

Assessment Of The Educational Status Of Girl Children Aged 6-14 Years In Urban Slums Areas Of Jaipur District Of Rajasthan State

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Abstract: *This study gives an overview of the educational status of girls aged 6 -14 years in different slums of Jaipur City. It gives data about enrollment, drop outs and also percentage of children who have never been to school, covering reasons for all the above. This study focuses on issues of enrollment and retention and data has been analyzed from a gender perspective. Although the survey does not cover all of Jaipur extensively, it gives us a window to analyze the scenario of girls' education in the underprivileged colonies and settlements of Jaipur. The main objective for conducting this study was to find strategies for enabling the girl child to get into school. The findings of the survey have been presented in a gender desegregated manner and have also been analyzed community wise. This was one of the key strategies of the study in order to help us understand if there were any significant differences at the micro level, which would in turn require differential strategies for action. Other variables of analysis were caste and religious groups and also insights from the perspective of varying income groups within the communities surveyed.*

Key words: Girls Education, Slum Area, Educational Status, Drop-out Rate, Enrolment, Retention, out-of-school

1. Introduction

Around the world girls and women are treated as number two citizens - all luxuries, comforts and even necessities must first be provided for boys and men, and only then, if available, can percolate to girls and women. This is true to some extent throughout the world but more so and very conspicuously so in India. For the past few centuries in India, the girl has been completely neglected even as a human being and she live as if only to support and satisfy men. In every home even today the boys are still pampered and given the best of everything and the girls of the same family are almost completely ignored. Even in the basic requirement of education, girls are left out because it is felt that, they in any case have only to look after their homes and the needs of their families, so, where are the need to

study? The only requirement of women is even today, to look after the needs of others and give birth to children, and no more they need to have. For this task of home keeping assigned to women, it is felt by all that there is no need for them to go to school. It is considered foolish to allow girls to waste their time in studies and this concept is widely accepted by the Indian society. It may be very true that in majority of cases the girl does not have to become and does not become the breadwinner of the family. However, in this process of thought we are inclined to forget that, to give birth to the next generation and to bring up this new generation is the basic and all important task not only for the family but also for the society and the country. What the mother teaches the child deeply embedded in the heads and the hearts and eat the

little soul. In this context thus, let us remember to what the mother teaches the child is all-important and pervasive. For this important work of girls and womb feel that, they need education and, their negligence in tell field is a mishap for the country.

The National Commission of Women was set up by an Act of Parliament in 1990 to safeguard the right and legal entitlements of women. The 73rd and 74th Amendments (1993) to the Constitution of India have provided for reservation of seats in the local bodies of Panchayat and Municipalities for women, laying a sturdy basis for their contribution in decision making at the local level. Moreover, the Central Government of India has recently launched the Saakshar Bharat Mission for Female Literacy, which aims to reduce female illiteracy and spread education and awareness even in the most remote and rural parts of the nation.

This study gives an overview of the educational status of girls aged 6 -14 years in different slums areas of Jaipur City. It gives data about enrollment, drop outs and also percentage of children who have never been to school, covering reasons for all the above. This study focuses on issues of enrollment and retention and data has been analyzed from a gender perspective. Although the survey does not cover all of Jaipur extensively, it gives us a window to analyze the scenario of girls' education in the underprivileged colonies and settlements of Jaipur. The main objective for conducting this study was to find strategies for enabling the girl child to get into school.

2. Provisions for the Girl Children

(i) Rights of the girl child

According to National Plan of Action for Children 2005, DWCD, Government of India:-

- Assurance of equality of status for girl child as an individual and a citizen in her own right through promotion of special opportunities for her growth and development.
- To ensure survival, development and protection of the girl child and to create an environment wherein she lives a life of dignity with full opportunity for choice and development.
- To stop sex selection, female foeticide and infanticide.
- To eliminate child marriages.
- To ensure the girl child's security and protect her from abuse, exploitation, victimization and other forms of violence.
- To protect the girl child from deprivation and neglect and to ensure the girl child equal share of care and resources in the home and the community and equal access to services.
- To take measures to protect girl children from any treatment, which undermines self-esteem and causes their exclusion from the social mainstream and also to break down persistent gender stereotype?
- To eliminate all obstacles that prevents girls from full enjoyment of human rights and fundamental freedom including equal rights in succession and inheritance.
- To ensure equal opportunity for free and compulsory elementary education to all girls.

