



A REVIEW OF THE STATUS AND CHALLENGES OF GIRL'S SECONDARY EDUCATION

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ABSTRACT

Education is the basic tool for empowering a woman; moreover, Education is the key to development. India has made progress in education, but not enough and definitely India attained independence, almost sixty percent of girls / women are not literate. Most of them have never been to school or any other education programme. Education-basic, functional or digital, always enlightens a person from the darkness of ignorance and innocence. Awareness about importance of cleanliness, good habits and knowledge about various disciplines helps a woman to support her family and groom her children as better citizens of society. Girls need life skills. Thinking critically, empathizing, and relying on themselves help them meet day-to-day challenges and make informed decisions. When girls learn these skills and how to use them daily, they become better to handle the challenges they may face, from gender and many situations. The primary aim of running a girl's school is to provide a safe and comfortable environment for the girl child. In India, the girls rarely get a chance to get a proper education, and these schools ensure they get the best ambiance to study. The present paper focuses on status and challenges of Girl's Secondary Education in India.

KEY WORDS: Girl's Education, Secondary Education School, National Programs

INTRODUCTION

India is determined in educating all children, especially the girl child. Through schemes such as the Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan, we are committed in providing free and compulsory education to all the children between 6 to 14 years of age. However, even after declaring education as a fundamental right, the country is facing several challenges in educating the girl child. The biggest bottleneck is the orthodox mentality of families towards girls and their importance in society. In many parts of the country especially rural areas, girls are still confined to domestic drudgery.

The government of India has initiated various programs and policies to ensure that a girl must not miss any opportunity of getting an education. But still, a lot more needs to be done for providing education to the girl child. It will require a much effective implementation framework along with a greater level of commitment of people in general. Until we create awareness amongst people about the benefits of women education, all these programs would not bring about the desired result.

Education is the most important for girls to develop their abilities as to develop the society and nation. For that the Government started many programs for the benefits of girls at various levels (at primary, secondary and higher level). To promote enrolment of girl child in the age group of 10-15 at secondary stage, especially those who studying and to encourage the secondary level education of such girls, the Centrally Sponsored Scheme and National Scheme of incentives to Girls for Secondary Education was launched in May, 2008.

SECONDARY EDUCATION

As compare to the past large number of girls are getting admissions in the school system completing primary education and pursuing secondary and tertiary education. Secondary education is provided between the age groups of 14-18 years. It is proposed to bring more and more girl students in the various streams mainly in arts, science, commerce and vocational streams. According to the Babylon's dictionary, "Secondary education is the final stage of compulsory education, preceded by primary education and followed by higher education". The Secondary education is provided by the different organizations under the control of the Government of India.

- ❖ National Council of Educational Research and Training
- ❖ National Institute of Open Schooling
- ❖ Kendriya Vidyalaya Sangathan (KVS)
- ❖ Navodaya Vidyalaya Samiti (NVS)

These are the organizations which are providing the secondary education at a large scale to the girls as well as boys and these are making efforts to decrease the gender gap in the country.

NEED FOR THE STUDY

Education plays an important role in the life and evolution of mankind. Education creates knowledge, awareness and attitudes among the human beings for the betterment of society. As a human right, in the 21st century education directs an individual to creativity.

The Indian education system is the biggest system in the world where primary, middle, secondary, higher secondary and college plays a vital role in sharpening the personality of individuals. But, there are many hurdles in the way of education system of our country and the large numbers of school going children are continuously leaving the school system before completing the secondary education.

India is a country where the sex ratio of male and female is 1000:940. Gender differences can be seen everywhere in the education system of the country where male dominating society exists. So, the educationist should be aware to the specific needs of the girls. Even after the formation of the many committees and commission the enrolment rates of girls are still declining day by day. Those who are enrolled in the schools they are not prepared adequately due to the lack of adequate facilities.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

1. To study the national schemes to Girl's for secondary education.
2. To study the challenges of girl's education.
3. To study the importance of Girl's education
4. To give appropriate suggestion for improving the girl's secondary education in India.

