

**Education for Women's Empowerment:
An Evaluation of the Government run Schemes to
educate the girl child
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Executive Summary

In this paper, I have taken up those schemes of the Ministry of Human Resource Development and the Ministry of Women and Child Development that deal with the empowerment of girls and women through education. On the basis of replies to applications for information under the Right to Information Act, the Mid Term Appraisal of the Tenth Five Year Plan, articles on *Pratham's* ASER Report and several articles on various schemes and their funding patterns from the Economic and Political Weekly, I have evaluated the schemes with respect to the extent to which they involve local participation, their aims and objectives and their implementation strategies. I have made also recommendations for more efficient implementation, most of which deal with enhancing participation by the beneficiaries of the schemes.

1. Introduction

Women and men in India enjoy *de jure* equality. Article 14 of the Constitution of India guarantees equal rights and opportunities to men and women in political, economic and social spheres, Article 42 directs the State to make provision for ensuring just and humane conditions for work and maternity itself and Article 51 (A) e imposes upon every citizen, a fundamental duty to renounce the practices derogatory to the dignity of women.

However this *de jure* equality has not yet materialised into a *de facto* equality, despite the efforts made in the Five Year Plans. The First Five Year Plan sought to “promote the welfare of women” by helping them to play their legitimate role in the family and the community but emphasised that the major burden of organising activities for the benefit of the female population had to be borne by the private agencies. Five Year Plans continued to reflect the same welfare approach to women’s interests though they accorded priority to education for both, men and women and launched measures to improve maternal and child health services and supplementary nutrition for children as well as expectant and nursing mothers.

It was the Sixth Five Year Plan in which the focus on women’s interests shifted from ‘welfare’ and ‘development’. Planners and policy makers began to recognise women not only as partners but also as stake-holders in the development of the country. The Seventh Five Year Plan saw developmental programmes which aimed at raising the economic and social status of women and at ensuring that they get the benefits of national development. This is when ‘beneficiary oriented programmes’ extending direct benefits to women in different developmental sectors began. There was a stress upon the generation of both skilled and unskilled employment through formal and non-formal education and vocational training. The Eight Five Year Plan had a Human Development focus. It tried to ensure that the benefits of development do not bypass women and it implemented special programmes for women to complement the general development programmes and to monitor the flow of benefits to women in education, health and employment.

The Ninth Five Year Plan was rather ambitious. It took up 'empowering women as agents of socio-economic change and development' as a major commitment. To begin with, it adopted the 'National Policy for Empowerment of Women', which among other objectives, sought to organise women into Self Help Groups to work for their own empowerment, accorded a high priority to schemes for maternal and child welfare and most importantly, made a bid at easy and equal access to education through the Special Action Plan of 1998, plans for the free education of girls up to the college level (inclusive of professional courses) and vocational training.

Education as such, results in positive externalities. Not only does it have an intrinsic value in the sense of the joy of learning, reading etc, but it also has instrumental, social and process roles. Moreover education may spread through interpersonal motivation. When one individual sends her child to school, her neighbour is likely to do so as well. Women's education too, often spreads this way, more specifically, through same sex effects. i.e. an educated woman is far more likely to send her daughter to school than an uneducated woman. Also, she is likely to maintain better conditions of nutrition and hygiene in her household and thereby improve her family's health (Sen 1997). The presence of a larger number of female teachers may encourage parents to send their daughters to school. Thus education is a fundamental tool for women's empowerment.

In this paper, I have taken up the girls' education schemes of the Ministry of Human Resource Development and the Ministry of Women and Child Development and I have evaluated them with respect to their public policy design in terms of aims, objectives and implementation tactics with reference to the extent to which they involve the grassroots. Prior to the evaluation of the schemes however, I have provided statistics representing the extent of gender inequality in current and initial enrolment, literacy and retention, listed variables that have been statistically proven to increase girls' enrolment and given a few reports on education for empowerment.

2.1. Vital Statistics:

The Report of the Taskforce on Education for Women’s Equality shows that while males exceeded females by 32 million, illiterate females exceeded their male counterparts by as much as 70 million. (CSO 1991) There was a significant rural-urban divide in female literacy. On approximation, rural female literacy was half of that of the urban areas.

Drop out rates were significant. In rural areas, for every 100 girls in Class I, there were 40 in Class V, 18 in Class VIII, 9 in Class IX and only 1 in Class XII. The corresponding figures for urban areas were 82, 62, 32 and 14, respectively.

Figure 1: No. of girl students for 100 girl students in Class I, 1991.

