

REPORT

EMPOWERING GRASSROOTS DEMOCRACY & ASHA PARIVAR CONVENTION

“A workshop for activists and students of social movements offered by Asha Ashram and the Convention of Asha Parivar”

14th to 19th May, 2010, Friday to Wednesday

Venue: Asha Ashram, Village Lalpur, Post Atrauli, District Hardoi, U.P., India

Schedule

Date and Day	Subject	Speakers
14 th May, Fri.	Climate Change	Abdhesh/Rashmi Gangwar, Centre for Environment Education
15 th May, Sat.	NREGS and Governance	Anurag Yadav and Amod Kumar, IAS officers
16 th May, Sun.	Terrorism, Naxalism and International Politics	Ajit Sahi, Tehelka and Advocate Mohammed Shoab
17 th May, Mon.	Right to Education Act	Madhu Prasad, Delhi University and Sarwat Ali, Jamia Millia Islamia, both associated with All India Forum for Right to Education (AIF-RTE)
18 th May, Tue	Asha Parivar Convention RTI, PDS, NREGS, Gender Equality, Human Rights, Communal Harmony, India Pakistan Peace, Terrorism and Naxalism	Nandlal, Keshav Chand, Jayashankar Pandey, Arvind Murti, Mamta Singh, Mahesh, S.R. Darapuri, Yugal Kishore Shashtri
19 th May, Wed.	Public Meeting on Right to Food	Leaders of various political parties and social activists

Programme Coordinator: Sandeep Pandey, Telephone: 91 522 2347365, ashaashram@yahoo.com

“14th May, Fri ,Climate Change,Abdhesh/Rashmi Gangwar, Centre for Environment Education”

The first day of work shop started with the very important topic , that was climate change ,the key speaker was Mr. Abdhesh gangwar , from CENTRE FOR ENVIORNMENT EDUCATION , first of all he spoke about the relevance of natural assets in human life , he deliberated on the relation of one generation with next generation and talked about the responsibilities or duties and right respectively , Mr. Gangwar said that we cant give those assets what we have got from our ancestor , if we are not giving such assets to our children we are doing injustice to them so our responsibilities toward our next generation is much , because present generation have spoiled much in comparison to other .

In the same line Mr. Gangwar spoke about the relation between the development and environment , he said that both must be parallel to each other , he quoted “living planet index” report which comprises 30 year data about the earth and which specifically talks about the health of earth , he said that we are using 25% more of earth or we can say that our consumption is more than 25% more , which is a kind of ecological debt on us . Now the important point is that loss which occurred due to our illegitimate use , how can be reimburse it that is main question. we have to be very cautious about our future generation , doomsday , kaynaat , pralay they all are synonyms of ecological disaster, they all are warning , so we have to give answer for the above question , in that pursuance we have to search problems then we have to seek solution, he said there is two concept they are following :-

1. FOOTPRINT
2. HANDPRINT

FOOTPRINT:- The weight on earth by each individual is his /her footprint , in 3decade it has been increased 3 times from the legitimate footprint , You’ve probably heard of the Ecological Footprint - the metric that allows us to calculate human pressure on the planet and come up with facts, such as: If everyone lived the lifestyle of the average American we would need five planets. So if you know footprint you will be able to know the problem and you will be able to search the solution .

HANDPRINT :-Hand print is a measure of ESD (Education For Sustainable development)action; action that is directed to decrease the human footprint and make the world more sustainable. Hand print is a new tool being developed by Centre for Environment Education (CEE), India to help measure action at different levels. One needs to ask what one does at individual, community, national and global level. The hand print analyses positive impact on the three aspects of sustainability: environment, society and economy. Various questions cover each aspect, investigating on amongst others your use of resources, your social engagement and your awareness of sustainable investments. While the footprint is the negative effect you leave on global resources, hand print is your positive efforts towards sustainability.

More over in the second session of the discussion some relevant fact came out , like in present scenario there is pertinent need of plantation , but no one in the village is ready for this , reason is very simple indian law allow for the plantation but you can not cut tree , without permission and if you do so you have to face music so there is no interest then, why should a villager do plantation, because there is no interest at all.

we have to choose a good lifestyle because it effect environment directly and indirectly .we have to look back towards and we have to take lesson from our ancestor's lifestyle , they were very sensitive towards environment.

