

Impact of area development program for children's educational development in rural society of Sri Lanka

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Area Development Program (ADP) is one of long term rural development approaches which has been implemented by World Vision International in many countries. World Vision Lanka (WVL) has launched about 26 programs in different areas of the country and most of ADPs are situated in remote areas of the country. When compared with developed areas as well as developing areas these selected areas for ADP activities are backward and neglected both by the government and the non-governmental organizations (NGOs). The main objective of this study is to identify the impact of ADP intervention in children's education as one of focal component of ADP.

The study is focussed on five ADPs in different places (Galenbindunuweva, Lunugamwehera, Kotawehera, Mahakumbukkadawala, and Kebithigollewa) of the country. All these ADPs are engaged in implementing child development activities as well as community development activities for a period of 15 years. In addition, these ADPs have completed their mid-term in the implementation process. Therefore, there is a ground for evaluating the achievement of all these ADPs performance targets on child's education.

All these ADPs have evaluated in 2006-2008. The methodology of these evaluations comprised survey method, comparative method and functional methods. Structured questionnaire, interviews, and observations carried out as tools of data collection. Especially, Focused Group Discussions (FGDs), Key-Informant Interviews are the tools of qualitative data collection.

All ADPs have their own partner organization representing members of sponsored families from each village within the ADP. It is a participatory approach and WVL staff working in ADP office coordinates all activities related each component. There are many activities identified for child's education and development such as providing child's physical needs to spend leisure time, books and stationeries, school buildings and equipment, volunteer teachers, dental equipment, preschools and necessary equipment, mid-day meal for preschool children, vocational training, promoting child societies and federation, leadership development programs, aesthetic activities, O/L and A/L seminars, scholarships, tuition fees for poor children, English classes, and computer literacy classes.

It is evident that all these activities help to improve children's education in all ADPs and school drop-out rate has reduced substantially due to impact of ADP intervention. There is an improvement of school attendance as well as the quality of education in these remote areas. There are few students who have entered into universities and others have positive trend to achieve their educational goals. Especially, parents are very keen on their children's education. Overall, there is a satisfactory improvement in children's education in many ADPs.

Key words: ADP, Children's education and development, World vision

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