	Class V	Class VIII	Class IX	Class XII
Rural Areas	40	18	9	1
Urban Areas	82	62	32	14

Source: MHRD, *The Report of the Taskforce on Education for Women’s Equality.*

The Report of the Taskforce on Education for Women’s Equality also suggests that for greater female enrolment and retention, the **presence of female teachers** at the primary level is useful. In lieu of table 1, it can be seen that while merely 21% of primary school teachers in rural areas were female, 56% was the corresponding figure in urban areas. This can be a significant reason for the lower drop out rates and higher enrolment rates of girls in urban areas. It is understandable that parents might be wary of sending their daughters to a school without female teachers.

Infrastructure, teachers and enrolment: Efforts towards attaining Universal Elementary Education (UEE) have resulted in a substantial increase in physical infrastructure, teachers and enrolment. The number of primary schools had increased from 0.642 million to 0.767 million between 1999 and 2005. The number of teachers in Primary Schools had increased from 1.91 million in 1999 to 2.31 million in 2004-5 and

enrolment had increased from 113.61 million to 131.69 million in the same period. It is intuitive that a lower Student-Teacher Ratio facilitates enrolment as teachers can now give more attention to each student. The increase in enrolment for girls at the primary level was 5.2% in this period- far higher than 1.7% for boys, according to The Chapter on Elementary Education of the Working Group Report for the Eleventh Five Year Plan.

As per the quality of schools, according to the Working Group Report, the percentage of schools having girls' toilets on campus has increased from 28.24% in 2003-4 to 37.42% in 2005-6. This is still dismal. Not having a girls' toilet in school would mean that girls often skip class to go to far-off toilets. This clearly decreases the quality of schooling. In Bihar merely 11.78% of schools had a girls' toilet as late as 2005-6. The proportion of schools without female teachers has gone down from 35.72% in 2003-4 to 30.87% in 2005.

2.2 Underlying Statistics

Gautam Bhan in his report to Swedish International Development Agency, titled India Gender Profile, makes it clear that while the Census of India, 2001 may report a 15% rise in female literacy (higher than 13.2% for males), it does not imply an improvement in gender bias in education. Thanks to the unbalanced sex ratio, an increase of 15% in female literates implies an increase of merely 10.51 million in contrast to 21.4 million male literates. In Bihar, the number of female illiterates actually rose by 12.25%- a drastic increase of 2.31 million illiterate persons over the 1990's. In fact the number of female illiterates rose in 10 states and union territories. In Rajasthan in 2001, only 4% of SC women were literate. However, Rajasthan reported an increase of 1 million female literates over the 1990's. 19% of SC females were literate in 1991 and 18% was the corresponding figure for ST females. Data for 2001 is, unfortunately not available.

Bhan does acknowledge that there were some positive features in the gender-education scenario. Gender gap between male and female literacy fell from 24.85% in 1991 to 21.68% in 2001. However, he notes that gender gap is consistent through

higher schooling. While the Gross Enrolment Ratio (GER) was as high as 92.7% for girls in 1992-3, merely 53.8% of girls went on for secondary schooling.

GER is often inaccurate and inflated, especially during what Bhan calls the 'enrolment session'. Instead, data on current enrolment should be relied upon. Bhan points out that current enrolment was merely 32.2% for rural females in contrast to 70% for urban females and 46.4% for rural males. The corresponding figure for urban males was 76.9%.

3. A cursory look at causes of gender bias

Reasons for low enrolment and retention of girls, according to Gautam Bhan, are early marriages. 4.3% of girls between 10 and 14 and 35.3% of girls between 15 and 19 are married (Bhan 2001). In urban areas, it is recognised that education increases a girl's marriageability while in rural areas, education implies that a girl lacks domestic skills and will make a bad wife. The opportunity costs of a girl's time are also very high as she has domestic responsibilities of sibling care etcetera, especially if her mother is working.

This is also because it is considered suitable to marry a girl off to a social superior. An educated girl should be married off to a more educated man. The more education a girl gets, the more difficult (and expensive) it is to find her a groom. Moreover the fact that a girl must leave her parents' home and sometimes village, once she gets married, reduces a parent's incentive to send her child to school. Sending a girl to school is like 'watering someone else's plant', according to popular perception. (Sen and Dreze 2002) The results of the PROBE survey by Jean Dreze and Geeta Kingdon show the various other factors that have been statistically shown to influence the school participation of a girl child.

3.1 Variables known to increase girls' school participation

In 'School Participation in Rural India' Dreze and Kingdon deny the conventional wisdom that low school participation occurs due to parental indifference. Qualitative data from the PROBE survey in the four most educationally backward states- Bihar, Madhya Pradesh, Rajasthan and Uttar Pradesh suggests that almost 90% of parents would like to send their children to school, particularly boys. As far as girls are concerned, the probability that a girl will be enrolled in a school goes up by 30% if her parents believe that a girl should go to school.

"Parents are not generally opposed to female education but they are reluctant to pay for it." This implies that State intervention in the form of free text books, uniforms etcetera can be an important factor in the initial enrolment of a girl child.