“15th May , Sat , NREGS and Governance , Amod Kumar , IAS officers”

Second day of workshop was dedicated to the National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme And Governance , and the key speaker was Mr. Amod Kumar , (I.A.S) , discussion started with the participation of ASHA worker who were representing different district , first of all Ajay Patel from mirzapur shared his experiences , he raised the issues of NREGA ,where he said that in NREGA scheme the ill treatment by the Pradhan towards the workers is very common , he also said that no where in his area , is following mid day meal menu ,in the same line Anil Mishra fro Unnao district said that food is not available according to set parameter by the government , in the name of nutrition there is nothing . Rajesh maurya from Barabanki said that shkisha mitra are not doing their job seriously , and he also raised question about the anomaly related to pension, Mahendra from Bihar said that there is pertinent need to think about the standard of B.P.L(Below Poverty Line), according to their experiences the member of ASHA parivar gave their suggestions, they are following :-

1. There is separate RTI department,so problem of department must be resolve by department itself .
2. We should seek political solution .
3. We should spread awareness i n each district through the member of asha parivar ,
4. We should pressurise court on the issue of stay order in matter of Right To information.
5. We should frame the structure of jababdehi .

Amod kumar said that there is a need for democratic reform , there is need to recognize the valu of our vote , we are not electing good candidate then why we are expecting good from them , he gave the example Shamim Modi , who has been working in Madhya Pradesh and fighting for rights of tribal and other people , she fought election but she could not succeed .so there are good people but we are not ready to elect them as our representative , whatever we are getting in present scenario , we are the only responsible for that , we are selfish . He emphasized to do revolution on the issue of system .he gave an example and said that like if you file F.I.R in other place not in police station , like if you file F.I.R in post office or D.M. Office that would be more efficient and would help in justice delivery system .so need of the hour is to change system . More over we have to seek some other option also like we have to encourage participatory democracy rather then representative , community kitchen service for the student is one such example .

16th May, Sun. Terrorism, Naxalism and International Politics Ajit Sahi, Tehelka and Advocate Mohammed Shoaib.

The third day of work shop was centered around the current problem of Naxalism , Terrorism ,International Politics and role of media , in this discussion the key speaker were Ajeet Sahi ji , Editor Tehlka , Adovocate Shohaib and Rajeev Yadav from PUCL . First of all Mr. Rajeev put forth his opinion about present situation , specifically he stressed on the role of media with relation to these problem , he gave various example the first example he gave is blast in CRPF CAMP in Rampur , uttar pradesh , after the blast next day in news paper the heading was that attack on CRPF camp by the Terrorist , after the investigation of that incident by the PUCL team it was found that there was blast in CRPF camp but it was not done by the terrorist , it happened on 31st December, and CRPF jawan they were celebrating new year in inebriated state ,and in that state they fired on each other but media narrated the incident in a very different manner .he said that media is key factor in deciding various things , he also said that state has special interest to create terror environment, the atmosphere which was created for UPCOCA ,it was pre conceived and pre planned , right from the judiciary to National Human right Commission they all speak same language , nothing is non political in this country , whether they are independent commission , we have fight with this system , there is pertinent need to convene a workshop on how to read news paper because they do not speak truth .

Further ,**Advocate Shohaib** who were fighting case of terrorist suspect Muslim youth , put forth his opinion , he said that NHRC , and other commission they all are established by the government it self so indirectly they are agent of government . He emphasised that why always Muslim are suspected for the terrorists activities an we all know that terrorist has no religion , why we always link Muslim with terrorism . He gave the answer of one question that why Azamgarh youth are so vulnerable , he said that in the reign of Ram Prakash gupt , one survey was conducted by the government and government has all specific data about each and every family of Azam garh , and they use these data in arbitrary manner . He also said that not speak about Azamgarh but some other places like Bareilly ,Saharanpur, Lucknow, Bahraich , Rampur are also in list .

In last Ajeet sahi ji spoke about the role of media in present situation of Naxalism , Terrorism , he also spoke about the sanctity and duties of media . He said that journalism is passion but media is a profession. This situation was not prevalent 15 year back , America had rules regarding media before 15 year , but present scenario we don't saw that media is law abiding mechanism ,media is becoming a means to turn your black money in to white . In India a new concept has just began , the concept of paid news , pay money and get news in your favour , we don't have ethics and we can not follow any model because situation is same all around the world we have example of American media in case of Saddam Hussain trial, to fight this problem we have to change system ,we do not have democracy but election , on present situation the educated class is against the country ,

he also elaborated on the issue of independence of media , why media were independent before 20 year, is there is any law ? Though we have law which gives independence to journalist but it is in static position , we have ACT which is known as **The Working Journalists & other Newspaper Employees (Conditions of service) and**

Miscellaneous Provisions Act, 1955 , this act gives independence to every journalist , no editor can fired him from the job , but the newspaper person who runs news paper agency evolved a mechanism of contract labour which automatically eliminate their all right what they can claim under this act , why they did choose it / because in contract they are paying more than three times more in comparison to the salary what a employee can get under this act . So there should be voice in favour of implementation of this act in India. Now a day commercialisation of every news is on full swing ,and the person who associated with this is accruing more money in comparison to other in a newspaper agency a person who is head of sales department is getting more money in comparison to the Editor of that News paper.

