

Education and Poverty:

A New Model for the Developing World

Dr. Abraham M. George



Education is often cited by developmental experts as the key to poverty alleviation. The Millennium Development Goals set by the United Nations for the year 2015 for developing countries call for universal primary education, and it appears that many will achieve this goal. Illiteracy rates and gender disparity in education have also been declining. Despite these accomplishments, the question still remains as to whether the poor are really benefitting from the education they receive. It appears that improvements in education as noted by governments mask the realities on the ground, and the poor are not well served by what little is offered by the schools they attend.

Dr. George will share his experience in rural India over a 12 year period where he started a residential school for children from Dalit families, previously called "untouchables," and remedial education at government schools in the area (visit www.shantibhavanonline.org). He believes that current practices in many countries will not yield the desired results, and there is a better way to improve education and opportunities for the poor.

Abraham M. George is the founder and managing trustee of The George Foundation (TGF), a non-profit organization based in Bangalore, India, that is dedicated to the welfare of economically and socially disadvantaged people. TGF runs several projects in livelihood/income generation, education, health, and empowerment of women, which are described on the web site www.tgfworld.org. His work in the field of environmental health was instrumental for the removal of lead from gasoline throughout India in April 2000 and the creation of *National Referral Centre for Lead Poisoning in India* (see www.leadpoison.net). His most recent book "*India Untouched: The forgotten face of rural poverty*," based on his 10 years of experience working in rural areas of Tamil Nadu, India, has gained wide acclaim in India and abroad.



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