Also, the PROBE survey suggests that child labour isn't such a potent cause of low school participation in India. It claims that an out-of-school child works only two hours more than a child who attends school.

As such, the PROBE Survey classifies the variables that affect a child's participation in school into household, school and village characteristics.

The **Household variables** include parental education, ownership of cows and goats, dependency ratio, caste and religion. The regression co-efficients of these variables against initial and current enrolment of girls had tested significant and had the expected signs.

- 1 Parental education increased enrolment sharply.
- 2 Cross sex effects were not as strong as same sex effects. It was seen that a mother's education did not significantly affect her son's probability of enrolment but it increased the probability that her daughter would be initially and currently enrolled.
- 3 The ownership of cows and goats decreased the probability of a girl's enrolment. This was because the daughter of the household would be expected to milk the cows and feed the cattle.

4 There was an inverse relationship between the dependency ratio and the probability that a girl child would be enrolled. This is due to sibling care responsibilities that would inevitably fall upon the girl child- especially if her mother was working.

5 It was also seen that being an SC/ST and a girl decreased an individual's chance of being enrolled by 8% in contrast to 6% in case of being an OBC and a girl. Muslim girls were not found to be significantly less likely to be enrolled in a school.

While **school variables** like the successful implementation of the Mid-Day Meal Scheme, proper infrastructure, teacher regularity and child teacher ratio did not significantly affect boys' initial and current enrolment, they tested significant for girls.

1 The presence of the mid-day meal increased the probability that a girl would be enrolled by 15%. This was because it reduced the per-capita costs of schooling.

2 A lower child teacher ratio meant higher enrolment of girls as did teacher regularity.

3 This is possibly because a low value of such variables would decrease the benefit of schooling which would then be lower than the high opportunity cost of a girl's time (sibling care, housework etcetera).

4 School infrastructure tested negative- this is counter intuitive but Dreze and Kingdon explain it by stating that the PROBE survey was targeted at villages where school participation was unusually low and less likely to be affected by better infrastructure.

Village variables too were shown to affect girls' enrolment.

1 The village development index tested positive for girls, which is understandable, considering that a more progressive village would be more likely to cause girls to go to school.

2 The presence of a women's association in the village was also seen to increase girls' enrolment.

The PROBE Survey shows that a programme or a scheme to increase the enrolment and retention rates of the girl child should account for all possible factors. The per capita costs of schooling should be reduced due to the high opportunity costs of a girl's time. Therefore, the provision of mid-day meals and cheap text books are important. To increase retention rates

however, the presence of a female teacher, or atleast a gender sensitised teacher, the presence of a girls' toilet, a lower child teacher ratio and regular teaching is essential- partly to increase the benefit of schooling and to guard against gender insensitive remarks and actions.

However, high enrolment is possible even in the absence of these conditions. According to 'First Class against All Odds' by Rajat K Panda, the *Swastik* School, a remote institution without electricity in *Godbhanga* village, has no school drop outs and 22 first class students out of 34. Schools in the area have low retention rates and poor academic records. Panda attributes its success to the perseverance of the headmaster. Every school may not have one and the experience of this school need not be replicable. Yet, the *Swastik* School has met with its outstanding results also because it has rendered hostel facilities and because it has mobilised the children around a cause-protecting the *sal* forest behind their school. There are policy implications in the first clause. The second will be difficult for the government to replicate. However, it proves that scope for a greater participation by the local community can also further enrolment and grade attainment.

With these factors in mind, I shall in the course of this paper, evaluate various Centrally sponsored education schemes like the Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan, KGBV, ICDS and others to empower the girl child.

4. Centrally Sponsored Schemes (CSS) for the education of the girl child and adolescent girls.

The United Progressive Alliance had pledged in its Common Minimum Programme to empower women politically, educationally, economically and legally to ensure gender equality. The Tenth Five Year Plan had an overly ambitious target of reducing gender gaps in literacy by atleast 50% in 2007. Even the Mid Term Appraisal of the Plan conceded that the target was unrealistic. According to the 2006-7 Budget Rs. 222.51 billion was to be spent exclusively for women. Schemes in which all the beneficiaries were women were to receive 100% of their funding from this fund while

those which benefited women indirectly were to get 30%. However, even schemes like the Indira Awas Yojana in which only 77.17% of the beneficiaries are women and the National Child Labour Project in which only 44% of the expenditure is exclusively for girls have been given 100% of their funding from the fund that is to be used exclusively for women.

Schemes for the empowerment of girls and women can be classified into schemes for 1) livelihood generation, 2) education, 3) health, 4) food security and nutrition, 5) housing, and 6) protection and the generation of awareness. Education schemes have had the largest budgetary allocation of the fund for women's empowerment. It was as high as 38% in 2006-7 and is still 31% of the total in the 2007-8 Budget. A major chunk of the allocation for the education of girls and women has been accorded to the Ministry of Human Resource Development's Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan (SSA). In absolute terms, Rs. 50.6 billion was being spent on the SSA in 2006-7.

