



New Education Group

Foundation for Innovation and Research in Education



Annual Report April 2007-March 2008

Our Vision

NEG-FIRE is a Development Support Organization that aims to transform lives of marginalized children through appropriate education by strategic and dynamic partnerships.

We see every Dalit, Tribal, Girl child and all vulnerable children learning to be confident young individuals, enabling them to relate to the world around them and providing the springboard to embark on higher academic or vocational education in order to build an egalitarian society.

Our Mission

We promote Quality Education for marginalised children resulting in Social Transformation in India while upholding the values of transparency, accountability, pluralism, equity, justice, peace and respect for all.



CONTENTS

Our Vision and Mission	
From the Chairperson	2
From the Executive Director.....	3
New Programs Initiated.....	5
a)The Edu-Leadership Program	6
b) Inter-State Strategy	14
Partnership Promotion.....	15
Our Reach	16
Grant to Partners.....	17
Research and Documentation	23
NEG-FIRE's Diary.....	33
Finance	39



From the Chairperson

Dear Friends,

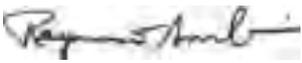
To follow the beaten path or to leave a trail – this is the challenge before any organization and particularly for any development NGO that is serious in being relevant to the burning issues of the marginalized. It is much easier if the organization starts afresh. But if the organization has a past, then a period of transition is inevitable.

NEG (National Education Group) became NEG-FIRE (New Education Group – Foundation for Innovation and Research in Education) in March 2005. After going through the teething problems like selection of the new Executive Director and competent staff, the Board had to work out its vision and mission on the future thrust. Further certain administrative procedures had to be completed such as Income Tax registration and Foreign Contribution registration of NEG-FIRE. Particularly the latter one is a long drawn out process and the office has done a wonderful job in expediting all these administrative procedures. We believe that we shall be receiving the FCRA Registration certificate soon.

Concurrently the transition period has been satisfactorily completed and a new thrust has been initiated. From soliciting projects and processing them NEG-FIRE has become a proactive organization with defined goals, that seeks partnerships and then focuses on them. The Edu-leaders programme and the Inter-state border area education strategy are pilot projects. NEG-FIRE has also selected de-notified tribes as another marginalized group to develop a strategy to bring education to them. Education Fellowship with the research component is another project to obtain valuable data on some of the burning issues related to the education of the marginalized.

NEG-FIRE has embarked on these new ventures because of a competent team that has been built up by our Executive Director and we hope to contribute to the betterment of the educational needs of the marginalized.

Sincerely,



Fr. Raymond Ambrose.



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From the Executive Director

Dear Friends,

Namaste from NEG-FIRE!

277 toddlers in the riot affected Juhapura area in Gujarat, have their hands soiled in mud, fingers treading beads, happily singing, swaying their hands and moving their eyeballs in great synchronicity. Thanks to Samerth our partner who provides space for stimulation and growth, safety and security, thus keeping fear out of these young minds and hearts.

Tharu tribe children in Bihar exclaim 'we like swimming, fruits, games'. ' We dislike floods, heat' and all these expressions in English! DEEP our partner, in Bihar provides good learning experiences for children.

75 Sarpanches (heads of the local governance structure) in Medak, Andhra Pradesh have signed resolutions and have promised 'child labour free villages' in their Panchayats. Thanks to our NGO partner, Sadhana, this will ensure that all children are in school.

The Jesuit Province Society in Parakasa district, Andhra Pradesh, was able to transform their Learning centers, into the Alternative and Innovative Education centers of the Sarva Shikshan Abhiyan (SSA) and the salary of one teacher, books and the mid-day meal are provided by the SSA. The government will now build a school for the children as there is no school within a radius of 1.5 kms for these Dalit children. Both the NGO and we, at NEG-FIRE are happy since children will now receive their due entitlement from the government. This is also in keeping with the strategy of NEG-FIRE.

The above examples (of our partners selected in the previous year) are just glimpses of some good practices on the ground. Through these initiatives they also respond to issues of caste, religion and gender for a just and equitable society.

In 2007-2008 our outreach increased. We are now part of 12 more NGO constituencies, reaching out to 12,063 children, 223 teachers and 181 schools in 8 states. Through these NGOs, we have the opportunity to better understand (and therefore appropriately respond to) tribes like the Biagas in Chattisgarh, Shabar and Kandh in Gajapati, Paraja in Koraput, Bagata, Kondadora, Valmiki, Nookadora and Duliya Kotiya in Visakhapatnam, and newer Dalit communities.



The Edu-leadership program in Uttar Pradesh and the Interstate Strategy in Andhra Pradesh, Orissa Madhya Pradesh and Chhattisgarh are in their embryonic stage and in the coming year will mushroom to newer areas. Our Research and Documentation program will also be strengthened. Pools of resource persons consisting of partner NGOs and the staff of NEG-FIRE will be created to consolidate and strengthen quality processes for children's learning.

Thank you dear co-travelers who send us feedback on our work. This helps in our reflection and growth. We will continue to look forward to it. The year would have not been possible without support from our donor Misereor, the Board, Staff, Partner NGO's, consultants and friends who remained with us during this journey made difficult due to the late receipt of the Prior Permission in February 2008 ! Sir Dorabjee Tata Trust (SDTT) entered our circle of support this year and we welcome others who are willing to tap and augment our potential to the maximum!

'I want to be an *'Insaan'* (human being)' is the dream of a little Musahar Dalit child in Mudhbani, Bihar when asked about his future dreams. Similar expressions from children and their families torment us. But it is they who give us our raison d'etre. We are conscious that we have a long way to go ...the journey has just begun for NEG-FIRE.

Warm regards,

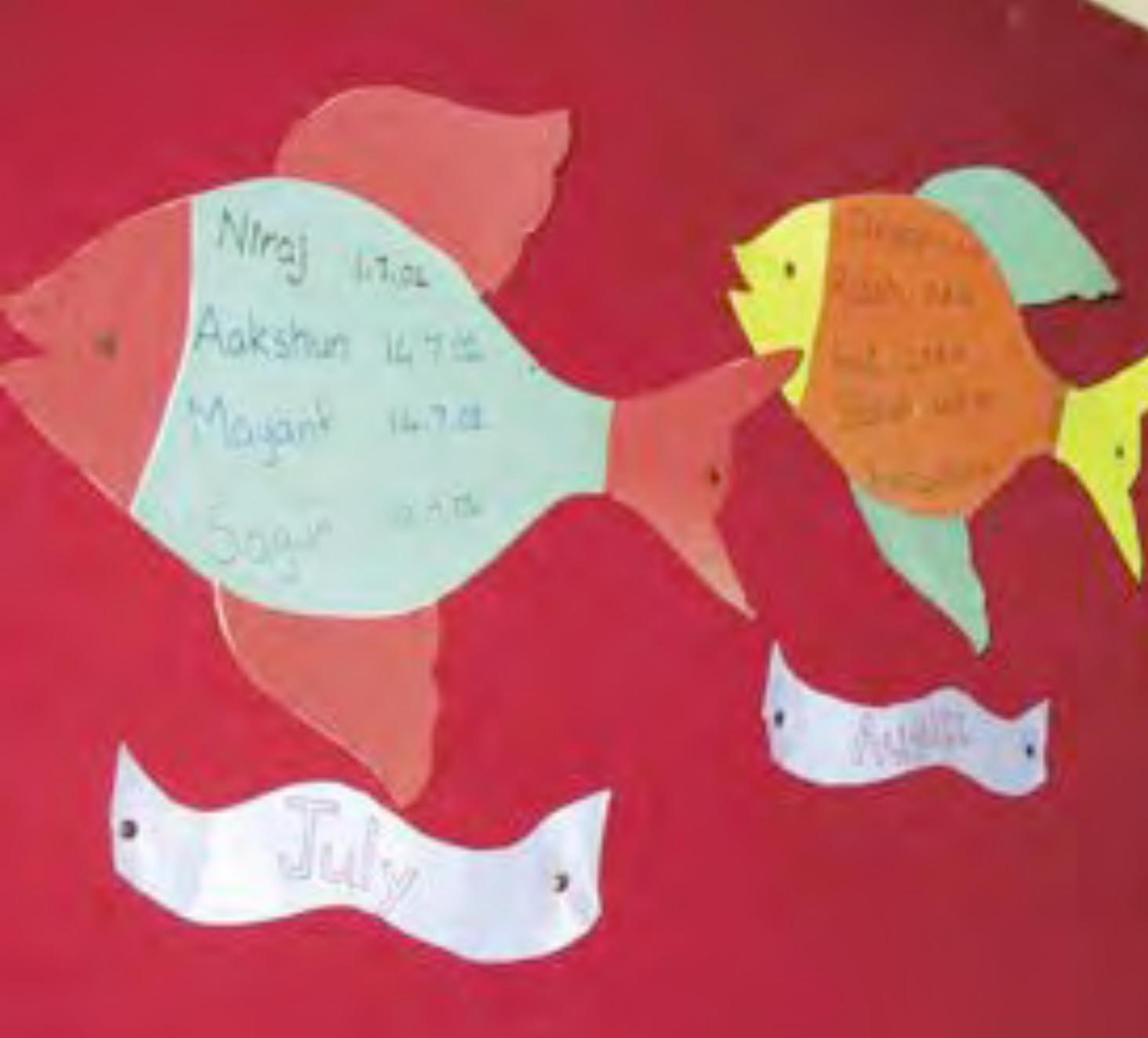
M. Ishwaran.

