty Line (BPL) and Economically Weaker Section (EWS). In addition, there are six religious minorities under which Muslims and Buddhists have the lowest literacy achievement.

The efforts of Indian government towards ensuring equitable and inclusive education in the country can be traced back to the formative years of the country post-independence. The education policies of 1968 and 1986 under the Directive Principles of State Policy (Article 46) of the constitution focused on promoting the socio-economic and educational needs of the SCs and STs with special provisions, are some of these significant measures. In addition, residential institutions like Navodaya Vidyalaya Samiti (NVS), Ashram schools, Ekalavya schools were established and incentives like fee exemption, free textbooks, scholarships, free meals, free bicycles, free uniforms and textbooks were provided to ensure higher retention rate during school education. Subsequently, Right to Education (RTE 2009) ensured higher enrolment rate through 25 per cent reservation in private and unaided schools. Education programmes like Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan (SSA), Schemes for Infrastructure Development of Private Aided/Unaided

Minority Institutes (IDMI), and Strengthening for Providing Quality Education in Madrassas (SPQEM) further ensured easy access to primary school education. At secondary school level, education schemes like Rashtriya Madhyamik Shiksha Abhiyan (RMSA), Inclusive Education for Disabled at Secondary Stage (IEDSS), Incentives to Girls at Secondary Stage, National Merit-cum-Means Scholarship, Financial Assistance for Appointment of Language Teachers, Adolescence Education Programme, Girls Hostel, Model School, ICT at School, Vocationalisation of Secondary Education, Model School under Public-Private Partnership (PPP) mode have been operational to enhance the access and quality parameters.

In 2018, the education schemes of SSA, RMSA and Teacher Education were merged into one namely, Samagra Shiksha, followed by National Education Policy (NEP) 2020 focusing on the goals of access, equity and quality for all children. However, in spite of the continuous efforts through policies and programmes, it has been observed that there remains a huge gap between the policy and practice. Access to education is achievable but equity and quality parameters bear contextual underpinnings. A merely right-based approach and various policies, programmes and schemes for disadvantaged groups are not sufficient as the issue of social discrimination is much deeper. NEP 2020 aligned itself with Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and visualises the learning of all children with equity and inclusivity.

Over the years, it has become evident that there remains a huge need for better policies for affirmative action and creating an inclusive environment with the institutionalisation of these policies. The reservation policy in admission and recruitment addressed equity issues to a very large extent. Yet the treatment of the disadvantaged groups, particularly SCs and STs, need to

go a long way in ascertaining equity. Very often, there is a lack of awareness regarding the available schemes for which new mechanisms of information sharing may be evolved by involving the stakeholders. Better accountability and monitoring mechanisms are required for the operationalisation of schemes and scholarships to all sections, in order to make them more effective. Further unified Management Information System (MIS) for tracking the educational progress of disadvantaged groups from pre-primary to higher education could be made an integral part of the system.

The goal of equitable access to quality education as articulated in NEP 2020 has given a new hope for reaching the education goals of equity and inclusion of all groups through SEZs. This can be made more effective by making context-specific action plans and programmes based on the academic credentials of the student irrespective of the social identity.

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Educational Disparities across Communities in Malaysia

Education has been described as the most important modifiable social determinant of health, and has shown to increase healthy behaviours and improve health outcomes across the lifespan. Education policies may partially compensate for disadvantage in schools. They can, for instance, provide more educational resources and staff to these schools, or offer incentives to the best teachers to encourage them to work and remain in the schools where they are most needed. The situation regarding special needs education varies enormously from one country to another. There are, for example, countries that have well established systems of special schools for those with specific impairments. However, especially in developing countries, indications are that the high cost of special schools means, in practice, that only a small minority of students, usually urban elite, benefit from them. The vast majority of students with special needs, especially in rural areas, are provided with no services whatsoever. Indeed, in many developing countries, it is estimated that less than 1 per cent of children with special educational needs are included in existing educational framework.

