

NEED TO BUILD ALTERNATIVE EDUCATION MECHANISM IN VIOLENCE-HIT KASHMIR

Relevant for: Security Related Matters | Topic: Role of External State & Non-state actors in creating challenges to internal security incl. Terrorism & illegal Migration

© 2019 The Indian Express Ltd.
All Rights Reserved

The author works with Save the Children

The decades-old Kashmir conflict has made a serious psychological impact on children and it has made socio-emotional and psychological adjustments challenging for them in complex stressful situations. At the same time, children of the state have shown remarkable resilience. That reflects in the recent results of Class X and XII. Much of this is the outcome of positive parenting, individual intelligence and social support. Parents understand the uncertainties of the situation and are a key agency in ensuring emotional security to their children.

Over a couple of years, the Kashmir conflict has taken an ugly turn, directly affecting the education system. The [economic survey](#) report 2016 declared irreversible loss in education in the state. Despite such loss, children and their families have demonstrated a high degree of resilience.

Voluntarism has also played a big role in sustaining the educational sector in different parts of the state. Community-based schools have tried to fill in the vacuum. This was especially true during 2016. Unfortunately, however, voluntarism has not been replicated on a larger scale. During the frequent unrest in 2017 and 2018, schools have been closed for several months – last year, they were closed for 191 days – but there has been scarcely any initiative from the NGOs or governments.

In conflict-prone regions, public welfare systems need to be resilient. This is especially true for education. It is high time that Jammu and Kashmir's education department strategises on an alternative education mechanism in humanitarian crises. Such a mechanism should involve community-level stakeholders, educationists, civil society and NGOs. It should also try to ensure continuity of education through home or community based schooling approach during unrest situations.

In order to streamline such a mechanism, there is immediate need to engage all stakeholders, central level policymakers, the state governments and security agencies to ensure safety and security of educational institutes and support the continuity of education during emergencies. State education department have to draft well-organised preparedness plans and map resources in key pockets of fragile regions to implement alternative education model. This model should provide a child-friendly environment, inclusive space and let children and their families breathe freely from psychological stress and strain.

Educated volunteer-based community groups need to be formed in most conflict-affected regions of Kashmir. The formation of such groups could be key part of preparedness and restructuring educational plans. Standard operating procedures (SOPs) for alternative education model should ensure protection for children. Mandatory trainings on Child Protection in Emergencies (CPIE) is imperative for functionaries of the state education department.

Safer education and school safety is a major concern in Kashmir, the dysfunctional character of education department during unrest situations can severely affect the careers of children in Kashmir and could lead to massive psychological distress among children.

There is no doubt that Kashmir is a serious political problem, but our children are our future. It's high time for all sections of society in Kashmir to come forward and contribute in developing community-based alternative mechanism to ensure restoration of education in humanitarian crises.

The author works with Save the Children

Download the Indian Express apps for iPhone, iPad or Android

© 2019 The Indian Express Ltd. All Rights Reserved

END

Downloaded from **crackIAS.com**

© **Zuccess App** by crackIAS.com

CrackIAS.com