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Director's Message

International and National Day observances draw our attention to issues of concern; serving to refocus our priorities and resources, while renewing advocacy about them. 24 January marked the International Day of Education as well as National Girl Child Day. In this Slice, we reflect on how the themes of Education and the Girl are closely intertwined and require our consistent attention if we are to move forward towards an equitable future for all children; a cause to which BREADS is fully committed.

Her Life Matters!

In India, the very survival of the girl until she could be educated, remains a cause for concern; and the National Girl Child Day draws our attention to the fact that the existence of the Indian girl cannot be taken for granted. Rather, the Indian girl's life is to be celebrated because it is often the result of an individual struggle for survival, which also requires the support of State and civil society's resources, invested in law enforcement, advocacy, education, and development.

The Child Sex Ratio (CSR) in the age group of 0-6 years, according to Census 2011 showed a significant downward trend with 918 girls per 1000 boys. The CSR had declined from 976 in 1961 to 918 in 2011. Out of 640 districts in India, CSR reduced in 429 districts (2/3rd of the country), while 244 districts were even below the national average of 918 (www.bbbpindia.gov.in). In 2011, Kerala recorded a CSR of 964 while Karnataka recorded 948.

Acknowledging the need for corrective action, the Central Government introduced Beti Bachao, Beti Padhao (BBBP) as a national scheme in 2015, to:

- Prevent gender biased sex selective elimination
- Ensure survival and protection of the girl child
- Ensure education and participation of the girl child

The government used large-scale media advocacy, convergence across departments and law enforcement, with monitored targets to address the problem, initially focusing on selected districts across the country, gradually expanding its outreach.

Among the first 161 districts selected, Vijayapura (CSR 931) in Karnataka and Thrissur (CSR 950) in Kerala were the only districts in these states identified for monitoring. Survey reports suggest that the situation is improving slowly.



Where's the money?



Even as campaigns spread the message, it is imperative that the State invests in communities and the health and education of children. Between 2015-2020, INR 848 crores were spent on the BBBP scheme: 80% of it on media campaigns. This funding aspect of development work is worth some attention.

The Centre for Budget and Policy Studies (CBPS) Bangalore analysed public expenditure on children in the pre-COVID (2019-2020) and post-COVID (2020-2021) periods in 14 Indian states. State budgets were already under pressure from demonetisation and GST, and the pandemic had worsened the situation. Some of their findings/suggestions:

- Higher child development was observed in the states with higher per child expenditure (Kerala, Tamil Nadu, Telangana, and Karnataka are the top four in India with average annual pre-COVID expenditure ranging from 17600 to 14400 crores).
- Kerala and Karnataka, both facing a higher pandemic load, reduced their per child expenditure in the post-COVID period.
- While expenditure on child development schemes is critical, the expenditure on personnel and infrastructure (physical and systems) is also very important. Consistently, states need to spend more to address the challenges of the pandemic. The lack of personnel severely affected the reach of education, health, and nutrition services for children, owing to emergency COVID duties while their own work was side-lined.
- Technology-led learning failed to reach all children, necessitating a hybrid approach. Schools and Anganwadi centres as important platforms for integrated development and provisioning services also became very evident. Effective use of these platforms to course-correct the health, nutrition and education issues of children is very important.
- Local solutions, local checks and balances, along with local participation and cooperation are critical for the successful delivery of services. This became very evident during the pandemic and can be effectively incorporated into the system to enhance local accountability as well.

A discussion on the budget is too vast for this newsletter but the following points should give us a sense of perspective, keeping in mind that until December 2021 (still a pandemic year), only around **half** of the budgetary allocations had been released for many schemes: for example, 48% for mid-day meals and 52% for ICDS (thewire.in).



In Budget 2022:

- The Women and Child Development Ministry was allocated INR 25,172 crores. This includes all Child Protection Services and related schemes, Anganwadis, mid-day meals, schemes for adolescent girls, services for the empowerment of women, autonomous national Commissions for Protection of Child Rights and Women (NCPCR, NCW, CARA etc.) and others.
- Education (including higher education and skilling) was allocated INR 104,278 crores
- Defence was allocated INR 5.25 lakh crores
- Capital expenditure was allocated INR 7.5 lakh crores

The range of expenditure on the various items does put things in perspective, doesn't it?