Marita Ishwaran

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NEW PROGRAMS INITIATED

- a) Edu-Leadership Programs
- b) Inter-State Strategy

Happy Birthday children! Muktangan, Maharashtra

Eduleaders: A New Transformative Force

Creating leadership for improving quality, promoting community conscientisation and influencing policy in education

A program initiated by NEG-FIRE

Genesis of the 'Eduleadership' Initiative

The idea of 'Eduleadership' has emerged from NEG-FIRE's vast experience and understanding of education, especially for marginalized children. Over the past two decades, this experience has come from supporting over 1000 grassroot initiatives across 22 states of India. The organization believes that the challenge of universal school education is essentially a problem of leadership in education. In the absence of a committed, able leadership at different levels, educational interventions often end up being superficial at best. Current approaches, which are driven more by the need to achieve targets than build people's capacities, lack a long term perspective. Very few programs have resulted in generating a 'critical mass' of self motivated thinker-doers who can bring about a lasting change in the way education happens. NEG-FIRE believes that by addressing the issue of leadership, the problems of education governance, quality and sustainability can be dealt with more effectively. This thinking has led to the Eduleadership initiative.

Eduleadership is not only about 'managing people' or 'running' educational institutions better. While educational management in this sense forms a part of eduleadership, the latter distinguishes itself with a clear focus on the learner – thus, the problems of curricula, pedagogy and the schooling experience of the learner are all at the heart of this thinking. Eduleadership is all about transformative leadership in education, which goes beyond the mechanical development of competencies and skills to achieve some tasks. It is about deeper values, high commitment, passion and a great degree of resilience.

Who is an Eduleader ?

Broadly speaking, eduleaders are innovators in education, located at different levels within the system. They are leaders of proven practice. Children, Teachers, Community Representatives, those working in public delivery institutions in governmental and non-governmental settings, are all prime candidates who can become eduleaders with the right preparation. Ideally, eduleaders are those who are restless about the current situation of education – they can identify problems, envision a new response, are willing to take risks, willing to put in all the efforts necessary to address these problems, and make themselves heard.





How will the Program Work?

The Eduleadership Program (EP) seeks to develop, within five to six years, a critical mass of eduleaders to bring about change within a given geographical area. Beginning with Uttar Pradesh, NEG-FIRE gradually seeks to expand this initiative to the states of Bihar, Jharkhand, Madhya Pradesh, Chattisgarh, Orissa and Rajasthan. A convergent state strategy keeping the district, block or cluster with all stakeholders involved, will inform the program.

Essentially, the EP has been envisaged as a three year leadership development initiative to develop a cadre of eduleaders in a chosen location or region. This would be a full time program, with flexibility for those who may be exempted. Persons who are willing to work full time will be compensated. The curriculum and materials for the program will be comprehensive, flexible and contextual, with adequate attention to theory and praxis. Facilitators anchoring the program are those with vast experience, understanding and sensitivity to the education of children in marginalized settings.

Before the launch of the EP in any area, NEG-FIRE will initiate a consultation with interested individuals and institutions to explore the idea of eduleadership and identify potential candidates for the program. NEG-FIRE also seeks the support of individuals and organizations for the program.

Impact

The EP is visualized as a long-term and continuous program. There are two kinds of benefits and impact envisaged. The first is an impact at a broader level. By working with key groups of people like children, teachers, parents, community leaders and government, the Eduleaders are expected to bring about 'system level' changes in the way education happens for marginalized children. Second, by facilitating the development of a group of persons as eduleaders, the program hopes to generate opportunities for individuals to initiate innovative responses from which a wider learning can occur. It is also hoped that these eduleaders will seriously consider working in education as a full time vocation.

The Journey begins in Uttar Pradesh

Four districts were identified for intervention, Azamgarh, Badayaun, Maharajang and Muzaffarnagar. The rationale for selecting these poor backward regions is in keeping with the mandate of reaching out to the poorest and most vulnerable children and also ensuring that leadership emerges from the margins. We hope through this that the most vulnerable are empowered and can become deciders of their own destiny. Badayan and



Maharanjang, fall in the most backward districts as per the Planning Commission categorization, with literacy rates at 43 and 46 percent respectively. Muzaffarnagar has 38 percent muslims and the lowest female literacy rate at 30 percent

The process began with field visits to the four districts of Azamgarh, Badayun, Maharaganj and Muzaffarnagar, to understand the NGOs, their strategies specifically with regard to education, get a hands on experience of the ground realities of the region and simultaneously to share the concept of the Edu-leadership program. A range of interested NGOs, academic institutions, Mahila Samakhya, DIETS, B.ED colleges, Panchayats, CDPO's of the ICDS, individuals, local leaders, and communities were met in this pursuit.

A workshop was organized from 18 – 20 February 08, in Lucknow, by NEG-FIRE for 37 local NGOs from Azamgarh, Badayun, Maharaganj and Muzaffarnagar districts.

The objectives were:

- To explore the nature and scope of 'edu-leadership' both in general terms and also specifically to the context of UP
- To discuss the details that such a program involves (curriculum, methodology, etc)
- To explore the possibilities of partnering with local NGOs on this program
- To identify potential NGOs for the first batch of the edu-leadership course

In many ways the workshop became an exploratory one, meant to test the feasibility of the edu-leadership program with a group of grassroots organization. It attempted to 'co-create' an understanding from the beginning with the heads of the NGOs and various diverse responses were synthesized, it was mutually agreed that the edu-leader should be a candidate from the same community, must be educated and preferably with some experience of community work. The age group was prescribed to be between 18-50 years and it was stipulated that gender balance must be maintained.

The edu-leader is expected to work in 4 settings: parents, community, schools [both govt and non-govt], the education system at large and with NGOs of the area. A candidate for edu-leadership was also expected to have a clear vision about the nature, scope and possibilities that arise from the education of children, be capable of analyzing the situations and help to generate interest and commitment in education.

For the programme a rounded curriculum was envisaged both stage-wise and phase-wise with sequential inputs and scope for revisiting earlier learnt concepts. The edu-leader was also to be prepared through practical action research, exposure to innovative interventions and hands-on training and study. Possible difficulties and challenges were analyzed and the workshop concluded with the delineating of roles, responsibilities and activities of all of the partners involved in the edu-leadership programme.

Sir Dorabjee Tata Trust (SDTT) provided initial grant for testing the feasibility of this project. Subhir Shukla from IGNUS-erg is providing the technical support for this program in Uttar Pradesh.



Reference Points for Organizations Interested in Providing Technical Support to the Eduleadership Program

1. Invitation

NEG-FIRE invites proposals from organizations who may be interested in partnership for implementing the one year Eduleadership Program. This note sets out key points that will need to be referred to during discussions and finalization of proposals. A brief description of the eduleadership program has also been provided. For more details, please contact NEG-FIRE.

2. Organization Profile

NEG-FIRE is looking for well established organizations that have a proven track record in children's education especially with respect to those children who are marginalized. In essence what this means is that they should have seriously engaged with the government schooling system at different levels over the years, worked with children, teachers, parents, local communities and the educational administration at large. They can be either resource support organizations with in-house capacity that have developed educational resources, undertaken training, research, and so on for government, NGOs etc. Or, they can be organizations in education that have more directly worked at the community level, with parents, teachers, schools and so on. Educational resource support organizations can also partner with local grassroots NGOs in implementing the program. Such organizations are expected to have a good record of working with local communities – they should have a sound relationship with local government and communities, and a clean record of having undertaken developmental activity since their inception.

The present focus of the eduleadership program is on the states of Uttar Pradesh, Bihar, Jharkhand, Chhatisgarh, Madhya Pradesh, Orissa, Rajasthan, Maharastra, Gujrat, West Bengal and the North-East states.

Any organization interested in undertaking the eduleadership program with NEG-FIRE support must have in-house capacity (technical, managerial) to successfully implement the program. NEG-FIRE is particular that in a program which is about leadership in education, the concerned Partner organization must be able to demonstrate this leadership in the first place. For effective implementation of the program, technical inputs in specific areas can also be outsourced by the Partner organization from time to time, but the overall program inputs must be provided by an in house core team. This team is also expected to manage the program.

It is important for the potential Partner organizations to provide adequate examples of the work they have undertaken with respect to the education of marginalized children. NEG-FIRE expects sharing of relevant information regarding organizational status, documentation of experiences, evaluation reports, studies etc in this regard. All these will help NEG-FIRE in understanding the concerned organizations better. This in turn will contribute to the establishment of a sound partnership between NEG-FIRE and the implementing Partner organization.



3. Process to be Followed for Launching the Eduleadership Program

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3.1 Agreeing the Proposal and Budgets

A detailed proposal with budget is expected by NEG-FIRE. In the proposal, NEG-FIRE expects reflection on the following points, among others:

- The organization's views on the education of children, particularly marginalized children
- Experiences so far in education – achievements and challenges
- Strengths and limitations of the organization vis-à-vis education
- The organization's views and understanding of the aspect of leadership in education and why this is important
- An implementation plan – how the organization proposes to go about doing the eduleadership program. As part of this, a note on the program curriculum needs to be made (the detailed curriculum can be annexed as part of the proposal), along with the methodology that the organization proposes to follow
- Intended outcomes – these are the set of expectations from the program.
- Monitoring and documentation – this is considered to be important and NEG-FIRE will expect some serious reflection in the proposal as to how this will be done
- Assumptions made, and likely risks that will be encountered, in implementing the program.

NEG-FIRE believes that the Eduleadership program must benefit from a partnership. It therefore believes in co-creating the program from the beginning and looks forward to be involved in reflections from the stage of conception itself.