Education is the foundation of children's future life and ability to work; therefore, assisting disadvantaged children in learning how to independently improve their livelihoods is imperative. Most parents see education as the foundation for their children's better lives, and rightfully so. It is widely-held as a social leveler, a way to reduce growing divides in opportunities and outcomes across different strata of society. Children who experience learning disadvantages due to family issues are becoming a crucial concern to the society. Ensuring social mobility and enabling social integration are today's key challenges. These issues provide the backdrop for the communities we focus on: children and youth, persons with disabilities, and seniors. Women and men should have equal influence on the design of educational programmes and should equally be able to access them. Special efforts should be made to encourage

the participation of girls and women with disabilities in educational programmes. Article 28 of Malaysia's Persons with Disabilities Act 2008 affirms that children with special needs should be given the necessary support to "facilitate their full and equal participation in education". Based on international best practices and current national policy, the Malaysian Ministry of Education is committed to moving more students with special needs towards the inclusive education programme and raising the overall quality of the provision. The Malaysian Education Blueprint 2013-25 outlines the action plan for inclusive education in "Improving Access in Preschool Education: Inclusive Education Programme (IEP) Initiative." Inclusive education means giving each and every child an opportunity to learn at their local school with enough support for them to reach their full potential. This does not require special institutions, care or expensive materials. It simply means that all students should have the opportunity to receive individualised services and approaches to learning.

In combination with school administration and teachers, the project establishes a dense teaching and counseling network to assist students who have difficulties in adapting to studying normally. It comprehensively assists the disadvantaged children in improving their education and thinking mindset, and tackling problems they may face in the learning stages. While addressing health outcomes associated with education, one has to be aware that education plays a crucial role in individual and community health and the endeavour to implement public policies. Addressing educational issues will, therefore, reduce health disparities and promote health equity across communities.

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Education for Socially Disadvantaged Students in Sabah, Malaysia: Overcoming Challenges for their Brighter Future

Sabah, a state in Malaysia, known for its rich biodiversity and cultural diversity, is also home to socially disadvantaged students who face unique challenges in accessing quality education. These students, who come from low-income families, remote areas, minority groups, and other marginalised backgrounds, often encounter barriers that hinder their educational opportunities and outcomes.

One of the main challenges faced by the students in Sabah is poverty. According to the Malaysia Education Blueprint 2013-25, Sabah has a higher poverty rate compared to the national average, with some districts having poverty rates as high as 19.5 per cent. Poverty can affect a student's ability to afford school-related expenses such as uniforms, textbooks, transportation, and tuition fees, which can result in lower school attendance and participation. Poverty can also affect a student's living conditions, nutrition, and health, which can impact their physical and cognitive development, and ultimately their ability to learn effectively in school.

Another challenge faced by the students in Sabah is access to quality education, especially in remote and underserved areas. Sabah is known for its diverse geography, with many remote villages and settlements located in challenging terrains such as mountains, rivers, and islands. These areas often lack adequate infrastructure, including schools, transportation, and educational resources, which can result in limited access to quality education. Limited access to quality teachers, curriculum, and learning materials can hinder the academic progress of these students and widen the education gap between rural and urban areas in Sabah.

Furthermore, the students in Sabah may face cultural and language barriers, discrimination, and marginalisation based on their ethnicity, religion, or indigenous status. Sabah is home to various indigenous groups such as Kadazan-Dusun, Murut, Bajau, and others; each with its unique cultural heritage and language. Students from these minority groups may face challenges in navigating the education system that may not always cater to

their cultural and linguistic needs. Discrimination and marginalisation based on ethnicity or religion can also affect the social and emotional well-being of these students, impacting their educational experiences and outcomes.

Additionally, the students in Sabah also face social and emotional challenges such as bullying, peer pressure, and low self-esteem. These challenges can impact their mental well-being and academic performance, and may be compounded by the lack of support systems and resources to cope with these issues. Students in remote areas may also face challenges in accessing mental health services and counseling, further exacerbating their social and emotional challenges.

To address the challenges faced by the students in Sabah, collaborative efforts from various stakeholders are essential. The government, NGOs, schools, communities, and families must work together to ensure that these students have equal access to quality education and opportunities for success. One of the key solutions is to address poverty through targeted financial assistance programmes, school feeding programmes, and provision of free or subsidised educational resources. These initiatives can help alleviate the financial burden on socially disadvantaged students and ensure that they have the necessary resources to participate fully in the education system. It is also crucial to ensure that these initiatives are sustainable and reach the most vulnerable students in remote and underserved areas of Sabah.

