



Non-Formal Education Program

Situational analysis/ Needs Assessment Education

Maa Ki Dua realizes that education is vital to empowering a community by providing individuals with the skills and capacities necessary for engaging with various stakeholders around them. Maa Ki Dua education programme focuses on two levels: at children and youth.

Ensuring children's well-being has always been a concern for Maa Ki Dua. While their well-being is generally addressed through most of Maa Ki Dua interventions, as reflected, for example, in increased enrolment of children in villages where comprehensive work on has been completed on the natural resource base, a number of specific programmes have been designed to meet their particular needs in a more thorough manner, such as the Kindergarten programme and the children's Education programme. In addition to worrying about children's well-being, Maa Ki Dua has also worked on creating spaces for children to speak up and ask questions. Maa Ki Dua education the programme has done a considerable amount of work on altering the relationships between a teacher and children, trying to make them more equal and embodied by mutual respect

Maa Ki Dua started its work in the 60s with adult education. Maa Ki Dua implemented various programmes including a functional literacy programme for farmers, the National Adult Education Programme and Total Literacy Campaign. Although these interventions were not entirely successful in imparting literacy skills, they helped lay the ground for further education and facilitated the creation of forums for community collaboration and action. It also became clear that adults were not particularly interested in literacy. Nonetheless, it appears that in areas where Maa Ki Dua implemented Adult Literacy programmes, children's education has been positively impacted. Over time, the focus of Maa Ki Dua education programme shifted to children's education, especially for those marginalized by the mainstream education system. Some meaningful partnerships have been forged with external agencies for this work,

The context of Maa Ki Dua work area is characterized by a significant number of children still out of school, the dismal quanta of learning acquired by those in school or those who have studied for a few years, and high push-out rates due to a wide variety of reasons. Amongst the latter, non-comprehension in the classroom, the poor quality of schooling and teaching, and a the range of economic and social reasons are counted. Hence, Maa Ki Dua education strategy aims to address two primary needs; (1) ensuring education to the out of school children; and (2) enabling communities to demand and collaborate with the government to secure a better education for their children.

Ensuring quality education to out-of-school children

A good education, while having the intrinsic value of securing a more dignified life, also has instrumental value in reducing migration, particularly amongst vulnerable groups such as children and youth. A recent study on adolescent migration revealed that youth often migrate for work because they drop out of school – either because they find it boring or because they find it difficult. With limited engaging local opportunities, migration often becomes the preferred option. Other studies, both in Dera Ismail Khan District and nationally, also point to the extremely low levels of learning among children who have attended school for a few years. Accordingly, Maa Ki Dua efforts have focused on addressing the quality of education to strengthen the attractiveness of schooling. To this end, village level non-formal education centers and residential literacy camps are organized for out of school children, thus improving educational status whilst simultaneously serving as demonstration sites that engender recognition of quality education at the community level.

Non-Formal Education Centers

Maa Ki Dua works with village communities to establish Non-Formal Education (NFE) centers in remote hamlets with the aim of providing access to education to children between the ages of 6 and 14 who are deprived of schooling due for one reason or another. The centers are run by interested and capable community members. Responding to past assessments which showed poor learning levels of students in the NFE centers, concerted efforts have been made to rectify the problem. These include increasing the duration of the school day to six hours, improving the physical structures, using diverse learning materials, regularly building teachers' capacity, inculcating an interactive and child-centered pedagogy, and building community participation. Emphasis is laid on helping children to think, interact, question and form concepts on their own, all aimed at creating a joyful and stimulating learning environment for children. Assessments show an enhancement in children's retention and learning levels. With consistent effort, the academic abilities of teachers and their understanding of the children's learning processes have also been enhanced considerably.

Strengthening community contribution to and ownership of education is another key dimension of Maa Ki Dua work. Communities are managing many NFE centers, even in terms of their

physical functioning. Every student pays a fee of five rupees per month which is deposited in a common village fund and is used, under the supervision of the village development management the committee, to meet some of the cost of maintenance of the school. Nineteen committees have taken up the responsibility of paying the stipend of the NFE center instructor from interest earnings of the village corpus fund. A noteworthy change in village discussions is that children's issues are now given a place of importance.

Education Scholarships

Economic poverty is one of the main reasons for children going for migration and, accordingly, for not receiving an education. On average, however, children and adolescents are able to remit a meager amount of about Rs.1,500 per annum, and this too at the expense of their education. In response to this the phenomenon, Maa Ki Dua has been considering the idea of providing scholarships to such children and their families so that children do not have to leave school due to economic reasons. Investigation into the feasibility of this solution and others will be an important part of the Fifth Comprehensive Plan.

At the end of the current plan period, Maa Ki Dua will have 175 NFE centers with an enrolment of over 5,000 children, of whom 46% are girls. Working on building the capacity of instructors to teach better, and efforts to reduce absenteeism of both, children and teachers, will continue in conjunction with communities.

A debate is underway on how to respond to the demand for imparting higher classes' education through NFE centers. In many places, parents send their children to NFE centers instead of the dysfunctional government school machinery, thus placing pressure on Maa Ki Dua to replicate the government syllabus. Maa Ki Dua, however, sees its centers as sites for demonstrating alternative models of quality education, rather than as permanent alternatives to the mainstream government system.

Target Group/community- The target group for the particular program is children between the age group of 6 to 14 years. These children mainly belong to the schedule caste and schedule tribe village communities.

The objective of the project

- 1) Ensure quality education, to enable children in the age group of 6 to 14 years who are deprived of education to independently read and write with comprehension.

- 2) Through these interventions on quality education, enable communities to experience an alternative and meaningful education.

- 3) Work proactively towards enabling communities' to demand quality education from the government.

Deliverables (quantitative and qualitative results)

1- Quantitative

About 4000 children all over Udaipur and Rajsamand district are benefited through the Non-formal education program.

2- Qualitative

Ensuring quality education for children.