



A STUDY ON THE ROLE OF GOVERNMENT SCHEMES FOR UPLIFTMENT OF GIRL'S CHILD EDUCATION

Parul¹ & Gurmeet Singh²

¹Ph.D. Research Scholar (Education) Central University of Himachal Pradesh

Dharamshala, Kangra (H.P.) Email Id: paruldogra1@gmail.com

²Ph.D. Research Scholar (Education) Central University of Himachal Pradesh

Dharamshala, Kangra (H.P.) Email Id: theguru96044@gmail.com

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Abstract

Education is a fundamental human right for all individuals, regardless of ethnic background, and it is crucial for the sustainable growth of the nation as a whole. When we examine global history, we can see that only those countries which provided comparable educational opportunities for both men and women were capable of achieving advancement. We cannot develop into a developed nation without properly educating our girls African proverbs such as "If you educate a man, you educate an individual, but if you educate a woman, you educate a nation" serve as a reminder of the relevance of education for girls. Allowing women the liberty to choose what kind of life they select for themselves starts by providing them with education. The days when people believed that enrolling girls to receive an education was not required are no longer prevalent in today's society. The purpose of this paper is to outline the current situation and issues affecting girls' education in India and suggest possible solutions for these issues. The study as a whole is based on secondary sources, which include various kinds of articles, reports, research papers, books, government websites, and digital world materials etc. There are four sections in the paper. The importance of girls' education in India and its historical context are highlighted in the paper's first section. The paper's second section examines the current state of girls' education in India. The third section of the paper goes into detail on the important initiatives and programs that the Indian government and the states have taken to improve the education of girls as well as the various issues that this sector encounters in India. The final section of the paper makes recommendations to eradicate constraints on girls' child education in India.

Keywords: Girls' education, Initiatives, Schemes and barriers of girls' education.



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Introduction:

There was an era when people didn't believe girls needed to be educated. The importance of females' education is now being recognized. The contemporary era is the era of girls' awakening. In all aspects of life, they are making an effort to maintain a competitive edge with men. The education of girls has been opposed by many people. They claim that a girl should spend her time in her own house. They point out that the money invested in the education of girls is a waste. This perspective seems incorrect because girls' education could contribute to a silent change in society. For the improvement of underprivileged marginalized sectors, particularly girls in the community, girls' education serves an essential role. Education for girls is important since they shape future generations and, in consequently, determines the direction of the entire country. However, the actual situation is different. Girls constitute 58.65% of the total population, but their illiteracy rate is 65.5%, compared to boys' literacy rate of 82.1% (Data from the Census Report, 2011). Additionally, the average yearly dropout rate for girls in primary-level classes is 4.14%, and in the higher primary school classes, the rate is 4.49% (DISE Data, 2014–15). In reality, the upper elementary level had the highest dropout rate in the last three years. In India, the overall literacy rate is 74.00 percent, and the literacy rate for women is 65.46 percent, according to the 2011 census. The database makes it obvious that there has been an increase in female literacy in India. But it grows gradually. Women are not allowed to leave their homes or go to work in rural India due to the norms of society. The socioeconomic, sociocultural, parental education level and accessibility to the school serve as some of those factors which influence females' opportunities for education. According to the data from 2019–20, the dropout rate was 2.6 percent, which fell to 1.9 percent in 2020–21, then jumped quickly up to 3 percent in 2021–2022. The dropout rate for girls at this level has been greater than that for boys in each of the three years. Despite the government's numerous efforts towards improving girls' education in India, the "Beti Bachao Beti Padhao Scheme" was introduced in 2015 with an ideal of educating girls. The "Sukanya Samriddhi Yojana" scheme was introduced in 2015 to help with the expenditures associated with the girl child's higher learning and marriage (The Ministry of Women and Child Development Report, 2015). In order to reduce the school dropout rate, the government of India additionally made a decision to create girls' toilets throughout each school. Because there is a correlation between drop-out rates and a lack of toilets at middle and high schools, per the Annual Status of Education Report (2014).

