

Impact Assessment of Remedial Coaching Centres of Nav Bharat Jagriti Kendra (NBJK)

For Axis Bank Foundation

Prepared By



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Executive Summary

Introduction

Nav Bharat Jagriti Kendra (NBJK) provides tuition support in English, mathematics, and science through its Remedial Coaching Centres (RCC) to children of classes VIII, IX and X, who belong to poor, marginalised communities from rural Hazaribag. With funding support from Axis Bank Foundation (ABF) this programme has been implemented in three development blocks, viz. Chouparan, Churchu, and Sadar.

This study, conducted by Best Practices Foundation (BPF) and commissioned by ABF, assesses the impact of NBJK's RCC programme across these three blocks. Following a qualitative case-study approach, the BPF team visited 10 RCCs across the three blocks between November 13 and November 18, 2014. Focus group discussions (FGDs) with students and parents were held during the six-day field visit. Structured and semi-structured interviews were held during the same period with full-time and part-time NBJK staff engaged in the implementation of the programme.

RCC has demonstrated its success in cases where the high school is inaccessible and children tend to drop out after class VIII due to several endemic factors. Being located in the village, the RCCs have been able to provide academic support that enables the children from an underprivileged rural background to complete schooling successfully. RCC is not a substitute for regular schooling; but complements school-work with additional support. Various strategies are used by the tutors to make the topics simple yet interesting.

Regular contact with parents is maintained in order to ensure that the academic progress of children continues and to discuss any other issue that may affect their performance. Various extra- and co-curricular activities have been included in the RCC over the years, for the holistic development of children who are otherwise deprived of such activities. See Box 1 for details of activities carried out for children. In addition, a orientation-cum-refresher workshop is organised twice a year for tutors.

Box 1. Activities in RCC

1. Remedial teaching
2. Quiz programme
3. Exposure Visit
4. Essay competition
5. Drawing, word *antakshari*, spelling test
6. Sports
7. Annual felicitation for RCC toppers in board examination
8. Programme for children with disabilities

Impact of RCC

Through its numerous activities, the RCC model has succeeded in upgrading the educational status of children and increasing their motivation, especially in the case of girls, to continue with their studies beyond secondary school. The regularity of RCC makes children lead a disciplined life. They learn the basics of science, mathematics and English at the RCC. As a result, most children move up from failing grade to 1st or 2nd division marks in their school examination. After joining RCC, some children even outperform the better students in their class. Increased confidence has enabled these children to take leadership roles – organising

programmes in school, giving speeches, becoming president of *bal sansad* amongst others. Among board examinees, the number of children securing 1st division marks rose from 28 percent in the year 2011-12 to 54 percent in 2013-14. During the same period, the number of children who failed in the board examination also declined from 10 percent to four percent. There are instances of timely intervention made by the tutors preventing early marriages. There is an increased level of awareness among parents about the importance of education for both boys and girls. The parents have started questioning the school authorities about regular teaching, monitoring, the functioning of the mid-day meal and so on. Young boys have often been encouraged by their families to migrate to big cities after completing middle school, and to work, even in difficult circumstances, in order to safeguard them from being lured into anti-social activities. RCC provided an opportunity to complete studies up to Class X and thereby prevent child labour.

The attitude of children towards studies tends to change after they join the local RCC: they become regular in school, start asking questions in class, take leading roles in organising school programmes, and most importantly improve their examination performance. School toppers in board examinations have on the whole been students from the RCCs.

Children with disabilities have benefitted from the annual assessment camp and distribution of equipment through the RCCs. Additional input and assistance in certification are received from the special educator during home visits.

Ways forward

RCCs have been functioning almost as an alternative school in a context where government schools are not yet equipped to provide adequate academic support to children from disadvantaged and marginalised families. In a situation of educational resource scarcity, the provision of more coaching centres would have a serious positive impact on the community.

At present, mathematics, science, and English are the three subjects taught at the RCC. However the children need support in Hindi and social studies also. Therefore, it is recommended that these two subjects be included in the RCC.

Many government initiatives do not acknowledge the requirement of first generation learners who need additional academic support to cope and come up to the level of normal students. Therefore, it is recommended to provide continuing support to the existing RCCs. If not, a staggered withdrawal policy on the part of ABF is recommended in order to allow NBJK to leverage additional funds for the project.

NBJK could consider raising funds from other sources in case ABF decides on withdrawal. Slight modification and reorganization in the way of functioning of the RCC may prove beneficial. For example, introducing a dual-fee structure, sponsorship for specific activities like sports, felicitation of awardees, and exposure visit would reduce the dependency on ABF funding.

The activity for children with disabilities (CwDs) needs to be strengthened. Either this component of the programme should be merged with other NBJK programmes meant for the CwDs, or a focussed and systematic intervention is required to provide support to the CwDs in addition to annual assessment camps and distribution of equipment.

Under the Education Guarantee Scheme and Innovative Education Scheme of Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan (SSA) there is provision for specific strategies and innovative pedagogy for special groups like child labour, street children, adolescent girls, girls belonging to certain backward communities, children of migrating families, and so on.¹ As a method to improve quality of elementary education, SSA suggests remedial teaching up to a period of four months only as a method to help children in adjusting to formal environment who join schools after undergoing bridge camp.² SSA focuses on children in the age range 6-14, and thus does not extend to Class IX or X; thus it is not empowered to upscale NBJK's initiative covering the age range 14-16. Therefore it is recommended that NBJK advocates with the state education department to provide additional academic input for first generation learners to enable them complete schooling. This kind of support would be necessary as long as there are first generation learners in the towns and villages of India.

¹ <http://ssa.nic.in/ssa-framework/quality-issues-in-elementary-education>. accessed on November 14, 2014

² <http://ssa.nic.in/ssa-framework/quality-issues-in-elementary-education> accessed on November 14, 2014