On the issue of Naxalism Mr. Sahi criticised Mr. P.Chidambaram. He said that he is liable for the killing of Tribals as well as innocent soldiers.he created new atmosphere and protrayed tribals as terrorist .

“17th May, Mon.Right to Education Act,Madhu Prasad, Delhi University and Sarwat Ali, Jamia Millia Islamia, both associated with All India Forum for Right to Education (AIF-RTE)”

The subject of discussion of fourth day was RIGHT TO EDUCATION ACT , its practicability and implication , and the key speaker were Madhu Prasad from dehi university and Sarwat ali from jamia milia isalamia ,

discussion started with the notion of education in our indian culture , and what were the difference in present and ancient education system , dr. madhu said that Neo liberal policies of state and its influence is responsible for the discrimination in education system ,she further said that you can not give any thing in the name of education and can not call it education for example Education on mobile is not an option school as portrayed in Abhishek Bacchan commercial advertisement. Recommendations of Kothari Commission (1966) is very necessary to keep in mind which specifically supports common school system , education would not far away from any child if school is not far away from his reach ,

whether our new act furnish our all needs related to education ? Let us examine.

The implementation of the Act is being publicized as a revolutionary step. Government claims that due to this Act all the children of this country will be educated. But there is no truth in this. The facts given below expose the fallacy of the claims by the Government.

1.This Act has taken away the Fundamental Rights of balanced diet, healthy childhood and pre-primary education (Nursery, KG), of the children below six years of age which was guaranteed by the Constitution. What is this Act claiming to give in future if the foundation itself is so weak? We will expose, in the following paragraphs, the deceitful character of the Act which claims to give Right of Education for 8 years (Class 1-8). This Act has closed all the doors of higher education and career building opportunities after 8 years of schooling by not extending the Right for Secondary Education from Class 9 to 12.

2.There is nothing in the Act to say that handicapped children will be educated in the regular schools. The provision for the namesake has been made only in the standards for those handicapped who can not move independently. The blind, deaf and mentally retarded children have been totally ignored. The intention of the Government is to keep such children indoors and to wash off their hands by handing over the responsibilities to NGOs.

3.There is no mention in the Act that all the children will get free education (Ref Clause 3). In fact there is no mention that fees other than tuition fees will not be charged. Even such strange Rights of Free Education will not be available to those who are forced to study in private schools due to bad or unworthy conditions of the government schools (Ref Clause 8a). If the children in private schools will have to continue to pay the fees as before then is this Act not cutting an ugly joke on the children?

4.To fulfill the conditions of the Act Government will surely appoint teachers but they will be temporary, untrained and 'para teachers' on contract appointment. There is no provision to bar appointment of 'para teachers' (e.g. contract teachers, guest teachers, *shiksha mitra*, *shiksha upasak* etc.). This leads to a conclusion that the teachings in government schools and low economy private schools will be left to invisible forces. The question arises whether education of children in this country can be carried out satisfactorily without creating a cadre of permanent, trained teachers with a respectable salary.

4.The Act has not intentionally defined the qualification, salaries and other terms and conditions of the teachers. The Government can take whimsical decisions on these and related issues as per their own convenience. This will lead to creating chaos in Education. This year's budget has clearly indicated

that appointment of 'para teachers and low paid teachers in private schools' and their exploitation – financial and otherwise - will continue.

5.The standards of student –teacher ratio and room sizes have been fixed in such a way that it is clear from the data circulated by NUEAP (National University of Educational Administration and Planning) that around 40 percent primary schools (with less than 60 enrolments) will continue to have two teachers and two rooms. What it means is that the existing practice of one teacher-one room with several classes will continue. The same conditions will be applicable to about 30 percent of the schools (with less than 90 or 120 enrolments). That is to say that in future also the practice of educating poor children of two or three classes in the same room will be continued in a shameful way.

6.The Act permits the engagement of Government school teachers in non-academic activities like Panchayat to Parliamentary elections, census, relief works during disaster management etc. This means that the children in private schools will be taught everyday whereas the classes for poor children will get interrupted and disturbed due to the involvement of the government school teachers in non-teaching activities. This way the students of the Government school will continue to be unfavorably discriminated against and made to suffer.