Historical Background of Girls' Education in India:

Girls rarely received a formal education in India during the ancient era. Only a few girls among upper-class girls had received some home schooling. At that time, learning among girls was viewed as a disgrace. It had been believed that educating girls was pointless. In a 1959 report, the National Committee on Women's Education stated that, aside from the comparatively small amount of domestic education available to the daughters of upper-class families, girls received basically no formal schooling and that the general picture of the educational status of girls was the most unsatisfactory. In Bombay (now Mumbai), a school for females was established for the first time in 1824 by the "American Mission." Within five years, by 1829, there were reportedly 400 or more girls enrolled in that institution. Then, due to the efforts of missionaries and Indian charitable organisations, a few primary schools for girls were established during the first decade of the 19th century, primarily in the states of Bombay, Bengal, and Madras(Mondal, 2015). Nevertheless, despite these, there was a huge achievement inequality between males and girls in terms of literacy. According to research, approximately for every 1,000 boys, there were only about 46 girls enrolled in school. There were hardly any literate women in the country at the beginning of the 19th century, with the exception of a few in aristocratic houses.

The social reformer Savitribai Phule, who is regarded as the nation's first female teacher and being remembered as India's first modern feminist, is one of the most notable figures in Indian history. In the fields of education and literacy, she worked for the empowerment of women. The Indian government has come up with a number of plans and initiatives to support girl learners as they pursue their studies. Since independence, the position of women has grown considerably and the percentage of female students has continuously increased especially during the previous ten years. Girls' literacy rates increased from 8.86% in 1951 to 29.75% in 1981, 39.29% in 1991 to 54.16% in 2001, and are now 65.5% in the 2011 census report (Census Report, 1951-2011). All women and men in the present era are on the same level with one another as they possess the same competencies. Then why there are still concerns about girls' education and equal a chance to succeed. There exists sufficient a chance to provide education for every individual, including female students. According to the status report, more than ten years since the Right to Education (RTE) Act (2009) was enacted, 30% of girls from the poorest families and over 40% of adolescent girls in the 15–18 age range have never gone to school. Under Article 21A of the

constitution and all children between the ages of 6 and 14 are mandated to receive high-quality, free schooling under the RTE Act of 2009.

Status of Girls' Education in India:

India apparently made considerable improvements in education for girls in the past few decades. In comparison to earlier decades, the literacy rate has also increased. Girls' literacy rates were 39.3% in 1991 and 53.7% in 2001, however, it increased by 65.5% in 2011 compared to the previous year. Along with increases in literacy, enrollment in elementary, upper primary and higher education has risen significantly in India. Because of rising enrollment and declining dropout rates over time, recent data (DISE and U-DISE data 2021–2022) show that there has been a noticeable increase in the number of girls enrolled in primary, secondary, and higher education, to various stages of education. In comparison to 2020–21, the primary, upper primary and higher secondary levels of education's Gross Enrollment Ratio (GER), which assesses participation in general, showed improvements in 2021–22.

Table.1: Gross Enrolment Ratio (GER) by Gender and School Level of Education, 2020-21(in Himachal Pradesh)

<i>Himachal Pradesh</i>	<i>Boys</i>	<i>Girls</i>
<i>Primary (1-5)</i>	<i>106.3</i>	<i>107.8</i>
<i>Upper Primary (6-8)</i>	<i>99.2</i>	<i>101.5</i>
<i>Elementary (1-8)</i>	<i>103.5</i>	<i>105.3</i>
<i>Secondary (9-10)</i>	<i>101.0</i>	<i>99.7</i>
<i>Higher Sec. (11-12)</i>	<i>83.0</i>	<i>88.4</i>

(Source: UDISE+ 2020-21)

Importance of Girls' Education in India:

The empowerment of girls through education is an avenue for both men and women to reach levels of greatness, dignity, survival, and advancement. The backbone of the family, society at large, and nation are women. How can a country be considered developed if its women are not growing? Girls' education promotes self-esteem and self-confidence while contributing to the fight against illiteracy, making it one of the best ways for eradicating poverty in underdeveloped nations. Without question, educated women are more capable to manage their family's affairs. By imparting positive traits in children, she can make each member of the family

responsible. She can participate in social activities, which can greatly contribute to an entire nation with a strong socioeconomic foundation.