Improving access to quality education in remote areas of Sabah is also crucial. This can be achieved through measures such as building more schools in remote areas, improving transportation infrastructure, providing access to digital learning resources, and recruiting and retaining quality teachers in rural schools.

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Education of Socially Disadvantaged Children in Pakistan

Maria, a thirteen-year-old resident of an urban slum in Karachi, is one of the thirty previously out-of-school students aged 7 to 15 enrolled in an accelerated primary education programme at a temporary Non-Formal Basic Education (NFBE) centre in their neighbourhood. Like many of her peers, this is Maria's second chance after having dropped out early from her previous school. But the road to education has not been easy for Maria. She explains that her family is rather poor and they make bedsheets for a living. Maria herself used to work with her mother and other siblings before enrolling at the NFBE centre. When she started studying, her father got angry because she stopped earning. He asks Maria's mother to stop giving her food, as she is only wasting time. "My mother often cries about my situation and asks me to leave school, but I know she is my only support and one day, I will make her proud," she adds.

Insertion of Article 25-A in the Constitution of Pakistan in 2010 has made the provision of free and compulsory quality education for children like Maria aged between 5 and 16 years a constitutional obligation of the state. However, the intersection of discriminatory markers such as poverty, gender, ethnicity, disability, geographical location, and displacement among many others coupled with the deficit of educational provision complicates the realisation of this constitutional obligation resulting in the exclusion of millions, mostly girls, from the mainstream education system. Despite the gradual improvement in enrolment and retention across all levels of education, the number of children who are not enrolled in schools continues to elevate, indicating an untenable situation that has been at the centre of discourse around equitable access to education for the most marginalised in the country.

The anecdotal evidence from our interactions with the most marginalised children and communities confirms Yasunaga's (2014) conclusion that the current structure of formal education excludes specific groups of children owing to their inability to follow the fixed duration,

hours, terms and age-related regulations. This realisation among the key state and non-state stakeholders in the country has directed their attention to exploring alternate learning pathways to diversify the provision of education. Reflections on these programmes during the 2022 National Conference on Out-Of-School Children (OOSC) in Nigeria pointed towards making these initiatives cost-effective, relevant and responsive to the opportunity cost concerns. Following the expansive provision of an accelerated primary school curriculum, the province of Sindh has also launched a middle-tech programme that combines elementary school education packaged with skill development. Ashraf D. notes that to this end, insights from research suggest learning accelerates if learners are taught through a more compact curriculum (2019). The study further reveals that ongoing quality professional development support to Advanced Learning Programme (ALP) teachers could facilitate their understanding of the technical dimensions of the accelerated curriculum leading to its effective implementation. The OOSC 2022 conference delegates deliberated on the responsiveness of existing OOSC policy and practice initiatives and delivery modalities to the educational needs of diverse socially disadvantaged groups, including girls, transgender, children with special needs, and refugees and highlighted the need for designing a multi-year education strategy. Designing and implementing such an inclusive education strategy would need firm conviction of equity and inclusion, specialised knowledge, and human and material resources, including technology-driven solutions that also necessitate synergy and collaboration between state and non-state actors.

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Education of Children from Socially Disadvantaged Groups in Pakistan

It is an accepted fact that education is the backbone of Pakistani society because it plays a crucial role for not only socio-economic development but also helps in capacity building of individuals, and accelerates economic growth by producing skilled manpower. Education also provides pavement for reduction in poverty, inequality among different segments of society, and consequently improves levels of health and life expectancy. Moreover, human capital can only be produced by providing educational facilities to the masses. Realising the impact of education on the socio-economic development of the society, the constitution of Islamic Republic of Pakistan accepted education as a fundamental right as per Article 25-A. The successive governments have taken every possible step to provide educational facility to the masses irrespective of their social and economic conditions across the country. But different segments of the society such as socially disadvantaged children belonging to socially and economically backward segment of the community have not been able to access schools in various parts of the country because of multiple factors, including financial constraint, social hardships, geographical conditions and problems within the families. Consequently, around 22.5 million children are still out of school.