4.1 Funding pattern for Centrally Sponsored Schemes

One of the troubles with the Centrally Sponsored Schemes including those for the education of girls and women is their system of disbursement of funds. This process is highly complicated and involves a step by step transfer of funds and release orders. First the Pay and Accounts Officer of the department concerned in the Government of India (eg. The Department of Elementary Education and Literacy of the Ministry of Human Resource Development) sends release orders for CSS funds to the Central Accounting System (CAS) set up by the Reserve Bank of India in Nagpur. Also, it sends a release order to the corresponding administrative department at the State level. The CAS then sends a release order to the State Financial Department while the State Administrative Department sends release orders to the State Treasury and the District Account. Finance Departments of states often make implementing departments bring them copies of release orders and don't release funds otherwise. Release orders slowly filter down to the District Account, Block Account, Village Account and finally to the payees. Funds too are transferred in this tedious way. The CAS releases funds to the State Treasury which sends them down to the District Account which in turn transmits

them to the Block Account which then dispatches them to the Village Account which ultimately releases them to the payees.

The paragraph above has been summed up diagrammatically in Figure 2. It is far too complex to visualise or even understand otherwise.

Needless to say, this complicated procedure causes funds to be 'parked' or delayed at various levels and that the complication is a fantastic cover-up for corruption and for the siphoning of funds.

There is an urgent need for a simpler way to disburse funds. While the organisational structure and functions of the government should be decentralised, there is no need for funds to pass through the State, the District, the Block and the Village to the payees. Instead, the beneficiaries should get their funding directly. This shall be elaborated upon for each and every scheme. An alternate arrangement shall be presented at the end of this paper.

Figure 2: Flow of Funds for Centrally Sponsored Schemes

Key

Release Orders

Funds

Source: Dikshit Ashutosh, Renuka Viswanathan, T.R. Raghunandan. Efficient Transfer of Funds for Centrally Sponsored Schemes. *Economic and Political Weekly* Vol XLII No. 23: 2160, Chart 1.

4.2 Schemes for Education of girls and women of Ministry of Human Resource Development (MHRD)

The Department of Elementary Education and Literacy is in charge of the MHRD's most ambitious schooling project- The **Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan** (SSA). The SSA serves as an umbrella scheme for schemes directly and indirectly beneficial to the girl child- the National Programme for the Education of Girls at an Elementary Level (NPEGEL) and the Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) Programme. The Education Guarantee Scheme under SSA also aims to provide vocational and non formal education to out-of-school children, of which, girls are intuitively significant in number. While these schemes have been designed, keeping in mind, groups like girls, SCs and STs who are often left out of the development process, the quality of schooling is a matter of concern. Other MHRD schemes include the *Kasturba Gandhi Ballika Vidyalayas* (KGBVs), the *Mahila Samakhya Programme*, the Mid-Day Meal Scheme and schemes for adult literacy.

A pattern that persists through the schemes of the Ministry of Human Resource Development is that they seek to reduce the costs of a girl's education, the opportunity cost of which is generally very high as a girl who is in school cannot do the housework and look after her siblings. Also they seek to increase the benefits of schooling. Thus it is likely that they might cause the benefits of educating a girl to outweigh the costs and ensure that she is sent to school. An example is the Mid Day Meal Scheme. It works as an additional benefit. The NPEGEL provides free uniforms and textbooks, which causes a reduction in the costs of schooling.

Moreover, the schemes also seek to set up Non Formal Schools which provide bridge courses to mainstream out of school children, especially adolescent girls. Also, vocational training is provided.

4.2.1 Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan

The SSA was launched in accordance to the Eighty Sixth Constitutional Amendment for Universal Elementary Education (UEE) towards the end of the Ninth Five Year Plan in 2001 and was integrated with the District Primary Education Programme (DPEP). It was continued into the Tenth Five Year Plan. The aims and objectives of the SSA were rather ambitious. It was intended to ensure that all children were enrolled into the schooling system by 2003. All initially enrolled children were to complete five years of schooling by 2007 and eight years by 2010. By 2010, the SSA aimed to achieve universal retention.

The SSA was also an attempt to bridge gender and social disparities at the primary level by 2007 and at the elementary level by 2010. It was meant to improve access to education as well as the quality of elementary education.

Areas of concern

Needless to say, these ambitious objectives were not fulfilled. However, according to the Mid-Term Appraisal of the Tenth Five Year Plan, out of school children between the ages 6-14 were reduced from 42 million in 2002 to 8.1 million in 2004, which is rather dramatic. Though this figure has been accepted by the Planning Commission, the effectiveness of the SSA even with reference to initial enrolment is doubtful.