(ii) Girl's Education: The Constitutional & Legal Framework

The Indian Constitution provides a framework within which provisions are available for the education of children. Article 45 of the Directive principles of state policy of the constitution of India enjoins on the state to provide free and compulsory education to all children up to the age of 14. In 1993 in the landmark Unnikrishnan judgement, the Supreme Court ruled that the right to education is a

fundamental right flowing from the Right to Life in Article 21 of the constitution. Subsequently in 2002 education was made a fundamental right through the 86th Amendment Act to the Constitution. Since the passing of the act no concrete steps have been taken to turn this into a reality. The Right to Education Bill has not been passed yet. The center has framed a “model bill” that has been passed and sent to the state governments to be enacted into a law.

(iii) Constitutional Provisions:

Article 14 – The state shall not deny to any person equality before the law or the equal protection of laws within the territory of India

Article 15 – The state shall not discriminate against any citizen Nothing in this Article shall prevent the state from making any special provisions for Women & children.

Article 21 – No person shall be deprived of his life or personal liberty except according to procedure established by law.

Article 21 A – The state shall provide free and compulsory education to all children of the age of 6-14 years in such a manner as the State may, by law, determine.

Article 23 – Traffic in human beings and beggar and other forms of forced labour are prohibited and any contravention of this provision shall be an offence punishable in accordance with the law.

Article 24- No child below the age of 14 years shall be employed to work in a factory or mine or engaged in any other hazardous employment

Article 45 – The state shall endeavor to provide early childhood care and education for all children until they complete the age of six years.

Article 243G read with Schedule 11 – provide for institutionalization of child

care by seeking to entrust programmes of Women and Child Development to Panchayat (Item 25 of Schedule 11), apart from education (item 17), family welfare (item 25), health and sanitation (item 23) and other items with a bearing on the welfare of children. National Policy on Education (NPE) 1986 The National Policy on Education (NPE) 1986 emphasizes three aspects in relation to elementary education:

- Universal access and enrolment
- Universal retention of children up to 14 years of age
- A substantial improvement in the quality of education to enable all children to achieve essential levels of learning The Universal Declaration of the Human Rights

Article 26 of the charter states that:

“Everyone has the right to education. Education shall be free, at least in the elementary and fundamental stages. Elementary education shall be compulsory”.

(iv) Convention on the Rights of the Child

The Government of India ratified the convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) on 2nd December 1992 and is obligated to fulfill this pledge. Article 28 of the CRC deals with education as a Right of the child. It states: *“The child shall have the right to education and with a view to achieving this right; measures shall be taken to encourage regular attendance in schools and the reduction of dropout rates”.*

Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) Article 10 of the convention states that the state parties shall take all appropriate measures to eliminate discrimination against women in order to ensure to them equal rights with men in

the field of education and in particular to ensure, on basis of equality of men and women: “(a) The same conditions for career and vocational guidance, for access to studies and for the achievement of diplomas in educational establishments of all categories in rural as well as in urban areas; this equality shall be ensured in pre-school, general, technical, professional and higher technical education as well as in all types of vocational training; 10(f) the reduction of female student dropout rates and the organization of programmes for girls and women who have left school prematurely.

3. Statement of the Problem

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4. Objectives

- To find out the percentage of girl children not in school in Jaipur district.
- To find out the reasons why girl children never enrolled or dropped out in Jaipur district.
- To find out the percentage in out-of-school children in Jaipur district.

5. Sampling Design

The sampling frame was drawn from all the targeted locations. 400 households were visited for data collection and all children aged 6–14 years from these households were covered in the sample. The sample was drawn through a systematic random sampling technique.

6. Data Collection

For the current study, data was collected during the months of August–October 2012 and two main approaches of data collection were followed. These were:

- **Secondary data:** collection of educational statistics at the district & the state level from prior studies and research of Jaipur figures related to various girls’ issues, etc.

- **Primary data:** collection of data about the variables of interest; enrolment rates, dropout/ never enrolled children. The field investigators and supervisors belonged to the local areas and were able to communicate more effectively with the households. Before beginning the fieldwork, the surveyors were oriented about the objectives of the survey, survey methodology and use of survey instruments. They then visited the households and collected information using survey instruments by interviewing the head of the family or father or mother of the child.