The National Education Policy Framework 2018 was developed on five important pillars to bring improvement in education system for all segments of society, including disadvantaged children across the country. These include (a) National Cohesion by establishing close coordination and collaboration among national and provincial governments on key aspects of uniformity and quality in education for all segments - (b) The Inter-Provincial Education Ministers Committee (IPEMC) plays an active and decision-making role in setting common standards to enhance national unity, (c) Effective use of using valid, timely and reliable information for decision making and taking

prompt action, (d). Improved Governance and Financial Efficiency of the education system by streamlining to deliver result-oriented actions required at the federal and provincial level, (e) Innovative use of Technology using the power of ICT to maximise implementation and achieve results, and (f) Active Communication Campaign to promote equity and quality in education across the country. These policy interventions indicate that Government of Pakistan is taking every possible step for providing educational facilities to the socially disadvantaged groups. However, there is still need to gear up the national impetus to address the quality of public sector schooling by devising accountability mechanism required for achieving global commitment of SDGs to ensure equitable and inclusive quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all. Federal and provincial/regional governments have introduced education sector reforms from time-to-time in their respective area to fulfill international commitments and achieve targets of SDGs, which are still difficult because of the lack of infrastructure and financial constraints for provision of inclusive education.

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The January-June 2023 issue of ANTRIEP Newsletter will focus on the theme **‘Language of Instruction at the School Level.’**

Patterns of Marginalisation among Children and Status of their Education in Philippines

Marginalisation is a phenomenon that remains evident in the different sectors of the Philippine society. People are marginalised when they are systematically excluded from meaningful participation in society's activities. Such exclusion prevents them from gaining their basic rights (Jenson, 2000) such as education. As defined by UNESCO (2010), marginalisation pertains to situations of acute and persistent disadvantage in education. Young children belonging to marginalised groups also tend to be those who face economic, social, cultural, or political situations that restrict them from receiving quality early childhood care and development, and enjoying its outcomes. Ingrained economic, political, and social processes that operate within the different spheres of society tend to create, maintain, and widen the social inequalities that underlie marginalisation (SEAMEO INNOTECH, 2021). These inequalities linked with wealth, gender, location, language, ethnicity, disability, and other factors are more likely to interact with and magnify each other, which create multiple layers of marginalisation that perpetuate social exclusion. However, within and across societies, identifying who the marginalised are, may differ based on their national and local context (UNESCO, 2010 in SEAMEO INNOTECH, 2021).

In the Philippines, early grade children from marginalised groups include children in poverty, working children, children with disabilities, children in areas affected by conflict, and children in far-flung areas and children from indigenous groups. Children in poverty come from families with income below the poverty line and hence, do not meet the minimum food and non-food basic needs which pose risk to nutrition and survival. Moreover, children belonging to poor households lack safe and adequate shelter which serves as an additional risk in their daily lives. Poverty is linked to poor school participation. Data shows that a significant decrease in the enrollment rate of

kindergarten was recorded in Regions III, IV-A, V, VIII, IX, X, XI, XIII, and NCR. The most significant recorded decrease in enrollment was in Bangsamoro Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao (BARMM) (Luz, 2020 in SEAMEO INNOTECH, 2021). An estimated 12.4 per cent of the 26.6 million Filipino children aged 5-17 are working. A majority of these children are boys, working in a hazardous environment and/or more than allowable work hours (SOC, 2011). These working children are deprived of learning opportunities, valuable time for rest and play, and holistic development which makes them vulnerable to persistent disadvantage. Children in areas affected by conflict are those exposed to a conflict situation, which led them to drop out of school. The conflict situation makes children susceptible to trauma and deprives them of their right to education. Children in far-flung areas and children from indigenous groups are those who are in remote areas and do not have access to formal schools. The population of children belonging to Indigenous Peoples (IPs) groups in the Philippines is estimated at 2.5 million. The lack of disaggregated data, particularly on ECCD-age children, implies the invisibility of these children and emphasises their marginalisation (SEAMEO INNOTECH, 2021).