NATIONAL SCHEMES FOR GIRL'S FOR SECONDARY EDUCATION

- ❖ **National Scheme of Incentive to Girls for Secondary Education (NSIGSE):** National Scheme of Incentives to Girls for Secondary Education is a Centrally Sponsored Scheme for promoting girl education in the age group of 14-18 especially at secondary education level launched by Department of School Education and Literacy, MHRD, Government of India. The Scheme does not cover married girls, girls studying in private unaided schools and enrolled in schools run by Central Government like KVS, NVS etc. Under the scheme, a sum of Rs. 3,000/- is deposited in the name of eligible girls as fixed deposit. The girls are entitled to withdraw the sum along with interest thereon on reaching 18 years of age and on passing the 10th class examination.
- ❖ **Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan (SSA):** Government of India has launched its flagship programme Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan (SSA) to ensure Universalization of Elementary Education (UEE) with special focus on girl education in India. SSA is being implemented in partnership with State Governments. SSA also seeks to provide computer education to bridge the digital divide.
- ❖ **Rashtriya Madhyamik Shiksha Abhiyan (RMSA):** Under the integrated scheme of RMSA, interventions include the construction of new secondary schools, provision of toilets blocks in existing schools with separate toilets for girls, construction of teachers' quarters, construction of Girls Hostels, organization of empowerment/awareness camps to improve the education of girls at the secondary level etc.
- ❖ **Kasturba Gandhi Balika Vidyalaya Scheme:** Kasturba Gandhi Balika Vidyalaya Scheme was launched in 2004 in order to provide primary level education to girls. The scheme was specially designed for the underprivileged girls in rural areas.
- ❖ **Maharashtra State Bureau launches E-Balbharti App:** School students can now read textbooks on mobiles. The Maharashtra State Bureau of Textbook Production and Curriculum Research (Balbharti) launched an application that will let students read textbooks on their mobiles. Textbooks produced by Balbharti are published on ebalbharti in PDF format. The PDF e-books can be downloaded free of cost. The policy was aimed at reducing the weight of bags carried by students to school.

CHALLENGES OF GIRL'S EDUCATION IN INDIA

It is generally accepted by many that schooling has innumerable benefits for the child. Majority of Indian children, especially girls are deprived of these benefits. Girls are often taken out of school to share the family responsibilities such as caring for younger siblings.

- ❖ Negative parental attitude towards educating daughters is one of the important challenges to promote girl's education in India.
- ❖ Lack of female teachers is another barrier to girls' education. Girls are more likely to attend school and have higher academic achievement, if they have female teachers. Currently, women account for only 47.70 % of teachers at the Elementary level.
- ❖ Lack of infrastructural facility in schools is one of the major problems in development of girls' education in India. Annual Status of Education Report (2014) agreed that due to lack of girls' toilet facility, drinking water and waiting halls dropout rate at elementary and secondary levels have been increased than the past decades.
- ❖ Many girls desirous of pursuing education above middle level, facilities for which are available away from their homes, cannot avail themselves of these facilities due to lack of hostel arrangements.
- ❖ Parents often protest about insecurity for girls attending schools. Instances of abduction, rape and molestation of girls dampen the enthusiasm of parents and girl students in pursuing education beyond a certain age; thereafter they remain bound to their homes.
- ❖ Though education should be free, there are a lot of costs associated with sending children to school. The cost of uniforms, textbooks, shoes or bus fare can be too much to bear for a family living in poverty. Too often, parents choose to keep their girls at home and send the boys to school instead.
- ❖ In many parts of the country, the nearest primary school to a particular community might be a 4 or 5 hour long walk away. On top of that, girls may face dangers or violence on the long way to school; so many parents select to keep their daughters at home and out of harm's way.
- ❖ Typically, girls are asked to fetch the water, take care of their younger siblings and to help their mothers cook and clean. Due to this, girls may not have the opportunity to for attend school because their contributions to the household are valued more than their personal education.
- ❖ In many parts of the country, children's health is a big concern, especially if they are facing poverty. If there's not enough food or sufficient clean water to keep girls nourished and healthy, they may not be well enough to attend school.
- ❖ When girls are forced to marry young, they are often pulled out of school at a very critical age in their development. The transition from primary to secondary education is key for girls to gain the life skills they need to escape the cycle of poverty. Yet, this is often the same time that many girls leave school due to early marriages.
- ❖ Lack of enthusiasm and interest of the officials in charge of education is another problem for promoting girls' education.
- ❖ Lack of awareness among implementing different agencies and community members to implement

different schemes and provisions of girls' education at grass root level.

IMPORTANCE OF GIRL'S EDUCATION

The importance of girl's education is paramount. The long-term benefits of girl education can help a society grow holistically and lead to true women empowerment which can have far-reaching impacts. We need to make collective efforts to ensure that girls get the required opportunities to learn.

Gone are the times when people used to think that it was unnecessary to send girls to school. In the current times, women are competing with men in all spheres of life. Today, people not only understand the importance of quality education, but also send their daughters to school. It's an undeniable truth that girls' education can bring about a phenomenal change in the society.