7. Tools

A questionnaire was designed to collect information on items relating to the following subject areas:

- a. Basic information about the girl child and his /her family (e.g. name, age, present address, name of child’s father, educational status of the family, occupational status, social group, household income, family composition)
- b. Educational status (dropped out, never attended) of the girl child
- c. If the girl child is a school drop out, what was the last class the child attended?
- d. If the girl child was a school drop out, reasons for dropout
- e. If the girl child never attended the school, reasons for never attending the school

8. Analysis of Data & Reports

• Profile of the surveyed areas

The areas surveyed comprise of slums, urban villages and resettlement colonies of Jaipur. Most of the people in these areas work as daily wage earners in unskilled professions like rickshaw pulling, casual labour, small household industries and shops. In some places there are skilled labourers working as masons and gardeners. The average monthly

income of the households ranges from Rs 1500 – Rs 3000. Adolescent girls do household chores, take care of younger siblings and supplement the family income, mostly by working as domestic helps in nearby localities. The sex ratio is also skewed in favour of the males. Illiteracy rates for women and the average family size are on the higher side in these places. The few areas are situated near a huge wholesale market giving rise to problems of child labour and contributing to high drop out rates of girl children.

- **General Overview, Enrollment and Out-of-School Data**

400 households were surveyed in six slum areas of Jaipur between August and October 2012. The gender disparity comes out in almost all the areas of Jaipur. It is to be noted here that except for areas where the population of girls is marginally higher, everywhere else the percentage of girls is lower than that of boys. The gender gap is in all the slum area in Jaipur city, where the percentage of boys in the age group of 6-14 years was more than girls. Hence, even in the capital of Rajasthan schools along with other government schools, there still are a large percentage of children out of schools.

- **Proportion of boys & girls enrolled in school**

Proportion of boys & girls enrolled in school of the total children enrolled in schools, the percentage of girls is approximately 26% less as compared to boys at 62%. Despite the thrust in enrollment for girls over the past few years, the figures for girls enrolled in schools are still substantially lower than that of boys.

- **Proportion of boys & girls out-of-school**

The data analysis explains that girls do not fare very well when it comes to the out-

of-school. In comparing the number of girls in school to the number of girls out-of-school and also doing a similar comparison for boys it can clearly be seen that girls are 11% more likely to be out-of-school. An important point to be noted there was that, despite the number of girls being less than boys in the total sample size, the number of out-of-school girls is greater than that of out-of-school boys.

- **Dropped Out/ Never Attended School**

The out of school children comprise of those who have never attended school, or who for some reason have dropped out of school without completing their education. To get the actual picture of children who are out of school, both the categories of never attended, as well as the drop-outs need to be looked at closely.

- **Proportion of never attended & dropped out children in Jaipur**

Proportion of never attended & dropped out children in Jaipur of the out-of-school children, 65% are those who have never been to school at all. The remaining 35% are the ones who have attended school but for some reason, have dropped out. This is a very alarming trend implying that most children who are out of school have actually never attended school at all. Though the ‘never attended’ category is higher in most cases, almost the entire sample is in the ‘drop-out’ category. This finding along with the fact that more boys were out of school, suggests that they may have dropped out of school to enter the wholesale market in the area. In all other areas, the percentage of children who have never attended school is higher than the drop-out children.

- **A look into reasons for Children Out of Schools**

During the course of the study, it was found that varying factors contribute to children, especially girl children, being out of school. Here again, area specific

analysis points to trends being different in all the surveyed areas. The major reasons remain the same in most areas but it is the key influencing reason in each area that turned out to be different. Some factors play a greater role in one area than the other. The reasons were analyzed from the perspective of the parents who responded to the questions put forth to them by the surveyors.

- **Reasons for never attending school**

- Poverty
- Need to Work
- Disability
- Migration
- Lack of Interest in Studies
- Care of Siblings/HH
- Gender Bias
- Irregularity of Teachers
- Dysfunctional Schools
- Lack of School nearby
- Lack of Awareness
- Poor Educational Quality

- **Obstacles to Full School Enrollment**

- **Accessibility:**

- Physical and social (e.g. girls' restricted freedom of movement), distance to school.
- Discrimination (e.g. based on sex, race, ethnicity, religion, caste, class).
- Burden of household chores on girls in the family home.
- Burden faced by children combining work and school.

- **Affordability:**

- Direct costs (e.g. school fees, other compulsory fees).
- Indirect costs (e.g. uniforms, textbooks, transportation).
- Opportunity cost (i.e. income/wage lost to family from child leaving work to go to school)

- **Quality:**

- Lack of infrastructure, facilities, materials and support systems for children.

- Inadequate conditions of work for teachers (e.g. heavy workloads, low pay and status of teachers).
- Lack of adequate training, aids and materials for teachers.
- Lack of sensitivity of education authorities and teachers to the needs of children at risk.