3.2 Selection of Eduleaders

This is really the crux of the program. NEG-FIRE expects this to be a transparent and participatory process. Selection of potential eduleaders will not be undertaken only on the basis of conventional methods like interviews, paper-pencil tests, etc. A workshop mode will be preferred, where potential candidates will be provided opportunities to participate in activities that will involve the application and demonstration of their knowledge, skills and attitudes. A final selection based on a number of parameters will be done jointly by NEG-FIRE and the implementing organization.

- NEG-FIRE believes that 30-40 persons can be trained as eduleaders as part of a group. The following options may be kept in mind while selecting the group composition.
- Mixed group – consists of participants from a cross section – children, parents, community representatives, teachers, officials from the education department (particularly from the administration, Block Resource Centres (BRC), Cluster Resource Centre (CRC), District Institute of Education and Training (DIET).

Homogeneous group – this consists entirely of any one of the following – children, parents/ community representatives, teachers, DIET staff, personnel

from BRC, CRC or the education administration.

In both cases, NEG-FIRE would like to place priority on the participation of women. Candidates selected as eduleaders would be provided a reasonable stipend that will help them cover some incidental expenses during the program.

3.3 Curriculum and Materials

NEG-FIRE recognizes that the eduleadership program will develop in a variety of ways, depending on the emphasis given to it by the implementing organization. While the core of the program should not be compromised upon, the specifics can vary from place to place, depending on context, need etc. In fact, it is in this diversity of approaches that different lessons can be learnt.

The curriculum is considered to be an important aspect of the program, which will determine the nature of the experiences that participants undergo at every stage of the program. NEG-FIRE expects the partner organization to articulate the broad stage by stage curriculum in advance as part of the proposal. Likewise, on approval of the proposal, the preparation for the program assumes importance. In this regard, course materials (readings, assignments) must be prepared, and methodology must be determined.

While NEG-FIRE will encourage curricula to be prepared in accordance with need, the following areas will be considered to be important and must receive attention in the design of the eduleadership program:

- Developing a vision of education – exploring educational ‘aims’, their need, relevance, their implications for the kind of society that we may want to create; developing a socio-political understanding of society and exploring the role of education in it
- Translating the above vision into practice – developing curricula, exploring the debates on what should go into the curriculum, and how it should be structured
- Making the curriculum operational – understanding how children to learn, and designing methods and approaches to enable children to learn effectively; working with schools and teachers
- Monitoring and evaluating what happens – understanding how monitoring (of children’s learning, of schools, functioning of the educational system etc) can be undertaken
- Working with parents and local communities – understanding deeply the community in a historical sense – why are things the way they are;
- Understanding how the educational system is structured and how it works; identifying constraints and possibilities; exploring how change can occur
- Exploring the role of the individual – where do I come from? How are my beliefs and worldviews determined? What needs to change within me? How can this happen?
- Understanding leadership in education – how is it to be defined? How can it be developed and sustained?

NEG-FIRE believes that the above will form the core of the curriculum for the eduleadership program. These aspects must be integrated within the different modules of the program as well as within field work, written assignments etc. The aspect of leadership in education, for instance, is not meant to be looked at in isolation – the program must provide adequate experiences for participants to explore what it means to lead, cooperate, share, initiate etc, through appropriately designed activities throughout the program.

Participants may continue to be supported beyond the duration of the program, depending on their needs. An appropriate curriculum may be designed for this subsequently.

3.4 Monitoring and Documentation

An important element of the eduleadership program is its monitoring and documentation. NEG-FIRE expects its partner organizations to undertake this seriously. Monitoring is not seen as mere reporting in quantitative terms (for example, number of workshops conducted, visits undertaken etc). On the other hand, monitoring of processes will be focused upon both by partners and by NEG-FIRE. Detailed documentation of the program will be undertaken from time to time, as this is essential to consolidate and disseminate learning. NEG-FIRE will discuss approaches to monitoring and documentation with its partners once the eduleadership program is launched.

3.5 Assessment

NEG-FIRE will jointly (with its partners) assess the progress and results of the eduleadership program. Two assessments will be undertaken during the tenure of the program. The first would be at the end of six months (at the mid point) and the second, after the completion of the program. Later assessments would be undertaken to ascertain the impact of the program.

4. Funding for the Program

NEG-FIRE believes in a collaborative model to fund the program. This, it believes, will contribute to a broader ownership of the program. From the beginning, NEG-FIRE will seek to raise funds from multiple sources and will encourage its partner organizations to share program costs.





**Inter-state Workshop
Madhya Pradesh and Chhatisgarh**



**Inter-state Workshop
Orissa and Andhra Pradesh Partners**

Inter-State Strategy

NEG-FIRE strategically decided to develop a national inter-state strategy for the education of the children in the areas adjoining different states. A study conducted for NEG-FIRE by Dr. Mahendra Rajaraman identified 10 national interstate borders for intervention. The findings show that children are more vulnerable in such areas than in other areas. The learning language in school and the students' mother tongue is different, teachers are unaware of the students' mother tongue, no availability of bilingual text books, due to migration there exists higher rate of school dropout, laxity of officials in monitoring schools, irregularity among teachers, participation in school level sports at taluka and district level is non-existent, upper primary and high schools are far, trafficking has created fear and has forced parents to withdraw girl children from schools. This, coupled with seasonal migration, poverty, low natural resources for livelihood, abuse of women, inaccessibility, trafficking, lack of infrastructural support have led to these districts being positioned at the lowest rung of the human development index. It is to address these burgeoning issues that NEG-FIRE has decided to bring in education interventions through empowerment of the communities to address educational issues related to children and their communities.

NEG-FIRE also solicited the assistance of two consultants to identify NGOs and areas on the borders of Andhra Pradesh, Orissa, Madhya Pradesh and Chattisgarh in its pilot phase. A three-day workshop was organised for all key stakeholders from these districts so as to evolve a vision for the region and develop a plan of action. The workshop in Aruku at Vishakhapatnam, for villagers, teachers, Integrated Child Development Scheme (ICDS) staff, panchayats, government officers and NGO staff followed the Future Search methodology facilitated by Dr. Lalitha Iyer and Ms. Sarayu Kalyani of Think Soft. Two NGOs were selected, Society for Voluntary Action (SOVA) in Orissa and NATURE in Araku Valley, to develop a strategy and work on this for three years. A second workshop, at Raipur, for participants of Dindori, Khabirdham and Mandla also discussed the Participatory Rural Appraisal (PRA) results of 12 villages and identified issues for focused intervention. Here three NGOs Shikhar Yuva Manch, Gramadaya Kendra and Naveen Bharti Seva Samiti were selected to work on a two-year strategy.

ખોરાકમાં વપરાતાં મરી-મસાલા

મરચું



મીઠું



હળદર



ગરમ મસાલો



**PARTNERSHIP
PROMOTION**

રાઈ (સરસો)



જીરું



મરીયા



દળેલુ ઘાણાજીરું



અજમો



લજ



ડગર ફૂલ



Partnership Promotion

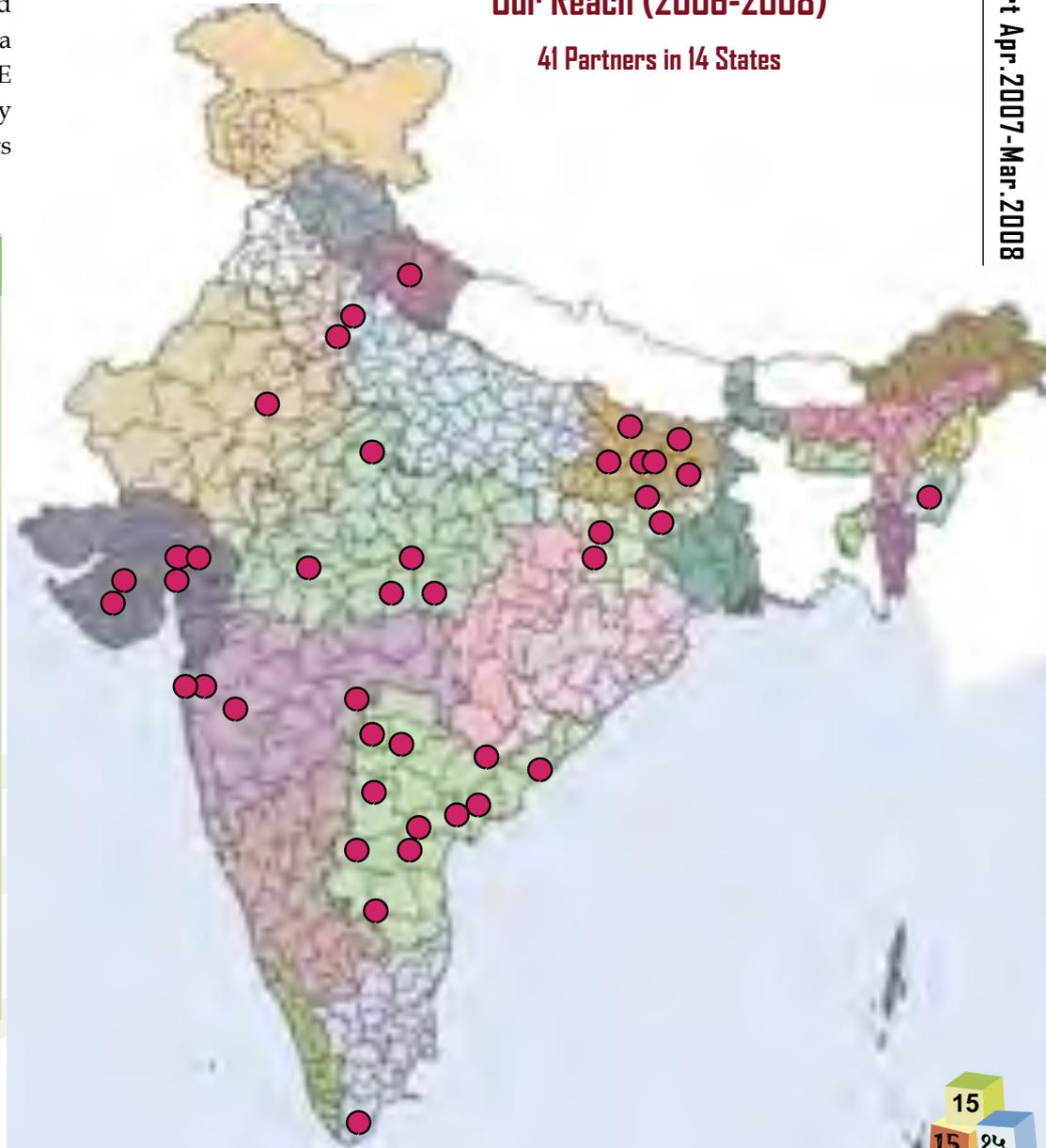
NEG-FIRE selected 12 new partners in 2007-08 from eight states covering 13 districts including three most backward and poor districts (Koraput and Gajapati in Orissa and Mandala in Madhya Pradesh) The present coverage (2006-2008) of NEG-FIRE includes 41 partners from 14 states and 45 districts in India, directly reaching out to 30,538. Of these 45 districts, 17 are backward districts identified by the Planning Commission.

