

## **REACHING THE UNREACHED: COGNITIVE DEVELOPMENT OF GIRLS FROM MARGINALIZED COMMUNITIES THROUGH AN ACCELERATED LEARNING PROGRAMME**

**NIRUPMA JAIMINI**

Associate Professor, Department of Education, University of Delhi, Delhi, India

### **ABSTRACT**

In the developing countries the challenge of educating the marginalized sections of society is a huge one and it calls for interventions at the micro level that could then be up scaled, through research and evidence based evaluative processes. This paper reports a study that was conducted on adolescent girls in the age group of 10 to 14 years, who were early school dropouts or never enrolled. These girls were put through a carefully planned, innovative accelerated programme, patterned as a bridge course in a residential mode for a period of one year. The aim of the programme was to enable them to catch up with the five years of schooling that they had missed through a specially designed, compacted curriculum in Language, Mathematics and Environmental Studies.

The idea was to facilitate their mainstreaming into the formal school system. The curriculum helped them to prepare for and take the class five examination, which served to formally certify successful completion of primary education. The objective was also to empower them through a multi pronged approach of personal, social and cognitive development in which their self esteem and identity were built up and they were encouraged to dream, aspire and also make efforts to further their education. The present study focused specifically on assessing the cognitive capabilities of the girls and to gauge their learning after completion of the programme. Their performance on cognitive tasks was studied and compared to their age related counterparts, who had been through regular schooling in the formal system of education. The findings of the study have significant implications for educational interventions aimed at mainstreaming out of school children, which is also one of the main aims of the Right to Education Act.

**KEYWORDS:** Accelerated Programme, Bridge Course, Mainstreaming, Situated Cognition