7.The Act does not prohibit enhancement in school fees by private schools. This allows them to enhance the fees in uncontrolled and arbitrary manner. The Act does not require the private schools to follow government guidelines or to allow participation of parents, social workers etc in managing the affairs of the school. In fact the HRD Minister Kapil Sibbal has already announced that after the Act is implemented the laws prevailing in different States with respect to monitoring the management and the fee structure of private schools will automatically become redundant. In such a situation the education will become dearer.

8.The Act talks nowhere about measures required to check ever increasing inequality and discrimination in education. Just as a follow up the Government is encouraging further widening of the gap. In such a situation only poor children will be left out in the Government schools with more and more discrimination and miseries. As a result of the implementation of the Act every child will have a formal right to education but poor ones out of them will be destined to have an extremely low quality education and level of dissatisfaction to ultimately drop out from the school education. (Government, by this Act, has ensured a freedom for itself from all responsibilities of ensuring a minimum amount of learning to children by the time they reach 5 th or 8 th class).

9.The Act providing free education to 25 percent poor children in private schools is being publicized as a big achievement (The tuition fees, for such children, will be paid by the Government). But it is cunningly silent on how the poor children will pay the fees other than the tuition fees which are charged by the private schools. The Act is also silent on the modalities, guidelines or criteria for selecting poor students under this provision. It means that it has been left out entirely to the whims and fancies of the private schools to devise ways and means of selection in arbitrary manner. Bigger question than that is whether quality education will be provided to the poor children admitted under this provision. No such possibility exists simply because a majority of private schools are themselves below standard. Added to this is a question about what will happen to those (~75 %) who will be left out. They will be forced to continue with low quality 'namesake' education only. In any case such children will be dumped on the street after 8 th class because there is no responsibility of the private schools under the Act for educating them any further.

9.The Act provides for education up to class 8 without appropriate formal evaluation of the students. This means that children in Government and low economy private schools will be pushed upwards up to class 8 with half education or no education at all. Class 8 certificate earned in this manner, for sure, will not help them in admission to higher classes.

10. The Act provides for mother tongue as medium of teaching only if it is 'practicable' for the government. For selected few, English has been left anyway as medium of teaching. Therefore, the education with double standards has been allowed to continue.

11. There is neither the intention nor a will in this Act to control profit making and commercialization of education. Opposed to this the Government, under the guise of public-private-partnership (PPP), is inviting capitalists, NGOs, religious organizations and helping them by allotting government land, money, and other direct and indirect concessions to allow them higher profit making by charging arbitrary fees, employing low paid teachers and paying taxes under concessional rates.

12. The Act is silent on the quality of teachers with the B.Ed and D.Ed. Degrees earned from an ever flourishing high-cost private colleges which are infamous for awarding degrees without conducting proper teaching/ training programmes.

13. The privatization, commercialization of higher education and ever rising coaching business is continuously on the rise. HRD Minister Kapil Sibbal has already announced that syllabus for Science and Mathematics for Class 11-12 and the entrance test for different technical courses (Engineering, Medical, Management etc) will be the same for the whole country. It is clear that this will add class 9-10 students also to the increased coaching business for some, whereas the number of poor children will be diminishing in the higher classes in the same order. This Act legitimizes the multi-layered discriminatory system of education as a permanent arrangement and has no scope for common syllabus or common entrance examination.

13. Government will have a moral right to introduce common syllabus or common entrance examination if and only if it replaces the present Act by an appropriate law to establish common school system in which every school - government or private-will be a neighborhood school (CSS-NS) and every child-rich or poor-will receive education under the same roof without discrimination. The world history is replete with evidences that the countries which educated their whole population followed common school system one way or the other. But this Act takes the country in reverse direction.

14. A new Bill is being brought to Parliament for permitting foreign universities to enhance commercialization of education, profit making and exploitation of resources which will result in continued mismanagement of and misrule in higher education.

- One more danger. The Union Government has tabled a proposal to GATS (General Agreement on Trade and Services) under WTO (World Trade Organization) with the intention of converting higher and professional education as a saleable item. If this is not withdrawn immediately the foreign universities/ institutions will claim to have the same or higher level of facilities in comparison to the Indian Universities / Institutions in India . In addition the Government will be under compulsion to provide legal protection to the foreign universities.

From the aforesaid facts it is clear that the Right To Education Act 2009, being implemented *w.e.f.* 1 st April 2010 , is nothing but cheating and deception of Indian public. Under the guise of this the Government is making fool of the Indian public by expanding commerce, trade and profit making in Education. This, in turn, will lead to deprivation of education to the children of common people and accelerate number of suicides by them. Further still, the Indian youths will be compelled to move further towards increased unemployment, inequality, violence and extremism.

