

BTC Consultation on

“Strengthening Child Protection and Inclusive Education policy for Children in un-served areas of BTC”

30th September 2016

NEDAN Foundation has organized one day Consultation Workshop with duty bearers from BTC Administration and other CSOs on 30th September 2016 at Conference Hall, Central Institute of Technology (CIT) Kokrajhar.

The consultation was inaugurated by lighting the lamp by the invited Chief Guest Mrs. Jolly Das Brahma (ACS, Secretary, BTC), Mr. Digambar Narzary (Chairperson NEDAN Foundation), Mrs Nishani Narzary (CP co-ordinator, NEDAN), along with core members of CPC from various displaced locations.

Mr. Digambar Narzary (chairperson of NEDAN) conveyed the objective of the consultation. He said that there are certain areas in BTC where there is no education due to many constraints. There should be inclusive education policy for all to make education free and compulsory irrespective of area jurisdiction in the line of RTE. It will reduce Child labour, Child marriage, Child soldier and other related crime against children. Citing the example of previous days Gurukul model of school, teaching under the tree, he said that such model-school could be made possible without harming the environment in forest encroach villages of Sarolpara and Ultapani. Mr. Narzary also added that this BTC consultation isn't for blaming each other instead it is for jointly working together for sustainability and empowerment of society.

Mrs. Jolly Das Brahma (ACS, Secretary, BTC) has stated how children in backward areas of BTC are facing many sufferings due to ethnic conflict. Child exploitation is taking place in various forms. There are many Government enacted schemes and laws but NGOs being working at ground level needs to implement the programs. She also said that after rescuing children from various difficulties it becomes mandatory to provide temporary shelter for them and therefore organizations working on this field needs to be granted funds to run shelter homes.

Ms. Nishani Narzary (Child Protection, coordinator, NEDAN Foundation) presented on “Child Protection Scenario in BTC”. She showed data from various reliable sources and also primary data collected by NEDAN Foundation from 25 displaced locations on the missing children and other challenges faced by children living on these locations. She explained the rescue, repatriation and reintegration of problematized children by NEDAN Foundation at Destination Girls Home. The home has a capacity of providing temporary

shelter for 25 girls. The role of NEDAN for minimizing children related problem was highlighted and the strategies adopted like formation of Village Vigilance Committee, Child Protection Committee, children drop-in-centre, training uniform personals on cross border trafficking, campus talks of human trafficking, CHILDLINE (1098) and child marriage. It was followed by discussion and conclusion.

Mr. Lawrence Islary (G. Secretary, Central ABSU), said there are many schools in BTC which are not provincialized and so many students drop out from school due to shortage of teachers. He further stated in order to impart quality education there should be one teacher for one class but in actual scenario in many school there is only one teacher maintaining students from class I-V. There are no adequate school and colleges in BTC and therefore force out migration in taking place from this region. As per Govt. of India, education should be free and compulsory for all but in Assam unlike other States there exist four types of school – Venchar School, provincialized school, govt. school and private school, which is the greatest drawback hampering education system. He figured out the shortage of educational institutions in Bodoland Territorial Council (BTC) due to which many students do not get admission in formal and technical education. In BTC, problem starts from KG to PG. He questioned when all required facilities are not provided how students can excel in education.

Mr. Amarsing Brahma (BEEO, Kochugaon) stated various roles undertaken by SSA to prevent force migration and measures available for migrated children in Brick clan industry to maintain their regular education. He said that Education department at the district and block level are facing challenges as they are asked to engage with other works of government like providing data and serving election duty which hampers their regular teaching duty in schools. He also said local authorities like VCDC are equally responsible to see the management of schools in their locality along with Education department. Emphasizing on quality education, he said drop out takes place where teachers are not sincere, regular and does not consider students as their own children. There are areas dominated by backward communities like Adivasis and Rabhas, where only class X pass teachers is found so quality education cannot be expected from such areas. Teachers from other communities also refuse to go and teach in such areas dominated by these communities. He said that he has been recommending BTC administration to conduct BTC level TET (Teachers Eligibility Test) and recruit teachers as per need of communities. Expressing his concern over this, he said that every year 6-7 teachers retire but it take 6-7 years to recruit new teachers. So such delaying hampers regular education resulting due to shortage of teachers. He put forward his advice to enact new policies for further encroachment, until then no further expansion should take place in BTC.

Ms. Padmini Brahma (Project officer TDH) stated the various problems adolescents are facing while dealing with parents due to the absence of teaching- learning model in the

schools of our region. She also stated various activities they have been extending for child protection through enhancing and reforming educational teachings in schools.

Mr. Matilal Basumatary (DFO, Haltugaon) emphasized the value of conserving natural resources as we are interdependent. He told the various laws and acts available to protect forest and wild life. He further said that in order to protect children and promote development in the society, first of all we should be sincere from our side as an individual. He also said that after 1988, forest officials could not control people entering and settling in forest land in Kokrajhar following agitation by different organizations especially ABSU. When there is no forest and animals then there will be no human beings, so everyone should cooperate to protect forest.

Mr. Louis Basumatary (DCPO, Kokrajhar) stated that Schemes related to children welfare and sustainability. He also added that the schemes like ICDS should function well and effective for the children. He further stated that if we can't provide education to our children then they will face problem in future generation.

The one day consultation continued with open discussion and recommendation for inclusive education policy in BTC region. The discussion took places on various issues related to inclusive education policy, children development and well being such as exploitation, trafficking, violation of rights, abduction, Child Labour, Abuse, Child marriages and other forms of issues. Also discussed about the mechanism issues in BTC related to RTE Act implementation in forest encroachment villages like Ultapani, Sorolpara and Lungsung. This consultation also really figured out RTE Act 2009 in details. The SMC roles and functions were also discussed in a very well and effective way.

The participants in one day BTC consultation suggested the following recommendations:

- VCDC and SMC should be aware of their roles and responsibilities
- While selecting CRCC(Cluster Resource Centre Coordinator), Asst. CRCC should be appointed
- Increase Seats in KGBV and NRSTC
- One school-one teacher is not justifiable, managing 21 subjects and therefore there should be 3 teachers in one school
- Involvement of police in CPC meeting relating to child marriage cases. etc