NEG-FIRE Presence in Backward Districts

Andhra Pradesh	:	Mehabubnagar, Chaderghat Chittoor Medak
Bihar	:	Gaya West Champaran Madhubani Patna Jehanabad
Jharkhand	:	Hazaribagh, Chatra Bokaro Koderm
Orissa	:	Gajapati Koraput
Madhya Pradesh	:	Mandala
Gujarat	:	Panchmahal

Our Reach (2006-2008)

41 Partners in 14 States



Grant to Partners

All the partners selected this year received grants in January 08, therefore the information on the partners is related to what NEG-FIRE is supporting and not the impact of the project.

Inter-State Strategic Partners

Andhra Pradesh and Orissa

Andra Pradesh NATURE

NATURE is a non-governmental organization, dedicated to the enhancement on tribal, dalit and rural communities, with a strong focus on women and children. NEG-FIRE has supported an intervention to ensure enrollment and retention of school-aged children and dropouts with specific focus on the girl child in the 60 border villages of Dumbriguda Mandal of Visakhapatnam District, Andhra Pradesh. The programme will create awareness in all 60 villages and strengthen School Education Committees and Mothers Committees. Children's camps for bridging gaps in learning levels will also be organized. Interface with interstate teacher unions, PRA members, and collaboration and coordination among stakeholders - education department, Community based Organizations and Panchayats (local governance bodies) will be facilitated through meetings. The total cost of the programme is Rs. 2,979,000/- with a total coverage of 3000 children. In addition, the project will work with the gram panchayats.

Orissa South Orissa Voluntary Action (SOVA)

Community development is an integral part of SOVA's core objective. It works for emancipation and enhancement of the living standard of poor people. SOVA now intensively works in 115 villages covering two blocks namely Koraput and Kundra of Koraput District. NEG-FIRE has supported a program for the inter-state areas of Orissa to protect the rights of children from marginalized tribal communities (Kandh and Paraja) covering 40 villages of Pottangi block of Koraput district covering 3,000 children with a grant of Rs. 2,825,500/-. The main approach is to form Child Clubs, build the capacity of the school dropout children through Writing Reading Improvement Programme (WRIP) and to mainstream them in to regular classes, strengthen the Village Education Committee (VEC) and Panchayati Raj Institutions (PRI) and child clubs in school monitoring process and introduce the



Children nurtured by NATURE



Staff meeting at SOVA



PRA exercise with the community in Bodla block

child tracking system as a tool for monitoring. The project will also develop linkages with Sarpanch and Teacher Associations. An interstate coordination meeting will be held for teachers union and PRI members to sensitize the teachers and PRI members on the functioning of schools in border districts. The interaction with SSA of the two districts in Andhra Pradesh and Orissa will be focused on developing innovative strategies and multi language education for usage in the border area schools.

Chattisgarh Shikhar Yuwa Manch (SYM)

The organization SYM was initiated in the year 1997 to address local governance issues. NEG-FIRE, is supporting a two-year pilot project that will work towards the goal of elimination of child labour and promote Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) and Primary Education for all children below the age of 14 years in the border blocks of Bodla of Kabirdham in Chhatisgarh and Samnapur of Dindori District in Madhya Pradesh State respectively. As part of the interstate strategy, some key activities include Interstate meetings with NGOs in Madhya Pradesh, interface with interstate teacher unions and PRI members and education departments across the districts. Six monthly meetings with the interstate stakeholders like block officials, community and NGOs will be organized. The financial support given to the programme is Rs. 1,389,375/- covering 894 children. SYM along with Naveen Bharti and Gramodaya have a common strategy for the next two years.

Madhya Pradesh Naveen Bharti Sewa Samiti (NBSS)

Navin Bharti Sewa Samiti has been working with the Baiga and Gond tribes in Mandala district of Madhya Pradesh since 1995. NBSS is also part of the two-year pilot project supported by NEG-FIRE for the border areas of Madhya Pradesh and Chattisgarh. NBSS will implement the project in the border Mawai block of Mandala District in Madhya Pradesh State covering 584 children with a grant of Rs. 547,425/-.

Gramodaya Kendra

Gramodaya has been working in Madhya Pradesh and Chattisgarh for the empowerment of tribal communities since 1989. The main activities of the organization have been leadership development, empowerment of PRIs and women, SHG formation and collaboration with the government department to effectively implement schemes for tribals. Gramodaya is another partner for the border area project in Madhya Pradesh and Chattisgarh. Gramodaya will implement the project activities in the border block Bodla of Kabirham in Chhatisgarh State with 937 children. The organization has been sanctioned a grant of Rs. 547,425/-.



Gramodaya and NBSS work with the Baiga Tribals

Individual Partners

Andhra Pradesh The Institute of the Brothers of St. Gabriel

People's Initiative Network (PIN) started at Moosanagar in 1990 with activities such as education for slum children, self-help programs for women, adult education in hygiene and health care and saving schemes to help them live a decent human life. NEG-FIRE supported the project earlier for a year. After an evaluation, the support has been extended for another year with a grant of Rs. 500,000/-. NEG-FIRE supports PIN in providing primary education to the most deprived children in urban slums of Hyderabad, covering 1298 children, a majority of them being Muslim girls.

Bihar: Patna Jesuit Society

The project location is in Sasaram Block of Rohtas district in Bihar. The organization is working with 1408 families of Kol and Musahar communities to address the issues of child labour. A large number of children in the project area have been working in the stone quarries. NEG-FIRE's support is an attempt to eradicate child labour and ensure their proper education through community mobilization, group formation, awareness and capacity building activities at a cost of Rs. 1,528,800/- for two years. The project covers 1681 children (889 boys and 792 girls).

Delhi Agnel Charities

The Agnel Ashram fathers and brothers, rising above all religious, communal and social differences, have been instrumental in propounding a movement that has sent outstanding waves in the realm of education. The support by NEG-FIRE helps to prevent dropouts. There is also a conscious effort to enroll more girls in the programs. The organization is catering to Classes I - VIII. The classes are organized in two shifts, as per the schedules of the schools. The total cost of the program is Rs. 480,000/- benefiting 900 children.



Peoples Initiative Network (PIN)- Hyderabad



Agnel Charity - Delhi



Pre-school classroom - Samerth

Gujarat Samerth Charitable Trust

Samerth took up the challenging task of providing a high quality early childhood education program with a view to preserve secular values, family and community involvement, and to provide early childhood education to all children. NEG-FIRE initially supported the program for a year. After a year the program was evaluated and with positive recommendation from the consultant, NEG-FIRE has renewed the project for two more years. It now supports 10 pre-schools (for children in 1-6 years age group) in the Juhapura-Vejalpur area, which is on the periphery of Ahmedabad city in Gujarat. Through preschools they reach out to 277 children (2.5 to 6 years) majority of whom are from muslim and other backward communities. Samerth is also building linkages with Municipal Corporation Schools for peace building in Ahmedabad and to start Pre-schools within the Government Primary schools. The program is supported with a grant of Rs. 1,103,760/ for two years.

Madhya Pradesh Rural Development Service Society (RDSS)

NEG-FIRE supports RDSS to improve the quality of education in six boarding schools and Rajiv Gandhi Shikshan Mission School through training of teachers and creche workers. It also supports mobilization of self help groups to ensure functioning of schools. The project will cover around 2300 children, 70 teachers, 60 Creche workers and 40 SHG members with a total cost of Rs. 1,190,840/- three years.

Maharashtra Paragaon Charitable Trust (Muktangan)

Muktangan is a community-based project in Mumbai, with the goal of creating a replicable model of low cost child-centred education. Muktangan has developed an alternative quality cost effective model of English medium education for underprivileged children. NEG-FIRE has supported the programme to test the replicability of the Muktangan method in an urban slum in Mumbai. Muktangan will train the women of the Slum Rehabilitation Society (SRS) as teachers to run child-centered English-medium pre-school classes. 300 children, 32 teachers and 10 balwadis would benefit through the Muktangan approach with a grant support of Rs. 820,675 for 18 months.