- **Relevance:**

- Curriculum detached from local needs, values and the aspirations of children at risk.
- Curriculum inadequate to prepare students for gainful skilled employment.
- **Problems Related to Education of Girls**
- Cost of education
- Access to education
- Lack of adequate number of schools at stages of education within proximity
- Lack of institutions for girls
- Lack of transport facilities
- Inadequate hostel facilities
- School environment (infrastructure)
- Paucity of women teachers
- Curricula
- Insecurity

• Lack of child-care centres or balwadis
Source: Educational Development of Women in India, New Delhi, 1982 Ministry of Education and Culture

9. Findings of the Study

- Skewed girl-boy ratios in the total sample.
- 22% children out of school. Girls have higher percentage in this category.
- Number of girls enrolled is less than boys.
- 72% girl children never attended the school and 28% girl children dropped out of the total out of school.
- Except poverty which is common to both, reasons for not being in school are different for 'never attended' and 'drop outs'.

- Reasons for ‘Never Attended’: Poverty, migration, lack of school nearby, taking care of siblings.
- Reasons for ‘Drop Outs’: Poverty, need to work, lack of interest in studies, taking care of siblings.
- Different patterns of ‘drop outs’ as per age, gender and last class passed.
- Income directly affects educational status. As income increases the number of out of school children decrease.

Although the education scenario in Jaipur is not as bad as it is in many other states of India, educational services are still not managing to reach a vast cross-section of the population, especially girl children.

It was found that some reasons and trends, a prime example being migration to one slum area to another area, are specific to Jaipur underprivileged areas. Migration has a very strong influence on the pattern and numbers children of dropping out of school. Based on the study findings, suggestions have been made on specific areas which need to be looked into, and where further steps need to be taken to bridge gaps.

10. Recommendations

• Accessibility of Schools

The schools are far off and children have to travel long distances to get there. Another factor, a cause for concern, is the commuting and safe passage of girls to and from school. Parents are hesitant to send their girls to schools if the schools are located at a distance.

• Quality of Infrastructure

The issue of providing adequate infrastructure in government schools needs the attention of the authorities concerned because the government schools are overcrowded with over 60-70 children in each classroom. Moreover, these schools do not have the capacity to support the large number of out of school

children in their area. The absence of toilets and drinking water in these schools makes it especially difficult for adolescent girls to attend. The student-teacher ratio is also skewed and leads to overburdening of teachers.

• Quality of Education

The study also found that in many schools in Jaipur, the authorities are charging amounts in excess of what is stipulated. At the time of admission, parents are asked for money in the name of ‘fees’ and are not given receipts for the same. The children have also said that during the school year, many monetary collections are made from them for different purposes. But school did not provide quality education to students. So, parents feel that we are wasting money on girl’s education. However, government should provide the free and compulsory education to all the girl children with other facilities.

• Migrant Population needs special attention

Some specific strategies need to be designed to cater to this segment of children as it is one of the main reasons for drop outs.

• Muslim Population – Specific Strategies

The study also found the Muslim community to have the maximum number of children out of school. The importance of education needs to be reiterated in these Muslim dominated areas as a general apathy for education was apparent in these. Suggestions of the Sachar Committee report such as the importance of recognizing Madrassas, linking them with formal education system and encouraging the Urdu language should be looked into.

11. Conclusions

The data from the primary and the secondary sources highlight the poor infrastructure, poor quality of teaching and low student-teacher ratios in the government schools in Jaipur. A numbers of classrooms were 'kuccha structures', while many classrooms were in the tents. Over 2 lakh children were studying in schools without electricity, while one lakh did not even have access to drinking water.

My Message

The Government of India has taken a number of steps to strengthen the girl children education. While most of the relevant educational programs are designed and implemented by the Ministry of Human Resource Development, some are within the

purview of the Ministry for Social Justice and Empowerment, and yet others in the Ministry of Tribal Affairs. Pursuant to the National Policy on Education, 1986, the Programme of Action, 1992 and The Right of Children to Free and Compulsory Education (RTE) Act, 2009 has come into force with effect from April 1, 2010, to incorporate the provisions for OBCs, SCs, STs, Minorities and other disadvantaged sections to include educationally backward minorities within the existing schemes of the Departments of Elementary Education and Literacy and Secondary and Higher Education. So, we should give our contribution to society to enhance the girl children education in slum areas of our nation.

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