The Philippine Government and its different sectors such as the Departments of Education, Social Welfare and Development, Health, National Nutrition Council, the Union of Local Authorities of the Philippines, and the Early Childhood Care and Development Council do not turn blind eyes to the layers of marginalisation being experienced by the Filipino children. They work collaboratively in advancing children's holistic growth and development by focusing on the provision of health and nutrition, early education, psychological, spiritual, and emotional well-being services, and the full range of the basic holistic needs of young children in consideration of varied forms of marginalisation in the country. The different programmes for children in the country include Daycare, the National Child Development

Centre, Clinic-based ECCD, Home-based ECCD, Free Pre-primary and Primary education, Multigrade programme, Every Child a Reader Programme, Indigenous Peoples Education and Special Education, Islam-responsive Curriculum, School Health and Nutrition Programme, Child Protection, and Pantawid Pamilyang Pilipino Programme (4Ps). Given the concerted efforts of the different sectors in the Philippine society, addressing the layers of marginalisation among children in the Philippines requires multi-sectoral and multi-dimensional efforts, strong collaboration between

and among stakeholders as well as responsive measures to target societal and environmental factors that influence the development and education of marginalised children.

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The Educational Welfare Policy for Socially Disadvantaged Children in South Korea

In Korea, providing national support for socially disadvantaged children has been considered critical. Since the foreign exchange crisis of 1997, the economic downturn has exacerbated educational disparities among social classes, which has led to an increased need for national-level educational support for disadvantaged groups. To address educational inequalities, the Korean government has focused on enhancing the public nature of education by providing free education from elementary to high school and offering necessary education expenses to low-income students. In addition to these basic public education policies, the Korean government has consistently strengthened its efforts to provide tailored support for the educational development of socially disadvantaged children at the national level.

One of the flagship national policies is the Education Welfare Investment Priority Area Support Project (renamed Education Welfare Priority Support Project in 2011), which has been in place since 2003. This project aims to alleviate the impact of intergenerational poverty by providing academic, cultural, psychological, emotional, and welfare support to schools located in high-poverty areas. To achieve this, school social workers are placed in targeted schools, and schools collaborate with local communities to connect various resources for disadvantaged students. The project targets low-income students, children of single-parents, children of North Korean defectors, children from multicultural families, and students with special education needs. As of 2022, around 55 per cent (6,626) of schools participate in the project, and approximately 13 per cent (690,637 students) of students nationwide have benefited from it.

Despite these national efforts, recent changes in the social environment have highlighted the need for new directions in education welfare policies. First, the COVID-19 pandemic and its impact has worsened

the academic and psychological difficulties of disadvantaged children, necessitating support to make up for their accumulated academic losses. Second, a more integrated approach is required to respond to the complex problems of students such as poor basic academic skills, child abuse, school violence, and psychological and emotional issues, beyond providing individual services. Third, there is a need for more educational support to address the growing diversity of marginalised groups, including North Korean defectors, immigrants, multicultural families, and foreign workers. Fourth, it is crucial to enhance the expertise and collaboration of relevant experts such as teachers, counselors, school social workers, and workers in local community.

To address the aforementioned challenges, the Ministry of Education is launching the "Student-Customised Integrated Support" policy, starting in 2023. This initiative aims to provide integrated and customised support to disadvantaged students facing complex difficulties. The ministry plans to create a collaborative team within schools and establish a supporting system to identify and aid potential at-risk students who may be in welfare blind spots. Currently, 19 pilot district offices of education and 96 leading schools are operating nationwide. Furthermore, a support centre has been established within the Korean Educational Development Institute to provide continuous field support and research. If the project is successfully established in the future, it will play a significant role in building a new education welfare system that can provide support to all disadvantaged children in need.

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News from ANTRIEP Member Institutions (January-June 2022)

Australian Council for Educational Research (ACER)

Australia

- More than 2000 students from 75 schools around Australia took part in the Global Academic Challenge – a new initiative designed to stretch high-performing students by applying their skills and knowledge beyond the traditional curriculum in March 2022.
- In April 2022, ACER and LEGO Foundation developed a framework to help improve the quality of learning through play at primary school.

Bangladesh Rural Advancement Committee (BRAC)

Bangladesh

- BRAC University has been ranked GLOBAL TOP 50 for the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), in May 2022
- Organised a research dissemination event, “Learning Loss Study and Bridge School Evaluation” at BRAC’s head office in Mohakhali.
- The Office of Career Services and Alumni Relations (OCSAR), BRAC University organised a session titled “Shikho Digital Learning with BRAC University”.