Pre-school classroom - Muktangan

Orrisa Association for Tormented Man's Aid (ATMA)

ATMA was founded in 1994. It has been active in mobilizing and eliciting effective community participation in developmental programs. The organisation is working in Mohana block of Gajapati district which is one of the most remote and inaccessible tribal areas of the state. Two major categories of the tribes are Kandha and Shabar whose livelihood is based on daily labour and collecting wood from the forests. Lack of education and awareness plays a vital role in the poor socio-economic situation of the area. Many villages are on the hill top where there is no road access. The NEG-FIRE supported project is designed to educate and empower the children through special support classes during school hours (10 am to 3 pm) in the existing school. The special classes will cater to the needs of two categories of children in two separate sessions- i) children below six years enrolled in Anganwadi centers, ii) school dropouts, working children and non-school goers within 6 to 14 years of age. The project is being supported for three years, covering 750 children, with a grant of Rs. 1,087,200.



Village Educators at ATMA

Street play by REAP children





**RESEARCH
AND
DOCUMENTATION**

A wall in rural Patna- Manav Kalyan Kendra

NEG-FIRE believes that universal access to and successful completion of quality elementary education is an inherent right of every child. To make this a reality, we need to have better understanding of the educational scenario and challenges for educational transformation. At present, there is an absence of sufficient quality research and field based evidences on different aspects of education for the children from the marginalized communities. The research and researchers in the academic institutions and practitioners on the ground do not address one another's concerns, nor do they benefit from one another's insights and experiences. Unless the perspectives, concerns, experiences, efforts and voices of the marginalized groups are researched and listened to, the disjunction in both policy and program formulation and implementation and ground reality would continue.

The Research and Documentation Program of NEG-FIRE, established in 2007-08, intends to build on the existing knowledge base and address the gaps in education research by initiating different kinds of research. It aims to bring into public discourse issues related to the education of the marginalised by disseminating research findings and sharing experiences among the wider body of stakeholders. These research are expected to result in a dialogue with both state and civil society to develop a more sensitive, inclusive and pedagogically alive education system. This research and documentation is also considered significant for informed intervention on the ground through partners and to support the advocacy drive of the organisation.

This initiative is a result of the year long and ongoing discussions and deliberations. A Research Committee has also been constituted to oversee the entire process.

The objectives that guide this research initiative are:

1. To initiate, encourage and promote empirical and action research as well as interdisciplinary research on identified issues related to the education of the marginalised children
2. To document success as well as challenges in the field experiences and innovations focusing on the education of marginalised children
3. To promote capacity building of field practitioners and to support NGOs/networks/other stakeholders, engaged in education, by facilitating their involvement in research and documentation
4. To help partners/groups/networks in raising issues and in availing validated information for policy considerations
5. To develop relevant advocacy material for the use of various stakeholders
6. To bring into public discourse issues related to the education of the marginalised by disseminating research findings and sharing experiences among the wider body of stakeholders.

This research program involves four kinds of research

1. Fellowship for Innovation and Research in Education Program (FIRE). This research program is intended for the grassroots activists, school teachers, educational administrators and other stakeholders.
2. Small grants for research & documentation would focus on NGOs/Networks.
3. Research promotion in collaboration with Academic/Research institutes involving institutions/ eminent scholars.
4. NEG-FIRE initiated research.

The documentation aspect of this program would entail documentation of:

1. Innovative pedagogic and inclusive practices and interventions by both state and non-state actors to understand the specifics of such innovations and the impact of such interventions in terms of the changes at the community or the school/classroom level.
2. The present practices in which we are engaged: research fellowship Program, teaching-learning material developed by our partners and the research carried out with our support.
3. Stories-tale

Fellowship for Innovation and Research in Education Program:

The key idea of this research fellowship program meant for different practitioners in the field of education – school teachers, NGO/ CBO workers, and other stakeholders is mutually supported networked action research:

- By clustering individuals from same area of action
- By supporting groups, of individuals within the same organisation
- By enabling networked research with thematic unity across different locations/institutions

The proposed research/documentation/narration may be a reflection on an ongoing teaching practice, an empirical or ethnographic study of classroom processes or action research around experiments in the classroom, school or community setting. It is envisaged that this program will help the practitioners to understand more closely the classroom, children, school, community and state practices with greater methodological rigour and cross-referencing etc. This fellowship will be awarded for a period of minimum six months up to a maximum of one year. It will be largely in-service in nature. Each fellow would be attached with a mentor.

We had intended to start with the 72 teachers, identified for transacting innovative pedagogy by the evaluation study of Prof. Ramachandran but found it difficult to locate them, due to the attrition both of the teachers and the NGO heads. We therefore began with Maharashtra from where we had received several applications for fellowship.

Research Work in Progress

During 2007-08, three research studies were sanctioned.

a) Action Research on 'Teaching, Learning of English in Hindi Medium Schools

English continues to symbolize both dominance and access to opportunities in India. Given its symbiotic relationship to means of knowledge and possibilities of employment, it is no surprise that marginalized groups also wish to make the master's language their own. But what are the challenges in this task of learning and mastering English for children who are marginalized and study in a non-English medium school? The Action research on 'Teaching, Learning of English in Hindi Medium Schools' at Masi Marsal School, Charhi, Hazaribagh, Jharkhand undertaken by Father Robert Slattery, engages with this question and aims to improve the English language competence of both students and teachers, most of whom are tribals.

b) Panchayati Raj Institutions and Education Governance – a Mapping of Issues, Challenges and Possibilities

Decentralization of power through Panchayati Raj Institutions raised hopes to achieve better accountability, larger resource mobilization, and empowerment of excluded people. However, there is widespread skepticism regarding the performance of PRIs, especially with regard to the issues of inclusion and participation of marginalized populations. The question of decentralized education governance has received even lesser attention. The PRIs are still far away from the schooling system with regard to its management, curriculum, pedagogy, its overall accountability etc. Further, considerable authority continues to be vested at the district and state levels in particular with regard to recruitment, posting and transfer and the tendency to create many parallel committees by the government and NGOs without the involvement of the Panchayats at all the levels. This has further weakened this constitutionally mandated structure.

To understand the meaning, nature and scope of local education governance, to understand and document the challenges, constraints, possibilities, experiences and learning from the experience of political decentralization in Kerala and Rajasthan, a research study by Mr. Shesha Giri, titled, 'Panchayati Raj Institutions and Education Governance – a Mapping of Issues, Challenges and Possibilities' has been sanctioned.

c) Caste Conflict and Children's Education

The impact of conflict on children's education has been one of the most neglected areas in research especially in India. Generally, caste conflict has been understood and explained by principles, norms and values of 'adult society', but in case of childhood, the nature of conflict is an unexplored terrain. Children are deeply aware of social conflicts, and this awareness makes them anxious about the future, but they seldom find opportunities



Discussion on the Agrarian crisis report

6313



to express their anxiety. In the year 2007-08, NEG-FIRE has also agreed in principle to support an ethnographic research on 'Caste Conflict and Children's Education' by Mr. Ajay Singh that tries to explore the relationship between experiences of conflict and children's education with special focus on caste conflict in two states of India.

Research Evaluation

During 2007-08, three research evaluations were sanctioned and two of these were completed.

a) NEG-FIRE's response to children affected by the agrarian crisis

Over the last decade and a half, more than 150,000 farmers in India have committed suicide in Andhra Pradesh, Maharashtra, Punjab and Karnataka. In Maharashtra, most suicides have occurred in the Vidarbha region and particularly in Yavatmal District. While it is largely the male members of the peasant families who have committed suicide, this coupled with the deepening agrarian crisis and the circle of indebtedness have deeply affected the women and children of all families in the category of small peasants and agricultural labourers. The impact of this agrarian crisis on the life, malnutrition, education- enrolment, retention and drop out and work of the children from these affected families has not received due attention. To understand these issues specifically those related to education and devise a strategy of intervention, NEG-FIRE undertook a rapid assessment research from 3rd January- 26th January 2008, in Yavatmal district where there has been rampant prevalence of suicides and malnutrition.

The major findings of this research are as follows:

- Both landed and landless families are struggling to deal with the crisis of indebtedness. Most families indicated that they did not have access to extension machinery of the government in giving sound information on how to deal with pests and declining productivity of land.
- Villages lack basic infrastructural facilities including those related to education and health. Schools are not located in near vicinity and there is absence of pre-primary education facility in the areas studied in this research.
- There is a large difference between the official statistics of child labour and children engaged in labour.
- Children from the age of ten years, including girls are working on the land owned by their family or on others field and also work as wage labourers. Children work for about 6-8 hours in the field. Responsibility for house chores and other domestic responsibilities may be increasing the work load of the girl children.
- These long hours of work lead to periodic absence from school of those enrolled.

- There is a significant number of children who are out of school and about two-thirds of the enrolled children do not even complete their elementary education.
- June and the period from October to December are crucial stress points when demands for involvement of children in the field are made.

To develop an appropriate strategy of comprehensive and integrated intervention, NEG-FIRE has decided to first visit the area. The intervention may be started from Yavatmal and later may be replicated to other districts.

b) NEG-FIRE and Denotified and Nomadic Tribes: A Study

In the nineteenth century, the colonial government concluded that the pastoral nomads, the itinerant traders and other unsettled communities are different from the settled agriculturists as they did not settle at one place and were not engaged in a settled livelihood. These communities were seen as aberrant factors. Lest they do not pose a threat to the maintenance of 'law and order' these communities were to be 'controlled' through different colonial legal and penal institutions. And so came about the notification of "criminal tribes". After Independence, these tribes were denotified and some of these communities were separately classified as nomadic. However, even today, discrimination against these communities persists and the denotification remains only in the legal sphere.