Areas of concern regarding the SSA include **poor teaching quality and infrastructure.**

1) Poor teaching quality: By the government's own calculations, four out of ten children in government schools are likely to drop out before completing primary school. According to Pratham's ASER Report in 2003, not more than 30% of the school children in the age group 6-14 in an educationally well developed state like Maharashtra can read simple texts fluently or can solve simple arithmetic sums. Pratham also conducted a survey of 2500 children in 59 municipal wards in Patna. Out of these, 1000 were in government schools, 1000 were in private schools and 500 had not been enrolled at all. On a random check, the attendance was merely 40%. 600 children who were in government schools weren't attending on the day of the check. Thus it seems that in reality, 1100 children out of 2500 children were out of school. This was a more than significant 44%. Less than half of the school-going children could read simple paragraphs or solve simple addition and subtraction sums.

2) Infrastructure

- 1 0.18 million school buildings had been sanctioned, out of which, 0.117 million have been constructed as on 31 March 2007.
- 2 0.69 million additional classrooms had been approved and merely 0.40 million were actually built.
- 3 0.17 million drinking water facilities had been arranged for but only 0.14 million were actually provided.
- 4 0.23 million toilets had been sanctioned of which 0.19 were constructed.
- 5 1.012 million teachers were to be appointed but only 0.79 million were recruited in reality.

An argument for community involvement

According to the Planning Commission in its Mid Term Appraisal of the Tenth Five Year Plan in 2005, the Teacher's Education Programmes should have been merged with the SSA, Teaching and Learning Materials (TLM) should have been introduced and there was to be a greater involvement of local communities, *Panchayati Raj* Institutions and Non Government Organisations (NGOs) in order to check poor teaching quality and teacher absenteeism.

Community involvement is usually a very good way to check teacher quality. Teachers should be hired by the School Management Committees rather than the State Government. The School Management Committees should comprise of parents and local authorities like *Panchayati Raj* Institutions. This will ensure that parents have a say in how well their children are educated. However, though the *Panchayati Raj* Institutions (PRI) have been established and though elections have been instituted and are taking place, PRIs have not been empowered enough through the effective transfer of functions, funds or functionaries. To encourage a greater role for the PRIs, the Planning Commission has recommended in its Mid Term Appraisal, that a linkage should be introduced by means of which, release orders should be given to the States if and only if there is evidence that they have transferred functions, functionaries and financial resources to the PRIs. Also School Management Committees should be allowed these as well.

There are also various financial allegations against the SSA. The Indian Market Research Bureau records an instance of two districts in Jharkhand in which grants of Rs. 4.78 million were released to 2369 schools which did not exist other than on paper. In Gujarat, Rs. 0.4 million was diverted by the Gujarat Council of Educational Research and Training only to perform a *Bhumipuja* (a ritual that involves the worship of the land).

There is also evidence on Teaching/Learning Equipment Material Grants' inefficiencies. In Andhra Pradesh 7531 colour television sets were procured at a cost of Rs. 112.1 million for the upper primary section. It was found during the audit that these television sets were lying idle in at least 36 schools. This was because these schools did not have supplies of electricity in the first place. In Uttar Pradesh as well, 51 out of 105 computers in 7 districts were lying dysfunctional due to lack of electricity. In Bihar, the reason for the non-utilisation of at least 247 computers was the inexistence of school buildings and the low availability of computer-trained teachers. This is another urgent reason for the integration of Teacher Education Programmes with the *Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan*.

4.2.1.1 Education Guarantee Scheme (EGS) or Schemes for Alternative and Innovative Education (AIE).

The EGS/AIE Schemes were launched under the SSA as successors to the Non Formal Education Scheme launched in 1979 and revised in 1987. These targeted not only out-of-school children but also hardest-to-reach children i.e. out of school girls, adolescent girls, school drop outs, children from habitations with no schools and working children. The target group was expected to comprise of children aged 6 to 14 and handicapped children aged 6 to 18. The EGS/AIE schemes covered 12 million people in 2003.

The objective of the scheme was to enrol children between 6 to 8 years of age into school. It was intended to arrange motivational courses to this end, if necessary. Children of ages 9 to 11 in non formal schools were to be mainstreamed with the help of bridge courses and residential camps. Schools in school-less habitations were to be set up.

Projects costing above Rs. 845 per child per annum for primary schools and above Rs. 1200 per child per annum would be approved by the Centre. Funding is done on a three tier system. EGS Centres and other State run Schools are funded on a 75:25 basis by the Centre and the States. Voluntary Agencies which run innovative schemes to enrol hardest-to-reach children into the schooling system are fully funded through Central grants.

The Mid Term Appraisal of the Planning Commission recommended that EGS/AIE Centres should enrol the remaining 8.1 million out of school children (as of September 2004) and mainstream the 12 million children in formal schools.