International Institute for Educational Planning (IIEP)

France

- International Institute for Educational Planning (IIEP) conducted a seminar on “Key experiences of initial teacher training in Latin America” in February 2022.

- IIEP organised the Regional Workshop in French on “management of education quality in Africa” from 21-25 February 2022.
- IIEP announced an online training course on “Gender-sensitive educational planning in Portuguese” in April 2022.

National Council of Educational Research and Training (NCERT)

India

- A two-day international webinar on “Toys and games to play, make and learn” was organised on 20-21 January, 2022 by NCERT under the aegis of the Ministry of Education.
- NCERT organised the 47th and 48th Jawaharlal Nehru National Science, Mathematics and Environment Exhibition (JNNSMEE) for Children from 8-11 February 2022.
- A five-day online training programme was conducted from 21-25 March 2022 on the topic “Digital Infrastructure for School Education (DIKSHA)”.

National Institute of Educational Planning and Administration (NIEPA)

India

- NIEPA conducted an online seminar on “Schools and Mental Health: Understanding the Fundamentals” Live Streaming on School Leadership Development on PMeVidhya, in January 2022.

- NIEPA organised an Orientation Workshop on “Education of Disadvantaged Children and Economically Weaker Sections at the Elementary Level: Policy Issues and Programme Intervention”, in January 2022.
- NIEPA conducted a workshop on “Leadership for Equity and Excellence: Capacity Building of School Principals from Eklavya Model Residential Schools” in February 2022.
- In March 2022, NIEPA conducted an Orientation-cum-Workshop on “Governance and Management of Quality Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) in India”.

The Aga Khan University (AKU) *Pakistan*

- In March 2022, Aga Khan University’s Institute of Educational Development (AKU-IED) in Pakistan held a two-day conference titled “Mathematics Unites: Connecting, Disciplines, Cultures, and Communities”.
- Aga Khan University in partnership with the Tanzania government initiatives on Early Childhood Development (ECD), conducted a two-day policy makers workshop at the Aga Khan Community Centre in Tanzania, in June 2022.

The Aga Khan Education Service (AKES) *Pakistan*

- The Aga Khan Foundation (AKF) launched The Learning Hub, a free online platform aimed at strengthening practitioners and empowering communities in the field of international development, in January 2022.
- Two new high profile centres for Early Childhood Development (ECD) have been inaugurated by the Aga Khan Education Service, Pakistan in Chitral.

Korean Educational Development Institute (KEDI) *South Korea*

- The Korea Educational Development Institute (KEDI) announced the results of the "KEDI POLL 2021," a comprehensive opinion survey on education, conducted as part of their basic research project in January 2022.
- Conducted the "2022 School Education (Support) Office Personnel Training" to enhance the understanding and capacity of educational support personnel for students with disabilities, ensuring continuity of academic progress and safeguarding their right to education in March 2022.
- The Ministry of Education and the KEDI launched the “2022 School Education Infringement Prevention UCC Contest” aimed at safeguarding school activities and fostering a culture of respect, in June 2022.

Vietnam Institute of Educational Sciences (VNIES) *Vietnam*

- The Vietnam Institute of Science and Education (VNIES), in collaboration with the Israeli Embassy in Vietnam and Yad Vashem, held a scientific seminar with the theme "Teaching and learning about the Holocaust" in February 2022.
- The VNIES, in collaboration with UNICEF Vietnam, organised an international conference "Educational technology: Towards a sustainable future" in March 2022.
- The VNIES, in collaboration with the American RTI Research Institute, organised a training session on “Integrating learning through play into primary education” from 13-19 April 2022.