Social improvement: Women who have received an education are more prepared to tackle societal issues and problems. Education was suggested as an important tool for societal advancement by the Kothari Commission in 1968. India has the potential to accomplish its goal of social development by educating women.

Gender equality: Women belong to a disadvantaged segment of the community. Their education aids in closing the gender gap in society. In co-educational schools, boys are taught as well to respect women.

Economic productivity: The country can achieve improved economic performance and greater gross domestic product (GDP) by educating women.

Decrease in infant humanity: A well-educated woman knows of her family's conditions and makes better decisions for the family to avoid conflicts among the members of the family. In addition, the education of women reduces the nation's infant mortality rate.

Improved living standard: Employment opportunities for women will undoubtedly increase with education. A woman with an outstanding educational background can potentially be capable to secure a good career and enjoy an improved standard of life.

Strengthening of democracy: Education increases women's political participation by making them more aware, which ultimately strengthens democracy. Through mobilisation, they could stand up for their fundamental freedoms.

Major Govt. Schemes and Initiatives for Improvement of Girls' Education in India:

The Indian government has started a number of initiatives to improve the standard of female students' education. Below is a list of them:

Article 15: prohibits discrimination on the basis of race, social group, place of birth, and religious beliefs.

Article 45: The State shall make every effort to ensure that all children receive early care and education until they attain the age of six years old.

Mahila Samakhya Programme:

In 1989, the Mahila Samakhya (MS) programme, an ongoing initiative for women's empowerment, was launched with the goal of transforming the aims of the National Policy on

Education into concrete initiatives for the education and empowerment of women in rural areas, particularly those who come from socially and economically marginalised communities.

Kasturba Gandhi Balika Vidyalaya Scheme (KGBV):

This program was initiated in July 2004 in order to provide girls the opportunity to receive primary education. It is primarily for underprivileged and rural regions where females' literacy levels are extremely low. 75% of the students in the established schools are from the economically disadvantaged class, and 25% of the students are female BPL (below the poverty line) students.

NPEGEL (National Programme for the Education of Girls in Elementary Level): In July 2003, the program was introduced. It served as an encouragement to connect with the girls that the SSA had been unable to reach through other programs. The "hardest to reach girls" were specifically identified by the SSA. 24 Indian states are included in this program. In order to provide girls better opportunities, "model schools" have been established under the NPEGEL.

NSIGSE (National Scheme of Incentive to Girls for Secondary Education): was started in May 2008 with the goal of creating a supportive atmosphere to lower dropout rates and encourage enrollment of girls, primarily from SC/ST communities, in secondary schools.

The Indira Gandhi National Scholarship Programme enables single girls child to pursue both higher education and technical training.

Swami Vivekananda Scholarship scheme (for Single Girl Child): Girls drop out at a considerably higher rate than boys do at all educational levels. The Swami Vivekananda Scholarship for Single Girl Child for Research in Social Sciences was established by the UGC with the intention of supporting girls' education in accordance with Swami Vivekananda's ideas. This scholarship is designed to support girls who have been identified as the only girls in their families to pay for the direct expenses of pursuing education.

Saakshar Bharat: In 2009, Saakshar Bharat, a new version of the National Literacy Mission, was introduced. Its goal is to promote adult education, with a focus on female literacy as an essential tool for promoting female empowerment. This is particularly relevant for women (age 15 and older) who do not have access to formal education. As a result, the literacy rate among women increased from 53.67% (Census 2001) to 65.46% (Census 2011). In addition, women surpass men for the first time and over the course of the decade, there were an additional 217.70

million people who became literate (source: XIIth Five Year Plan, Ministry of Women and Child Development, Government of India).