Details about programme implementation for 2006-7 are rather surprising. For one thing, Bihar and Jharkhand have done remarkably well. Bihar had a target of having 1.2 million children enrolled in EGS Centres. It succeeded in ensuring a current enrolment of 0.8 million, which is 70.33% of the target. It also succeeded in setting up

all the 15,423 EGS Centres that it had been targeting for 2006-7. Jharkhand succeeded in enrolling all the 0.7 million children and in setting up all the 17842 EGS Centres that it had been targeting. The Andaman and Nicobar Islands, Meghalaya, Mizoram, and Rajasthan met with similar success in meeting targets both in terms of number of children enrolled and number of EGS Centres set up.

Assam exceeded its target when it came to current enrolment (0.39 million as opposed to a target of 0.35) but it met only (in contrast) 86.58% of its target in terms of setting up EGS centres. Either the rest of the centres weren't necessary or the student-teacher ratio has increased, in which case, there has possibly been a decline in the quality of education imparted. Himachal Pradesh fulfilled its target of setting up 2659 EGS Centres but it is still short of the 7979 children it had been trying to enrol.

In comparison, Punjab performed poorly. It met only 56.37% of its target in setting up EGS Centres and 66.53% of the current enrolment it had been aiming to achieve. The most inefficient performer was however, West Bengal. While it had established all the 19680 EGS Centres it had been aiming to, it had succeeded in enrolling merely 1.23% (0.021 out of 1.7 million) of the children it had targeted.

Once again, it is rather doubtful as to the quality of these EGS Centres and the attendance pattern of their students. The Social and Rural Research Institute, a branch of the Indian Market Research Bureau attests that Bihar, Uttar Pradesh, West Bengal Rajasthan, Jharkhand and Andhra Pradesh have the maximum number of out of school students. MHRD's data doesn't seem consistent with IMRB's results at all. IMRB claims that the schemes under the SSA have completely failed to reach their objectives. **There were to be no out of school children in 2005. However, there were 13.6 million of them.** According to the National Institute of Educational Planning and Administration the number of drop outs as a percentage of the total number of out-of school students- 54.9%- was higher than the other 45.1% which had never attended school. Out of 100 children enrolled in Class I, almost 63 were absent from mainstream education. Only 37 of these children reached Class X. The primary reasons for the high

drop out rate were corporal punishment, boring and irrelevant curriculum and an inability to cope.

4.2.1.2 National Programme for Education of Girls at an Elementary Level (NPEGEL)

The National Programme for Education of Girls at an Elementary Level was started in September 2003 as an integral component of the *Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan*. It sought to distribute free textbooks for girls till Class VIII, construct separate toilets for girls and to conduct bridge camps for older out-of-school girls. The NPEGEL aimed at ensuring that 50% of the newly recruited teachers were female and that learning materials would be gender sensitive. NPEGEL also intends to mobilise intensive community efforts and institute an innovation fund (for better enrolment and retention) per district.

As such, the NPEGEL provides additional provisions for enhancing the education of underprivileged/disadvantaged girls at an elementary level through more intense community mobilisation, development of model schools in clusters and the provision of need based incentives like textbooks and uniforms.

Concrete details of its implementation are, in fact, available. 29532 model schools or cluster schools (1 school for 8-10 villages) have been developed. 73788 teachers in educationally backward blocks have been sensitised to gender issues. 7713 additional rooms have been constructed in schools for space for teacher training and skill building for girls. Free uniforms have been distributed to 20 million girls in Educationally Backward Blocks. NPEGEL was expanded to 38748 clusters (8-10 villages) in 3122 blocks in 2006.

According to the mid-term appraisal of the Tenth Five Year Plan by the Planning Commission, areas of concern with respect to NPEGEL are factors leading to low learner's achievement including poor classroom transactions, lack of pupil evaluation and low proportion of female teachers. The Planning Commission recommends that the local

community should be involved in monitoring school progress through Village Education Committees.

The NPEGEL Scheme is essentially for the girl child only. The idea behind free textbooks and uniforms is to reduce the costs of schooling for the girl child. It is generally seen that when there are economic constraints, the girl child is the first of the children in a family, to be taken out of school. This is because the opportunity cost of educating a girl is generally high. In case of economic constraints, the daughter of the house must do the housework (as her mother must work) and various odd jobs (as a domestic servant for example). The sons are kept at school since they can be counted upon as a future investment while the girls are to be married off.

However, free uniforms and textbooks cannot be distributed forever. These are a temporary measure- a direct action rather than a policy action. The NPEGEL should focus on doing more than increasing enrolment. It should increase retention as well. NPEGEL should focus on more permanent facilities like the construction of girls' toilets and spreading awareness about the need for girls' education.