ANTRIEP Member Institutions

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| <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Australian Council for Educational Research (ACER), 19 Prospect Hill Road, Private Bag – 55, Camberwell, Melbourne, VICTORIA-3124, Australia (www.acer.edu.au) 2. Balitbang Dikbud Centre for Policy Research (Puslit Penelitian), Office for Educational and Culture Research and Development (Balitbang Dikb), Ministry of Education and Culture, Jalan Jenderal Sudirman, Senayan, JAKARTA-12070, Indonesia. (www.kemdikbud.go.id) 3. Bangladesh Rural Advancement Committee (BRAC) 75, Mohakhali Commercial Area, DHAKA – 1212, Bangladesh (www.brac.net) 4. Campaign for Popular Education (CAMPE), 5/14, Humayun Road, Mohammadpur, DHAKA – 1207, Bangladesh (www.campebd.org) 5. Centre for Multi-Disciplinary Development Research (CMDR), R.S. No. 9A2, Plot No. 82, Dr. B. R. Ambedkar Nagar, Near Yalakki Shetter Colony, Lakamanahalli, Dharwad-580004 KARNATAKA, India (www.cmdr.ac.in) 6. National Institute of Education (NIE), P.O. Box 21, High Level Road, Maharagama, Sri Lanka (www.nie.lk) 7. Institut Aminuddin Baki (National Institute of Educational Management and Leadership), Malaysia Education Ministry, Value Education Complex 71760 Bandar Enstek, Negeri Sembilan, Malaysia (http://iab.moe.edu.my) 8. International Institute for Educational Planning (IIEP), 7-9 rue Eugene-Delacroix, 75116 PARIS, France (www.iiep.unesco.org) 9. Korean Educational Development Institute (KEDI), 7, Gyohak-ro, Deoksan-eup, Jincheon-gun, Chungcheongbuk-do, South Korea (www.kedi.re.kr) 10. National Academy for Educational Management (NAEM), Dhanmodi, DHAKA – 1205, Bangladesh (www.naem.gov.bd) 11. National Centre for Educational Development (NCED), Sanothimi, BHAKTAPUR 2050, Nepal (www.nced.gov.np) | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 12. National Council of Educational Research and Training (NCERT), Sri Aurobindo Marg, NEW DELHI - 110 016 (India) (www.ncert.nic.in) 13. National Institute of Education (NIE), 80, Preah Nordon Blvd, Phnom Penh-120207, Cambodia (www.nie.edu.kh) 14. National Institute of Educational Planning and Administration (NIEPA), 17-B, Sri Aurobindo Marg, New Delhi –110016, India (www.niepa.ac.in) 15. Pakistan Institute of Education, Ministry of Federal Education and Professional Training, Taleemi Chowk, G-8/1, ISLAMABAD-44000, Pakistan (http://aepam.edu.pk) 16. Research Centre for Educational Innovation and Development (CERID), Tribhuvan University, G.P.O. Box 2161, Balkhu, KATHMANDU, Nepal (www.cerid.org) 17. Institute of Human Resource Development (SIHRD), Shanghai Academy of Educational Sciences 21 Chaling Road, SHANGHAI, P.R.C.-200032, China 18. South-East Asian Ministers of Education Organisation Regional Centre for Educational Innovation and Technology, SEAMEO INNOTECH P.O. Box 207, Commonwealth Avenue, U.P. Diliman, Quezon City 1101, Philippines (www.seameo-innotech.org) 19. State Institute of Educational Management & Training (SIEMAT), 25, Sir P.C. Banerjee Road, Allenganj, Prayagraj-211002, ALLAHABAD, Uttar Pradesh, India (www.siematup.org) 20. The Aga Khan Education Service, Pakistan (AKES,P) 1-5/ B-VII, Federal B Area, Karimabad, KARACHI – 75950, Pakistan (www.akdn.org/akes) 21. The Aga Khan University - Institute for Educational Development, (AKU-IED), 1-5/B-VII, Federal B. Area Karimabad, KARACHI-75950, Pakistan (http://www.aku.edu/iedpk) 22. Vietnam Institute of Educational Sciences (VNIES), Centre for Higher and Vocational Education Studies 101, Tran Hung Dao Hoan Kiem HANOI CITY, Vietnam (www.vnies.edu.vn) |
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Edited by Prof. Madhumita Bandyopadhyay on behalf of the Focal Point, ANTRIEP and published by the Registrar, National Institute of Educational Planning and Administration, 17-B, Sri Aurobindo Marg, New Delhi-110016. Processed/printed by the Publication Unit, NIEPA at M/s Viba Press Pvt. Ltd., Okhla Industrial Area, Phase-II, New Delhi-110020, India.