The National Education Group West Zone was one of the first organizations along with a few others to intervene in the situation and carry out a study in Maharashtra. It also worked in tandem with others at the national level to create a platform for some kind of an intervention. It has supported different organizations working in five districts of Maharashtra, namely Ahmed Nagar, Bid, Nanded, Osmanabad and Sholapur. This intervention in the field of education and culture has undergone an experiential cycle. NEG (as it was known then) set up more than forty pre-primary education centers spread over seven districts in Maharashtra starting from the year 1998 onwards. NEG played a pioneering role in the process of pre-primary education for the denotified and nomadic communities.

To chart out a course of action and a road map for NEG-FIRE's intervention on the issue of denotified and nomadic communities in Maharashtra, NEG-FIRE has commissioned a study to take stock of those interventions from 1996 onwards. This study to be undertaken by Prof. Ajay Dandekar and Ms. Meena Srinivasan would also analyze the pedagogic impact of the earlier interventions. It is also expected to suggest the kinds of inputs that may be required at the level of pre and primary education levels for the children of the denotified communities. It would also help to formulate a clear understanding of the issues pertaining to intervention in the denotified communities and identify the communities that may need specific intervention.

c) NEG-FIRE Partners Speak

The transition from NEG to NEG-FIRE has involved several evaluations of the organization in terms of its focus on children from the marginalized communities and their learning, support to partner organizations, the quality of Programs and the nature and extent of the involvement and

participation of people in the decision making. All such internal and external reflections and analysis have been initiated with the intention to put in place the best strategies that would make it possible to realize the vision of NEG-FIRE to ensure quality elementary education to each child from the marginalized communities.

A key factor in formulation and success of such a strategy in the selection of such partners and the programs that share our focus, thrust areas, interests, ideas and commitment. To obtain better information about the kind of NGOs we have supported, to know their developmental ethos, thinking and practice and to make an assessment about our partners, both in the past and the present, supported by NEG and NEG-FIRE in different periods since 1989, NEG-FIRE initiated a research study with our partners. Prof. P. Ramachandran, Research Consultant, Valmar International, Mumbai undertook this research study.

Objectives of the Study

This study had the following aims:

- What is the profile of our partner organisations? When and why are they formed? Where are they located? With whom do they work?
- What are the key thrust areas of our partner organisations and where does education figure in it? What kinds of educational programs are run by the partners and supported by NEG/NEG-FIRE?
- What ideology informs these programs? What will strengthen it? What is the relationship of the partners with the community and how do they visualize the role of different stakeholders in education?
- What is the impact of any program? What are the future plans of the partners in terms of action, advocacy and sustainability?

All the above objectives were also used to understand all the organizations that sought our support, irrespective of it being given or not. Such information and analysis was considered significant to help document the key experiences and innovations of NEG-FIRE partners, identify potential partners, duration of support, identify how to decentralize the operations, identify where to support work and decide the age group of children and how to work with Government. This study was also seen useful to help us develop an institutional mechanism to strengthen the educational initiatives of the partners.

To undertake this study, names of 1637 partners were mined from the records of NEG/NEG-FIRE. A questionnaire with both closed and open questions (54 open questions) was prepared and translated in Hindi as well for the partners in Hindi states and was sent to these organisations. Exactly 200 responses were received. Separate codes were prepared for Hindi and English questionnaires and later merged. Field meetings with partners were also organized. One limitation of this study is that it has not separately classified the responses of partners supported by NEG, partners supported by NEG-FIRE and those not supported at all.

The key findings and analysis of this report are:

- Registration with NEG-FIRE and receiving funds from it are not necessarily related.
- Though
- Though more than half the respondents had set up their organizations even before NEG came into existence, it is encouraging to find that education was one of their aims and objects. This focus on education also comes out clearly when we look at the kinds of programs and activities of these organisations. Most of the people's organizations established by the partners are women's organisations/Mahila mandals. Most of the programs related with women are of self-help groups. These organizations also have an educational component and have been involved with the educational programs of the parent organization.
- The proportion of poor families in a majority of project areas has reportedly been reduced from six years ago; in 1/3rd of the project areas these conditions have remained the same, and in 1/10th areas the proportion of the poor has increased.
- The focus on education is evident in the response to another set of questions about the basic purpose of the Program. Education (194/243) greatly outnumbers community building (31/243) and economic development (20/243). Educational facilities (138/338) figures as one of the strategies to implement the primary Program community building (113/338) and teacher training (31/338). This means that while education may be the key thrust area, a variety of strategies are used for it. It is worth noting that questions of curriculum, preparing child-centered and context specific teaching-learning material do not figure as a strategy.
- The reasons for low priority to curriculum development are related to the capacities of the respondents themselves. Most of them use the NCERT curriculum (150) and another 39 have developed curricula by their own staff. Only 27 responses were received in response to the question, have they introduced any innovations in teaching? While local language is used as the medium of instruction, a very slight trend in favour of the English medium has been noticed.
- 72 teachers from different organizations were identified as innovative pedagogy practitioners. The exchange of views and ideas, networking, involvement with executive committee meetings and teacher's training figure as major means to share experiences.
- NEG/NEG-FIRE (86) and the government (82) figure as key sources of funding followed by self generated resources (53). In the list of challenges faced by these organizations, lack of funds (134) figures as the most critical challenge, followed by women (54), community (35), education and teaching (30 each). It was reported that the women were illiterate and therefore did not seem to view education as an important element in the life of their children.
- An examination of the groups with whom these respondents are working tells us that SC, OBC, BC (78) figure higher than poor (50), education for 6-14 age group (47) and children (38). This was followed by selection of children from poor families. In a number of organizations the selection was through local communities and committees. It is important to note that the category 'Third Party' (96) plays a major role in the selection of the target group for the program as opposed to discussion (27).
- Among different stakeholders, the heaviest stress is given to the teachers followed by the children, parents and then on the community. Major expectations from the teachers involve coming regularly to school, being accountable to the children and communities and being a functioning link between community and schools. Parents are expected to send children to school to participate in discussions and attend Parent Teacher

Association (PTA) meetings. The community is supposed to be involved in issue-based programs, be part of the VEC and own the school. The key contribution of the community is seen in providing support to activities through financial help and in kind. Members of the community have also worked as voluntary teachers and helped in identifying teachers. They have been members of the monitoring team and visited schools. Parents are held responsible for not sending children to school.

- About half the respondents are not satisfied with respect to the outcome of their efforts. These dissatisfactions relate to finances, families, lack of facilities and teachers. About one-fourth respondents have a satisfaction level beyond 75 percent.
- Coordination and exchange of views through network figures as the key way to share experience. Most of them indulge in weekly/monthly and annual reviews.
- Though a relatively high number of organizations felt that advocacy should be taken as a major feature of the project, only a small number are doing something about it. Lack of all round interest and lack of awareness/ knowledge on these dimensions are the two main reasons put forward for not doing anything. The number of responses under the heading activities that should be done for advocacy is higher than what is being done.
- The respondents have proposed two model durations of project support: 6 years and 10-12 years. The model values for the projects are Rs.250,000/- and Rs.1,000,000/- From the conditional responses given by some of the respondents it seems that the answers to both questions would depend on a number of factors and it was not possible or feasible to correct or mention just one period and one amount.
- While 75% of these respondents are happy about their association with NEG/NEG-FIRE and believe that it has benefited them in capacity building, forging relationships with the VEC, decision making besides financial support, another 25% are dissatisfied.
- About 95% of the respondents share the ethos and concerns of NEG-FIRE. 78 of the 200 partners did perceive the possibility of becoming resources centers of NEG-FIRE. A majority of the partners have taken the initiative towards sustainability of their project.

The study has been useful as these pointers provide directions for rethinking education and for re-strategizing. As a follow up to this study, NEG-FIRE has put greater stress on the involvement of women and the mobilization of the community. Integral to the capacity building programs is our endeavour to address the attitudes, myths and prejudices about women and marginalized caste groups. Through a participatory process programs are being developed with partners. Greater emphasis is given to pedagogy, classroom processes and child learning. The duration and the amount of support are also reconsidered for an upward revision.





Alphabets of grass grown by children - Bhonga Shala, Maharashtra

Capacity Building

Early Childhood Care and Education

NEG-FIRE realizes that the earliest years are the most crucial for the survival, growth and development of any child. Based on this foundation, access, retention and meaningful completion of the elementary education cycle for all children is achievable. Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) is a holistic approach to child development that is concerned with the physical, cognitive, emotional and social aspects. It also incorporates early learning, health and nutrition, parental education and advocacy.

In this context NEG-FIRE initiated a discussion with Paragon Charitable Trust (PCT) to provide academic support to its partners through the Mukhtangan programme. Mukhtangan is a community based comprehensive educational model developed by PCT offering quality, cost effective education to the economically disadvantaged groups. NEG-FIRE took some of its partners who presently run balwadis, along with Fr. Tom Kunnunkal and Dr .Pankajam - General Body members, for an exposure visit cum training to Mukhtangan in September 2007. The objective was to understand how the innovative ECCE curriculum in English is being transacted within the Government education system. At the workshop the participants appreciated

the democratic functioning of the organization, the school, the efficient use of learning inputs and highly motivated teachers. As a follow up, Mukhtangan will train teachers and staff of NEG-FIRE in the Mukhtangan approach.