She and her Community matter!

Irrespective of macro-level priorities or politics or financial allocations, life happens. We need to consistently empower communities to protect and educate their girls, while also empowering children to support each other's rights. Only then, can we create a society and nation in which the girl is safe and able to achieve her human potential.

BREADS takes a multipronged approach to the empowerment of girls: enabling communities, human and child rights education, advocacy, supplementary education centres, education sponsorships, residential bridge schools, formal and non-formal schooling with hostel facilities, and skilling.

BREADS' Strategy



Our work is reflected in the story of Aishwarya.

Fourteen-year-old Aishwarya is the eldest of six children, from an impoverished labourer family in Galag village, Devadurga, Raichur. Struggling to make ends meet, her family enlisted her initially to look after the younger siblings, and later, to accompany her mother to work in the cotton fields.

The Don Bosco Devadurga staff found Aishwarya working in the fields during one of their surveys of the village. They spoke to the mother and daughter about the importance of continuing her studies. They visited her home and finally convinced the parents to send her back to school. In preparation for mainstream school, Aishwarya was ready to undergo the residential bridge course at Don Bosco Devadurga.

When she joined the course, Aishwarya could only read a little Kannada. She needed to be coached in all the other subjects. She started at the fourth grade-level in the bridge school. Eventually, Aishwarya started learning and taking more interest in her writing skills. The teachers noticed a marked change in her while evaluating her learning after a month. After a year and half of coaching, she became much better at her studies. Aishwarya improved her commu-



nication skills and her confidence levels increased very much. She became a very active participant in the school's cultural programmes, sports, and games. After the bridge course, her academic standards were equal to the 6th grade. Her teachers proudly sent her off to mainstream school where she is now in the 7th grade.

Her journey towards a different future is a matter of pride and satisfaction not only to Aishwarya personally, but to her family and community to whom she is a torchbearer, as well as to those who work towards the transformation of the lives of girls such as Aishwarya. A very good return on investment, right?

In 2020-2021, BREADS through 25 project interventions for the rescue and rehabilitation of children in difficult circumstances, has reached out through awareness and advocacy to **169,981** adults in communities across Karnataka and Kerala, positively impacting **15,478** children through education and counselling.



“When you invest in a girl’s education, she feeds herself, her children, her community, and her nation.” – Erna Solberg, Prime Minister of Norway

True words, indeed. BREADS and the Don Bosco family do pay attention. If you would like to support the cause, please partner with us: <https://breadsdonations.com/profile.php>.

Encourage young girls to become agents of change!

Calendar

January 2022

- DREAM programme launches in Kozhikode, Thiruvananthapuram, Ernakulam
- Monitoring and evaluation of BREADS' projects
- Release of BREADS' Annual Report 2020-2021

February 2022

- Monitoring and evaluation of BREADS' projects
- WECAN Staff training cum meeting

BREADS NEWS



Release of BREADS' Annual Report 2020-2021

BREADS released its Annual Report 2020-2021 on 31 January 2022 on the occasion of the feast of Don Bosco at Don Bosco Provincial House, Bangalore Fr. Biju Michael sdb (General Councillor, South Asia) released the report and handed the first copy to Fr. Joy ...[more...](#)



DREAM-Staff Training

Bangalore Rural Educational and Development Society (BREADS) organised a three-day staff training for the programme staff of its Drug Rehabilitation Education And Mentoring (DREAM)...[more...](#)



DREAM launched in Ernakulam

The launch of the Drug Rehabilitation Education And Mentoring (DREAM) programme in Ernakulam was held at Don Bosco Psycho-Social Support Centre, Palluruthy on 8 January 2021...[more...](#)



DREAM Launch in Thiruvananthapuram

The Drug Rehabilitation Education And Mentoring (DREAM) programme was officially launched in Thiruvananthapuram by Smt. Veena George (Minister of Health and Family Welfare, Government of Kerala)...[more...](#)



Entrepreneurship Expo by WELive Alappuzha

Women Empowerment through Livelihood and Entrepreneurship (WELive) programme by BREADS Bangalore in association with the Integrated Development Society Alappuzha, organised an entrepreneurship expo ...[more...](#)