Udaan: The goal of the Scheme is to promote girl students' educational opportunities and encourage their enrollment. The aim is to eliminate the knowledge gap that exists between academic training in schools and engineering entrance tests. By providing incentives and academic support, it aims to increase the enrollment of female students in prestigious technical education institutions.

Pragati : Scholarships for girls who want to pursue technical education. It aims to motivate and encourage young girls who want to pursue technical education.

Mid-Day Meal Scheme: The gender participation gap in enrollment in school is steadily decreasing as the Mid-Day Meal Scheme contributes in removing the challenges that girls face in enrolling. The Mid-Day Meal Scheme enables working women to get away from the pressure of handling the cooking at home during the day and offers a useful source of employment for women. In addition to these, the Mid-Day Meal Scheme is particularly important for women and young girls.

Beti Bachao Beti Padhao: A national programme run by the government called Beti Bachao Beti Padhao empowers females all around the country. This plan's main goals are to protect children from social issues like gender-based abortions and develop children's education across the nation. As a result of its effectiveness, this programme was effectively expanded to other areas of the nation from its original target audience of districts with a low sex ratio. This campaign does not include the immediate transfer of finances; rather, it is primarily an educational initiative to assist in changing society views. The main objectives of this child protection programme include:

- Preventing abortions that are gender-specific.
- Assure the wellbeing of children and their survival as infants.
- Make sure that the child gets an education and gets included.
- Fighting against gender stereotypes and promoting gender equality
- Providing girls with an atmosphere of safety.
- To support girls' constitutional right to inheritance of property

Sukanya Samriddhi Yojana :

A savings programme sponsored by the Indian government for parents of girl children is called the Sukanya Samriddhi Yojana Account. The plan enables parents to create a trust to pay for the future of their children's education and marriage expenditures. It encourages parents to consistently save for their daughter's higher education and marriage in order to bust the myth that girls are a financial burden on their families.

You can open this account if you are a parent or guardian of a girl under the age of ten. Each child is only permitted to have one account. With the exception of twins and triplets, parents are permitted to open up to two accounts for each of their children. The account can be accessed at any post office or bank branch in India and is transferable throughout the country.

- 1) Savings accounts created particularly for parents of female children.
- 2) Encourages parents to save money for the education of their daughters; part of the "Beti Padhao Beti Bachao" initiative.
- 3) This account can be opened by parents of girl children under the age of 10.
- 4) Only two accounts are permitted per family; twins and triplets are exempt.
- 5) There is a minimum and maximum yearly deposit of Rs. 250 and Rs. 1.5 lakhs, respectively. The deposit amount, interest earned, and withdrawal amount are all exempt from taxes.
- 6) The account's maximum tenure is 21 years from the date it was opened, or until the girl child marries, whichever comes first.
- 7) Deposits are permitted for up to 15 years from the date the account was opened. Once the girl reaches the age of 18, she is permitted a partial withdrawal of up to 50%.
- 8) Accounts can be formed at your local post office or at any public or private sector bank, and deposits can be made in cash, checks, demand draughts, or internet transfers.
- 9) Upon submission of a valid address proof, the account may be transferred from one post office to another, from one bank to another, or between post offices and banks.
- 10) Pre-closure of the account is permitted to cover the girl child's marriage, provided that the girl child has reached the age of 18 and the necessary documentation is presented to prove it.

Balika Samridhi Yojana:

Similar to the Sukanya Samridhi Yojana, the Balika Samridhi Yojana is a scheme. For the parents of girl children, the programme offers only a limited amount of savings options.

