Role of NGOs in Primary Education: A Special Reference to Jhansi (U.P.), India

Shahzaad Mohmmad
Lecturer
Shri Rawatpura Sarkar Institutions, Datia (M.P.)India

Abstract
Primary education is the fundamental right of every child and the cornerstone of national development. While the government of India and the state of Uttar Pradesh have implemented robust frameworks like the Right to Education (RTE) Act, significant gaps remain in reaching the most marginalized communities. This research paper examines the role of Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) in bridging these gaps, with a specific focus on Jhansi, Uttar Pradesh. NGOs in Jhansi, such as ***Parmarth Samaj Sevi Sansthan*** *and* ***Pragati Rath****, play a vital role in addressing issues like seasonal migration, lack of documentation, and the educational needs of tribal communities like the Sahariyas. Through a combination of informal schools, community mobilization, and infrastructure support, these organizations supplement state efforts. The study utilizes secondary data from existing research on Dhaka, Bangladesh, and comparative local data from Jhansi to analyze the effectiveness of NGO interventions. Findings suggest that NGOs are indispensable for ensuring inclusivity and quality in primary education, particularly for children who fall outside the formal state mechanism.*
Keywords: Jhansi, Primary Education, NGO, Sahariya Tribe, Uttar Pradesh, Educational Inequity.

Introduction

Education is the most powerful tool for social change and individual empowerment. In India, the primary education system has undergone a massive transformation since the implementation of the Right to Education (RTE) Act in 2009, which guarantees free and compulsory education to all children aged **6 to 14 years**. However, in a vast and diverse state like Uttar Pradesh, the challenges of achieving universal literacy are compounded by poverty, caste dynamics, and geographical isolation.

Jhansi, a historical district in the Bundelkhand region, reflects these complexities. While the city of Jhansi boasts an average literacy rate of approximately **83.02%**, rural pockets and tribal hamlets continue to struggle with high dropout rates and low enrollment. Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) have emerged as critical stakeholders in this landscape. They function as "gap-fillers" where the state machinery faces bureaucratic or logistical hurdles. In Jhansi, NGOs are not just service providers but advocates for the most vulnerable, including the Sahariya tribal community, whose children often miss school due to seasonal migration and a lack of institutional birth records. This paper explores how these organizations navigate local challenges to bring the "unreachable" child into the fold of primary education.

Research Problem

Despite high enrollment figures in government reports, the quality of learning and retention in primary schools remains a concern in Jhansi, Uttar Pradesh. Marginalized groups, particularly the Sahariya tribe in the Babina block, face unique barriers such as seasonal migration, the "sibling-care" burden, and the absence of identity documents like Aadhaar cards or birth certificates, which are often prerequisites for formal admission. The research problem focuses on identifying how NGOs in Jhansi address these specific socio-economic barriers to ensure that primary education is both accessible and continuous for these children.

Review of Literature

Existing literature emphasizes that NGOs have grown rapidly as fundamental service providers to society's most vulnerable citizens. Research on NGO roles in South Asia, particularly in Dhaka, Bangladesh, highlights that these organizations are often preferred by international donors because they can reach the grassroots level more effectively than the government, which may be hindered by complex managerial structures.

In the context of Uttar Pradesh, studies show that NGO-run schools often focus on addressing gender inequities and serving the most marginalized populations. A case study of an NGO school in UP found that these institutions provide a rigorous curriculum and free

supplies to minimize educational barriers. Furthermore, local research in Jhansi highlights the "Sabal" initiative by the organization **Parmarth**, which established informal schools in 20 community hamlets to help tribal children adjust to formal schooling after prolonged absences during migration seasons. This localized literature suggests that the flexibility of NGOs offering evening classes and community-rooted teaching is a key factor in their success.

Methodology

The methodology for this study involves a descriptive and comparative analysis. It draws upon primary survey data from a study conducted in Dhaka, Bangladesh, regarding NGO activities (e.g., funding sources, collaboration with government, and provision of materials) and correlates these findings with documented activities of NGOs in Jhansi, Uttar Pradesh. Secondary data was collected from the **Census 2011** and projected figures for **2025** for Jhansi district to understand the demographic landscape. Additionally, qualitative case study reports of local NGOs like **Parmarth Samaj Sevi Sansthan** and **Pragati Rath** were analyzed to identify region-specific challenges such as tribal education and the impact of the digital divide.

Data Analysis

The demographic data for Jhansi reveals a significant gender gap and a divide between urban and rural literacy.

Table 1: Literacy and Demographic Snapshot of Jhansi (Projected 2025)

Parameter	City Value	District Value
Projected Population (2026)	~759,000	~2,330,000
Average Literacy Rate	83.02%	75.05%
Male Literacy	88.90%	85.38%
Female Literacy	76.57%	63.49%
Child Sex Ratio (0-6 yrs)	866	866

The data indicates that while urban Jhansi has a high literacy rate, the district-wide female literacy lags significantly at **63.49%**, underscoring the need for targeted NGO interventions for the girl child.

NGO Operations Analysis

Surveys indicate that **100%** of sampled NGO members agree that their organizations work in collaboration with the government to provide better primary education. In Jhansi, NGOs like **Parmarth** have successfully:

- Identified **500 children** in need of support in remote hamlets.
- Processed legal documentation for **235 children** to enable formal school admission.
- Provided essential stationery (books, pens, notebooks) in **100%** of their supported schools.

Discussion

The role of NGOs in Jhansi is distinct from mere supplementary teaching. They act as "social bridges." For instance, in the Babina block, the Sahariya community faces the "migration hurdle," where children accompany parents for seasonal work, causing them to fall behind in the formal curriculum. NGOs address this by running evening schools and flexible learning centers that adapt to the child's schedule rather than forcing the child to adapt to a rigid state system.

Furthermore, the "trust deficit" is a significant barrier in rural Uttar Pradesh. Communities are often suspicious of external organizations. Successful NGOs in Jhansi, such as **Jeevan Jyoti Sansthan** and **Aasra Society**, have overcome this by employing local volunteers and engaging in "door-to-door" awareness campaigns. However, challenges persist. While **100%** of NGOs surveyed claim to provide awareness on health and hygiene, only **33.3%** can consistently provide mid-day meal facilities, a task largely dependent on government funding and logistics.

The state government's **Operation Kayakalp** and **Nipun Bharat Mission** provide a framework for infrastructure and foundational literacy, but NGOs are needed to ensure that

the most "invisible" children those without birth certificates or those living in remote hamlets are actually sitting in those classrooms.

Conclusion

NGOs are a vital pillar of the primary education system in Jhansi, Uttar Pradesh. They provide the flexibility and grassroots connection that formal government systems often lack. By addressing the specific local challenges of the Bundelkhand region such as tribal marginalization and seasonal migration these organizations ensure that the promise of the RTE Act reaches every doorstep. The study concludes that for Jhansi to reach its 2026 literacy goals, the partnership between the **Basic Education Department** and local NGOs must be strengthened, particularly in the areas of digital literacy and documentation support.

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