We also initiated dialogue with Mobile Creches, who have been working on ECCE for more than three decades, to help us develop a vision for the next five years. A Visioning workshop was facilitated by Mobile crèches on 17th-19th March 2008 in New Delhi. NEG-FIRE's partners from eight states, Dr. Pankajam- General Body member and Mr. Sheshagiri-consultant also attended it. The workshop helped to identify the issues and understand the perspectives related to ECCE. A number of critical ECCE issues regarding the status of children, the attitude towards children both in the home and in school and parenting care-giver issues, gaps in school, ICDS and Crèche services; quality of services and children's access to those; curriculum and training issues, the



Team work - Mukhtangan, NEG-FIRE and Partners



status of ECCE teachers, their self esteem and remuneration were discussed as length. The capacity building of NEG-FIRE's partners, in research and advocacy, and consultation with partners in smaller groups were identified as the next steps in the process of finalizing the concept and visioning for ECCE.

Meeting of Partners

Ensuring access, retention and quality education to marginalized children, in partnership with NGOs, is an important promotion strategy of NEG-FIRE. In the first year, 2006-2007, the issues addressed were the gap in alignment of the vision of the organization and the operational plans of the finance and program teams. The second meeting of all our partners was held in January 10-12, 2008. The objective of this meeting was to understand the strengths, and expertise of the NGOs, identify training/capacity building needs of partners, evolve monitoring indicators at multiple levels - NGO, program design, values, and school and classroom level and to orient partners on NEG-FIRE financial and program reporting requirements. Program and Finance representatives from each of the 37 NEG-FIRE partners selected for 2006-07 and 13 NEG partners were invited for the meet on January 10-12, 2008. Mr. Subir Shukla, of INGUS-erg was the resource person who guided the development of the monitoring indicators. Mr. Joselyn Martins, our Statutory Auditor, and Mr. Thomas Mathew, Internal Auditor, took the session on finance and FCRA aspects. The outcomes of the workshop were that partners through a collective process, decided on indicators for monitoring of their projects and obtained a clearer understanding of the program, and finance reporting requirements and gathered information on the FCRA.

Overview of Proposals Received (April 07-March 08)

A total of 131 proposals were received during the reporting period. 100 were not accepted at the desk study level, due to non alignment with NEG-FIRE's vision and mandate. Projects not accepted related to construction of schools and hostels, with support being sought for single schools, NFE Centres without any mainstreaming plan, the age group went beyond the elementary level, and also from some southern states which are not the priority of NEG-FIRE. 12 projects out of 31 which were presented to the Project Selection Committee (PSC) were sanctioned at two meetings in October 07 and March 08.

Field Visits to the NGO's Sadhana - Andhra Pradesh.

NEG-FIRE supports Sadhana, an NGO in Andhra Pradesh to work through four partners (Sparsh, MDYF, SCOPE, SVK) to ensure 100 Panchayats, declare their villages, child labour free. Four months after the sanction of the project, it was heartening to note that 50 child committees and 50 Panchayat committees have already been established and two resolutions have been signed by the Gram Panchayats. A discussion with children from



Mr. Joselyn Martins Statutory Auditor - NEG-FIRE



Group work at the Partner's meeting



Apli-Shala – Pragat Shikshan Sanstha

three child committees showed that the children were aware of their role and the importance of their committees. They also feel great achievement when they convince parents to send their children to school. Sadhana faces stiff resistance and has to deal with issues of parents who question the benefit of going to school, owners of enterprises who employ children, parents in debt, child marriages linked to bonded labour, and language issues in the border areas. With great leadership from Murali Mohan, head of Sadhana, and a committed and courageous team, by the year 2009, 100 Panchayats in Medak will be child labour free.

Pragat Shikshan Sanstha,(PSS) Phaltan, Maharashtra

NEG-FIRE supports PSS to run the Apli Shala (pre-primary classes) and supplementary classes from I-VII. Children in supplementary classes seemed very happy to be part of these centers, and are learning well. They perform very well at the government exams. This had enthused the community who full heartedly support and appreciate PSS. The Apli shala has both a Jr and Sr pre-school where in reading and writing readiness skills are taught and children are prepared for class I. These Pre-schools have helped children to perform well at class I.

Samaj Vikas Sansthan, (SVS) Nanded Maharashtra.

SVS is supported for its vastishalla program and for bringing some change in policy to the 1984 Government resolution (GR) in Maharashtra that regulates the residential school hostels. Mr Bhumiputra, through a network of 21 NGOs called the Vanchit Bal Vikas Manch, is in the process of documenting the pathetic condition of the children in 22 residential hostels in the four districts of Beed, Nanded, Osmanabad and Latur. Vanchit was further supported to turn this present initiative into a rigorous coherent advocacy strategy with other groups and networks.

Sugam Jagrati, Bihar

NEG-FIRE supports 10 interim learning centers of Sugam Jagruti which has a clear mainstreaming plan. 322 children are enrolled at these education centers. Each centre is equipped with adequate teaching learning material. There is improvement in the reading and writing competencies of children. A lot of recreational inputs are provided to children. Village education committees have been formed, and they monitor, guide and suggest better implementation of the programme. The organization and the community conduct periodic reviews on the performance of children.

Manav Kalyan Kendra, Bihar

At Manav Kalyan Kendra, the children in Bihar said that their mathematics and language knowledge was better than at Environmental Studies (EVS), this was also verified. The organization requested help for training in activity based learning, for their teachers who are all local residents.



Sugam Jagrati

Samantar, Rajasthan

Chetanalaya the project of SAMANTAR was visited in December 07, six months from the date of sanction. Within six months of the project, SAMANTAR was able to recruit a team of five facilitators for the project who have undergone an orientation session, two workshops and three exposure visits to understand the aspect of educational philosophy, curriculum development, pedagogy and critical consciousness. A base line survey was made and individual profiles of children have been maintained for each child to measure their performance in every month. Most of the children, who come to the centre, are school dropouts and some of them have never been to school. A joyful environment is created where the children enjoy the learning and come to school regularly. SAMANTAR has consciously made an effort to reach out to the community and also conducts meeting with the community on a regular basis.

General Body Members 2007-08

- | | |
|--|------------------------------------|
| 1. Fr. Raymond Ambroise - Chairperson | 14. Ms. Hasina Kharbhih |
| 2. Dr. Jaya Peter - Vice Chairperson | 15. Mr. Gagan Sethi |
| 3. Fr. Rudolf C. Heredia, SJ - Treasurer | 16. Mr. Gratian Vas (till Nov.'07) |
| 4. Bishop Thomas D'Souza | |
| 5. Sr. Mariella CJ | |
| 6. Dr. Azra Razzack, | |
| 7. Rev. Fr. Thomas V. Kunnunkal, SJ | |
| 8. Bishop Stephen Rotluanga | |
| 9. Fr. Robert Slattery | |
| 10. Dr. G. Pankajam | |
| 11. Mr. Martin Macwan | |
| 12. Mr. Shankar Venkateswaran | |
| 13. Mr. Umashankar Periodi | |

Governing Board Members 2007-08

- | |
|--|
| 1. Fr. Raymond Ambroise - Chairperson |
| 2. Dr. Jaya Peter - Vice-Chairperson |
| 3. Fr. Rudolf C. Heredia, SJ - Treasurer |
| 4. Bishop Thomas D'Souza |
| 5. Sr. Mariella CJ |
| 6. Dr. Azra Razzack |
| 7. Mr. Gagan Sethi |
| 8. Mr. Gratian Vas (till Nov.'07) |