Mobilising community organisations to maintain effective checks on teacher training exercises and service delivery is important. In Orissa, there has been an initiative in which Mother Teresa Associations maintain a check on the attendance of teachers and children, the regularity of classes and the cleanliness of the school compound. Designated mothers are also required to bring out of school children in the neighbourhood by motivating parents. While NGOs and charity organisations can mobilise the community, the community itself can do a better job as it has more of an incentive to. The question is how will the government enable illiterate villagers, slum dwellers etcetera to come together, send their daughters to school and ensure that the benefits of schooling their daughters exceed the costs? To start with, there is a very low value attached to girls' education anyway. For this, the NPEGEL must spread awareness through publicity campaigns in addition to its other operations. Also, the schools that NPEGEL sets up should be exclusively for girls. Thus parents who are otherwise

uncomfortable about sending their daughters to co-educational schools would have a school to send their daughters to.

4.2.1.3. Kasturbha Gandhi Balika Vidyalaya (KGBV)

Launched in July 2004, the KGBV sets up residential schools at the upper primary region- primarily for girls from SC, ST and OBC families as well as minority communities. The scheme is being implemented in Educationally Backward Blocks where the female rural literacy is below the national average. 75% of the seats in KGBVs are reserved for SCs, STs, OBCs and minorities. The remaining 25% of the vacancies are filled with girls of BPL families.

The Government of India had sanctioned 1180 KGBVs as of 2006 but had made only 782 operational by September 2006. 52186 girls had been enrolled. The KGBV is being implemented in 24 States and 1 Union Territory.

KGBV is as such, targeted at girls above ten years of age. Out of school girls of this age require bridge courses to mainstream them into KGBVs. In Karnataka, these are being provided in all the 58 KGBVs in operation in Educationally Backward Blocks, in co-ordination with the Ministry of Women and Child Development, Mahila Samakhya Officials and NGOs. Madhya Pradesh offers two types of bridge courses- non residential and residential. Non Residential Bridge courses are offered in areas in which there are a substantial number of out of school children (10 or more). Residential courses are offered only in tribal areas. Out of the 959 residential bridge courses offered, 671 are for girls and 39201 girls have been enrolled in bridge courses in Madhya Pradesh.

From instances of implementation in Karnataka, it can be seen that KGBV has much scope for participation. 27 out of the 58 KGBVs run in Karnataka are run by *Mahila Sanghas* (Women's groups formed under the Mahila Samakhya Scheme. See 2.2). However, to ensure proper service delivery in terms of free uniforms, textbooks and mid-day meals, more active participation is required. Like EGS Centres, KGBVs too, should be run by School Management Committees consisting of members of the

Panchayat, Local Government authorities, *Mahila Sangha* women and more importantly, of parents and teachers.

4.2.1.4 Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE)

The ECCE was an optional component of the District Primary Education Programme while it was still in operation. Currently, the ECCE is still being carried out, though in a small way, under the Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan. The ECCE aims at setting up pre schools to prepare children for schooling. It has an indirect bearing on education for girls as with her siblings in school, the girl child need not assume sibling care responsibilities during school hours and can therefore, attend school.

ECCE is run with innovation funds from the MHRD through School Management Committees, Village Education Committees and Education Guarantee Centres.

To avoid duplication of efforts, ECCE Centres are instituted in areas with no Integrated Child Development Services Centres for pre school children run by the Ministry of Women and Child Development.

However, according to the Planning Commission in 2005, there aren't enough ECCE or ICDS Centres. ECCE should include provisions for training teachers on a need basis and for play-way kits for innovative teaching.

4.2.1.5 Recommendations

It is important to remember that the girl child is most susceptible to low school quality, low teaching quality and lack of innovative ways of learning. Thanks to the high opportunity cost of schooling a girl child and because educating a girl is like "watering someone else's courtyard" (as she will get married and not be a part of her parents' family any longer), if a girl fails a class or two, she is very likely to be forced to drop out. Thus, while the NPEGEL and EGS schemes may cause a girl child to get enrolled into school, they are not likely to ensure that she will not drop out.

For this, a two pronged strategy is important.

1) Start a massive publicity campaign extolling the virtues of educating a girl and the benefit that might accrue to her family in the form of monetary gain once she starts earning and status and prestige in the community. Education is sensitive to interpersonal motivation. If one family sends its girls to school, its neighbours are likely to do so as well.

The publicity should also invite parents to form associations and register with the district authorities. They should be informed of the benefits of organising themselves to protest against the low teaching standards and to ensure teacher regularity and service delivery.

2) The Centre should release its grants for the next year of the scheme if and only if there is evidence of community mobilisation. This should imply the formation of women's Self Help Groups, Parent Teacher Associations and School Management Committees. These can be trained by NGOs hired by the State governments or district authorities to insist upon checking records for teachers' attendance and regularity. These associations can be a very effective check upon inefficiencies related to teaching-learning materials as well. They will ensure that all television sets and computers are in operation.