However, things remain unchanged in several rural parts of India, where people still don't send their daughters to schools due to cultural and financial reasons. While some people think that girls should know nothing apart from household chores, others simply can't afford to give their daughters proper education.

There are several advantages of educating girls. Educated girls grow up to become educated women who can play an important role in the development of society. Let's look into some other advantages of sending girls to school.

- ❖ Education not only empowers a grown up girl, but also makes her economically independent. Economic independence makes a woman feel confident about herself and gives her a sense of accomplishment. Empowerment of girls and women also forms a strong base in the fight against the issue of gender-inequality.
- ❖ An educated woman is capable of sharing the burden of men in the different walks of life. In this age of economic crisis, it's hard for the middle class to make both ends meet. Working women can add to the total income of their husbands and can earn a living for herself and her family.
- ❖ Educated girls can not only improve their own lives, but can also brighten the future of the country by giving their children a good upbringing. Education leads to freedom of thought and broadens a woman's outlook. This also makes her aware of her responsibilities and duties.
- ❖ Empowerment of the girl child with the help of education will bring about a big change in the country. NGOs like Save the Children work with the government to provide survival, safety and education to the girl child.

SUGGESTIONS' FOR OVERCOMING THE BARRIERS OF GIRL'S EDUCATION IN INDIA

The education of girls is an integral part of national development. We can help girls get the education they deserve by supporting the following:

- **Equal Access to Education:** There must be an equal access to both girls and boys in education so that there will be no variations between them and they can continue their education. Plan supports community initiatives that promote positive attitudes towards equal access to education, and that raise awareness on its importance for both boys and girls. Plan also supports the creation of gender-sensitive learning environments to ensure both boys and girls enjoy their right to education.
- **Gender Equality:** Gender equality is good for everyone; boys and girls, women and men. Plan engages boys in solutions to achieve gender equality to help change social norms in entire communities. Mostly this gender equality is more familiar in villagers and they won't send their children for education especially girls.
- **Girls' Scholarships:** Scholarships help girls with tuition fees, school uniforms, school supplies and safe transportation. So they should utilize these facilities given by the state government or central government.
- **Challenging Gender Roles:** Raising awareness at family and community levels will promote positive attitudes towards education for girls. It's also important to engage parents in open dialogue regarding commonly held gender stereotypes.
- **Preventing Violence in Schools:** Plan works with communities to ensure that their schools are violence-free and that they provide a safe learning environment for girls. Plan also works with schools to build networks of peers, role models and mentors, train female teachers, and offers social support to help create a safe space for girls to learn.
- **No Fixed Schooling Hours:** Fixed schooling hours do not suit for girls in rural areas, as they are needed for domestic work at home or in farms and fields during these hours. This is one of the causes of lower participation rates of girls in education. The enrolment rates of girls and their retention can be improved if educational facilities are made available to girls during periods suitable to them when they are free from domestic chores. Flexible school timings have been tried in Rajasthan through the Shiksha Karmi Project and Lok Jumbish, and the results are encouraging. Higher authorities, community members, NGOs and all people of India must have to take responsibility to eradicate different barriers related to girls' education from our society. Each and every citizen of our country must have to remember that national development cannot be achieved without girls' education.

CONCLUSION

Education is very important for every child whether boy or girl. It is sad that some communities still discriminate against the education of the girl child. Education is the key factor for girls' empowerment, prosperity, development and welfare. Discrimination of girl from womb to tomb is well known. There is continued inequality and vulnerability of girls in all sectors-Economic, Education, Social, Political, Health Care, Nutrition, Right and Legal etc. Girls oppressed in all spheres of life, they need to be empowered in all walk of life. In order to fight against the socially constructed gender biases, girls & women have to swim against the system that requires more strength. Such strength comes from the process of empowerment and empowerment will come from the education. And rural transformation will come from girls' education. It is

a big opportunity for India to be developed socially and economically. Educated girls' are the weapons who yield positive impact on the Indian society through their contribution at home and professional fields. They are the reason of improved economy in the country as well as society. The objectives of the paper are: to assertion recent status and challenges of girl's education in India; to provide possible suggestions to overcome the challenges of girls' education in India. The Indian Education Commission 1964-66, rightly emphasized, "For full development of our human resources, the improvement of homes and for moulding the character of children during the most impressionable years of their infancy, the education of girls is of greater importance than that of boys". However, the change in the attitude of the public towards girls' education would go a long way in improving the situation.

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