6313

**Annual General Body Meeting - A Celebration of Mission.
28th 29th June 2007**



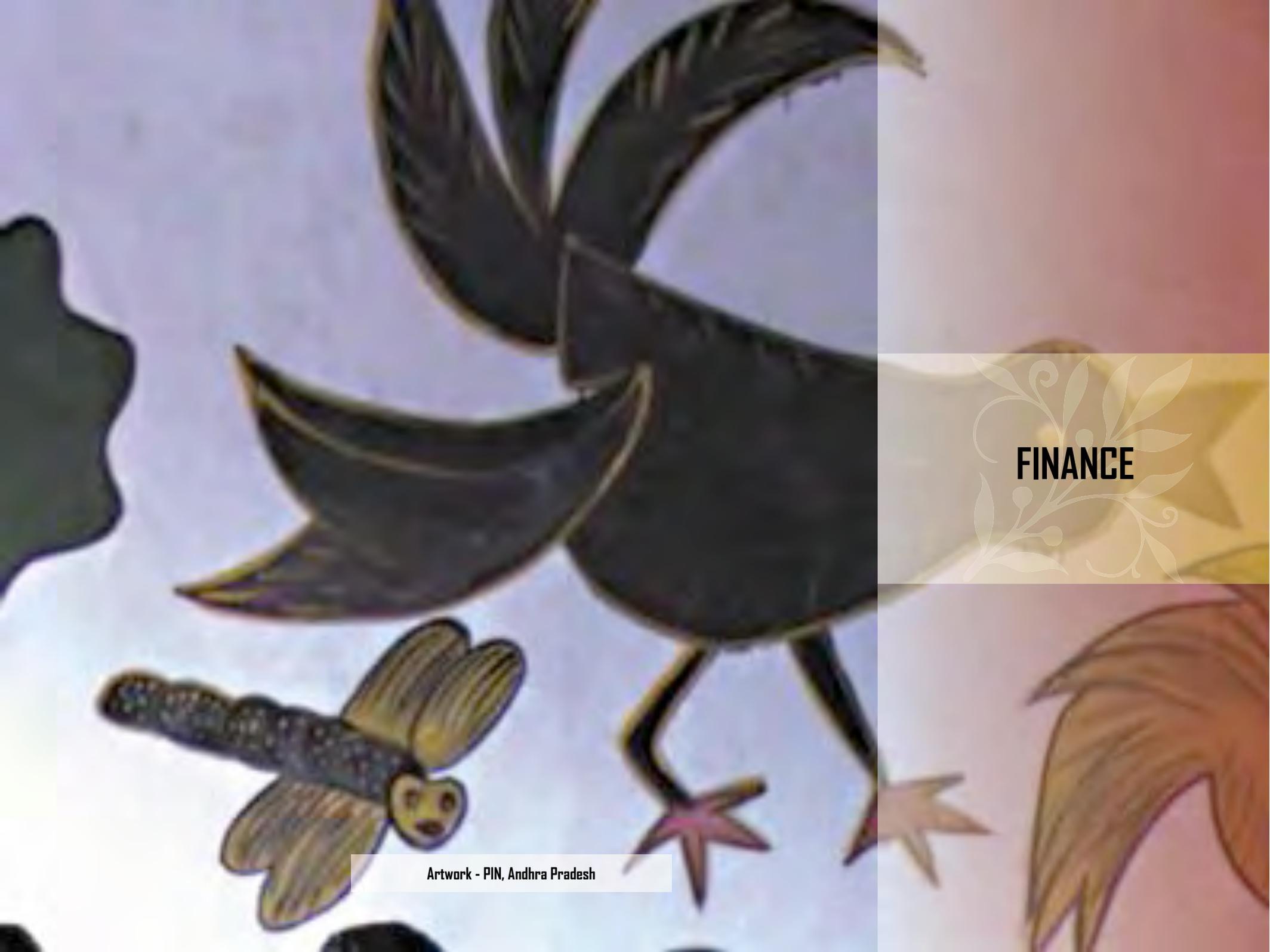
Felicitations

Fr. Tom Kunukul, Padma Shree, felicitated for Honorary Fellow of the Commonwealth of Learning 2006

Mr. Gratin Vas for 'The Golden Peacock Global Award' 2006

Mr. Martin Makwan for Human Rights Award in 2000

Thank you and Farewell Bishop Charles



FINANCE

Artwork - PIN, Andhra Pradesh

New Education Group - Foundation for Innovation and Research in Education
 Consolidated Statement of Income

Particulars	2007-08 ₹	2006-07 ₹	2005-06 ₹
Income			
Government Grants	1,00,00,000	1,00,00,000	1,00,00,000
Interest Income	10,00,000	10,00,000	10,00,000
Other Income	10,00,000	10,00,000	10,00,000
Total	1,20,00,000	1,20,00,000	1,20,00,000
Expenses			
Salaries & Wages	1,00,00,000	1,00,00,000	1,00,00,000
Staff Welfare	10,00,000	10,00,000	10,00,000
Travel & Conveyance	10,00,000	10,00,000	10,00,000
Printing & Stationery	10,00,000	10,00,000	10,00,000
Repairs & Maintenance	10,00,000	10,00,000	10,00,000
Depreciation	10,00,000	10,00,000	10,00,000
Interest	10,00,000	10,00,000	10,00,000
Income Tax	10,00,000	10,00,000	10,00,000
Other Income	10,00,000	10,00,000	10,00,000
Total	1,60,00,000	1,60,00,000	1,60,00,000
Surplus	40,00,000	40,00,000	40,00,000

For and on behalf of the Board
 Director
 Director
 Director

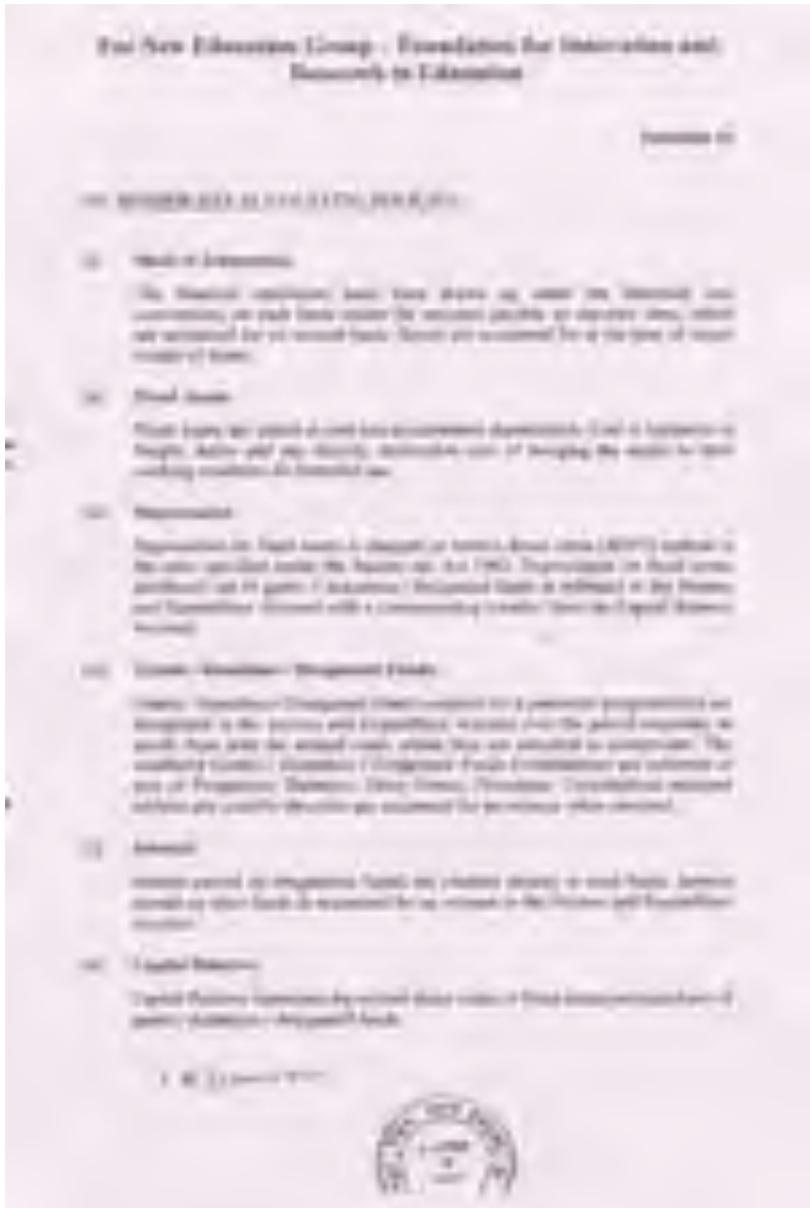
For and on behalf of the Board
 Director
 Director
 Director

New Education Group - Foundation for Innovation and Research in Education
 Consolidated Statement of Balance Sheet

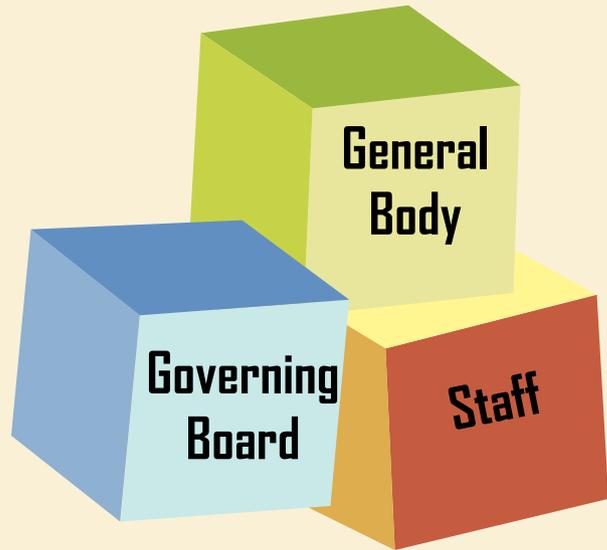
Particulars	2007-08 ₹	2006-07 ₹	2005-06 ₹
Assets			
Fixed Assets	1,00,00,000	1,00,00,000	1,00,00,000
Current Assets	20,00,000	20,00,000	20,00,000
Total	1,20,00,000	1,20,00,000	1,20,00,000
Liabilities			
Capital	1,00,00,000	1,00,00,000	1,00,00,000
Reserves	20,00,000	20,00,000	20,00,000
Total	1,20,00,000	1,20,00,000	1,20,00,000

For and on behalf of the Board
 Director
 Director
 Director

For and on behalf of the Board
 Director
 Director
 Director



MAKING A DIFFERENCE TEAM



We invite you to join hands

*.... to make Education an effective approach to empowering the powerless and bringing development to people and communities who have no access to it....
.... be a partner, a volunteer, a donor ...
Donate to*

NEG-Fire

(All donation are eligible for tax relief under section 80 G of the Income Tax Act)



NEG-FIRE

Fr. Agnel's School

Prerna Building, 1st Floor

Gautam Nagar, New Delhi-110049

Phone : (011) 26526570

Telefax : 26531887

Email : info@negfire.org

Website : www.negfire.org

Let us reflect

- ☞ Learning begins at birth
- ☞ No two children learn in similar ways Do we take this into account when we provide their education?
- ☞ Are children assured of the right to quality and culturally oriented education?
- ☞ Who should the teacher be accountable to ? The child, the community or the system?
- ☞ Do teachers treat at all children with same respect regardless of their class, caste, gender or religion?
- ☞ Is early childhood only about providing meals to poor children or about psycho-social development and learning?
- ☞ 'Can leadership emerge from the margins'?
- ☞ Should schools be community owned or privately owned?
- ☞ Should Panchyats play a crucial role in the education system?