- 1) Only newborns are eligible for the program's services.
- 2) Each girl child receives Rs. 500 at the time of birth.
- 3) A scholarship of between Rs. 300 and Rs. 1000 each year is awarded to the girl student while she is enrolled in school, until the end of Grade X.
- 4) The child's (maximum) enrollment age is 10 years old.
- 5) A household is only eligible to participate in this programme with two of its girls.
- 6) The depositor must come from a "Below Poverty Line" family.
- 7) You can open an account at the bank that is closest to you. Under this programme, only a select few banks are authorised to handle application processing.

The Government of India has implemented numerous initiatives to improve girls' education, but despite this, the status of girls' education has not improved as expected simply because the grassroots level has not been reached by these initiatives. Therefore, the Government of India should accept responsibility for implementing such programmes and provisions at the grassroots level.

Perspective of New Education Policy on Girls' Child Education:

On July 29, 2020, the Indian government approved the NEP. That defines the main objectives of the new educational system in India. The new education policy will increase the inclusion of girls. It will contribute to breaking the pervasive gender stereotypes in society. For instance, new courses like coding and crafting will be included in the NEP starting in the sixth grade. Many people may not realise it, yet in our society, girls do not get hired in occupations like carpentry. It has traditionally been connected to male occupations.

The idea of gender is another that needs to be presented to children at a very young age. From the beginning, youngsters must be taught the distinction between gender and biological sex. Any curiosity in adolescence can be cured with education. The New Education Policy puts a strong emphasis on women and young girls. It aims to provide greater comfort and support for girls by examining the school dropout rates of girls in India. The higher education dropout rates are the primary emphasis of this policy. According to this plan of action, the GER was 90.7% for grades 6–8; however, it was only 79.3% and somewhere around 50% for classes 9–10 and 11–

12. One of the main reasons of girls leaving school is menstruation. These alarming facts ought to serve as a wake-up call for society to discuss menstruation health openly. To engage students in discussions about sex education, gender identities, menstrual hygiene, and good health, teachers should form small groups of students in order to increase the literacy rates among girls.

The following are some suggestions that could eliminate barriers to girls' education in India:

A key component of the growth of a nation is the education of girls. By promoting the following, we could help girls in achieving the education they deserve:

(1) Equal Access to Education: Plan provides financial support for community projects that encourage favourable views of equal access to education and that highlight the value of schooling for both boys and girls. Plan also promotes the setting up of gender-sensitive learning environments to ensure that both boys and girls have the opportunity to receive quality education. **(2) Introducing Boys to Gender Equality:** Everybody, including children, adolescents, women, and men receives advantages from gender equality. In order to alter societal norms throughout entire communities, a plan involves boys in the development of solutions that promote gender equality. **(3) Girls' Scholarships:** With the assistance of scholarships, girls are able to pay their tuition, uniforms, supplies, and secure transportation. **(4) Gender Roles that Need to Change:** Increasing awareness in the family and community will encourage favourable attitudes toward girls' education. Parents should be involved in an open discussion about prominent gender stereotypes. **(5) Violence Prevention in Schools:** Plan collaborates with local governments to make sure that schools are free from violence and offer a secure environment for girls to learn. In order to provide an appropriate setting where girls can learn, Plan also collaborates with schools to develop peer networks, mentorship programs, and educational opportunities for female teachers. In order to eliminate a number of obstacles to improving girls' education, higher authorities, community members, NGOs, and each and every Indian need to take responsibilities.

Conclusion: Promoting girls' education is an extremely challenging issue that requires a variety of approaches to solving it. Socioeconomic, psychological, and other factors, many of which are centuries-old cultures and extremely ingrained in our culture, are contributing to this critical issue. In terms of a woman's development from both a socioeconomic and political standpoint, education is essential. The world has become a better place to live because of the impact of education. A number of strategies and plans have been developed for the purpose of raising the nation's overall literacy rate. Education for girls is a necessity for the advancement of the nation.

Thus, it is important for us to promote girls' education. These issues are extremely challenging to solve, but with strong dedication, commitment, and involvement from both individuals and organisations with good intent and rational outlooks, these challenges can be rectified and hurdles can be conquered for promoting improving the nation's development.

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