Only local groups like women's associations, School Managing Committees and Parent Teacher Associations have the incentive to maintain checks upon how well the children of the community are being educated. While they may pay low fees to government schools, they incur huge opportunity costs in the form of their children's time. Thus it is the beneficiaries of the schemes- the parents and the students who should be empowered enough to ensure service delivery under the Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan. Perhaps the CAS should fund School Management Committees directly once they are formed by district authorities or on their own initiative. This will empower local bodies as they will get more funds than they would have gotten had it trickled through

the state and district channels. With these funds, the SMCs can ensure the construction of schooling infrastructure and the provision of Teaching and Learning Materials. The SMC should be able to hire, pay and fire the school teachers.

The ECCE should also ensure crèches in the proximity of each and every co-educational and girls' school- primary as well as secondary. This would enable the elder daughters of households to leave their younger siblings in the care of trained personnel. (Community organisations should see to it that personnel in ECCE crèches and pre schools are trained.)

4.2.2 Mahila Samakhya (MS) Programme.

Launched in 1988 in accordance to the New Education Policy of 1986, *the Mahila Samakhya* Programme seeks to benefit women of all ages, especially those from socially and economically marginalised groups. It aims to integrate formal and non formal education for girls, education schemes for adult women and vocational training for girls and women.

Launched as a pilot project in 10 districts in Uttar Pradesh, Gujarat and Karnataka in 1988, the *Mahila Samakhya* Scheme covered 9000 villages in 60 backward districts in 10 States- Andhra Pradesh, Assam, Bihar, Jharkhand, Karnataka, Kerala, Gujarat and Uttar Pradesh as of 2000. 0.2 million women had been actively mobilised.

Its nodal agencies are voluntary organisations, women's associations and NGOs, all of which are eligible for Central grants. These agencies set up Mahila Samakhya Societies or *Mahila Sanghas* to take up field projects for empowerment and education and to develop means of learning and instruction.

The predominant composition of the *Mahila Sanghas* is SC/ST women belonging to land-less and marginalised families engaged in wage labour. Bringing these women into *Sanghas* makes them active agents in their own and other women's empowerment. The idea behind founding *Mahila Sanghas* was to enable women to affirm their potential

and to move from situations of passive acceptance to assertion and collective action. The Mahila Samakhya Scheme was to create independent collectives of women to initiate and sustain social change.

One of its more well-defined aims was to conscientise adult women to take familial decisions in favour of their daughters' education. (As aforementioned, the regression co-efficient between the presence of an educated mother and the initial enrolment of the girl child tested positive and significant as per the results of the PROBE Survey by Dreze and Kingdon.) The *Mahila Samakhya* Scheme empowered adult women to take decisions regarding the family. It was expected that empowered mothers would want to educate their daughters. In fact the *Mahila Samakhya* Scheme is also called The Education for Women's Equality Scheme. This is due to the various innovation projects taken up by *Mahila Sanghas* to educate their daughters. One of these is the concept of the *Mahila Shiksha Kendra* a residential learning centre facilitating the emergence of alternative forums for women like women's courts and health centres. The *Mahila Shiksha Kendra* is an innovative women centred educational facility for women in rural areas. In Andhra Pradesh, two women from the *Sangha* act as wardens in the Mahila Shiksha Kendra and cook for the girls. A gender training manual for Non Formal Educational instructors was developed on the initiative of a *Sangha* in Karnataka.

Mahila Samakhya: A Success?

For most women, organising themselves and attending meetings was an experience in itself. A *Sangha* woman from Tehri in Uttar Pradesh reported being told by her husband to stay at home and finish the housework instead of going out and 'gossiping' with the Mahila *Sangha*. If meetings delayed her cooking, she was beaten. Women in Andhra Pradesh were told "Today you could not cook because of the meeting; tomorrow you will ask men to wash clothes. What do you think you are going to do? Rule the country?" The Mahila Samakhya Scheme also caused women to be seen and noticed in areas erstwhile reserved for men, primarily high caste men.

The Mahila Samakhya Scheme has numerous success stories.

- 1 In the Attanoor Village in Raichur, an all women panchayat confronted land grabbers who were illegally using one and a half acres of common land, confiscated it and used it for the construction of community toilets.
- 2 Pushpalata, a ward member of the panchayat in Ryalapalli village, Gangadhara Mandal, Karimnagar district in 2000 confronted the Sarpanch about how he had spent the money obtained by the panchayat for the auction of two tamarind trees. When she was told that he had spent it on valves for the irrigation system, she was able to prove that the State Government had provided the valves free of cost. The money was returned.
- 3 In Sitapur in Uttar Pradesh, the *Mahila Sangha* was able to change a custom in which a female doll was beaten to shreds in public on Nag Panchami to one in which it is rocked upon a swing. This had a powerful symbolic significance. A parallel custom was one in which brides were beaten with sticks once they entered their marital home. The *Mahila Sangha* changed this into one in which they are offered sweets.

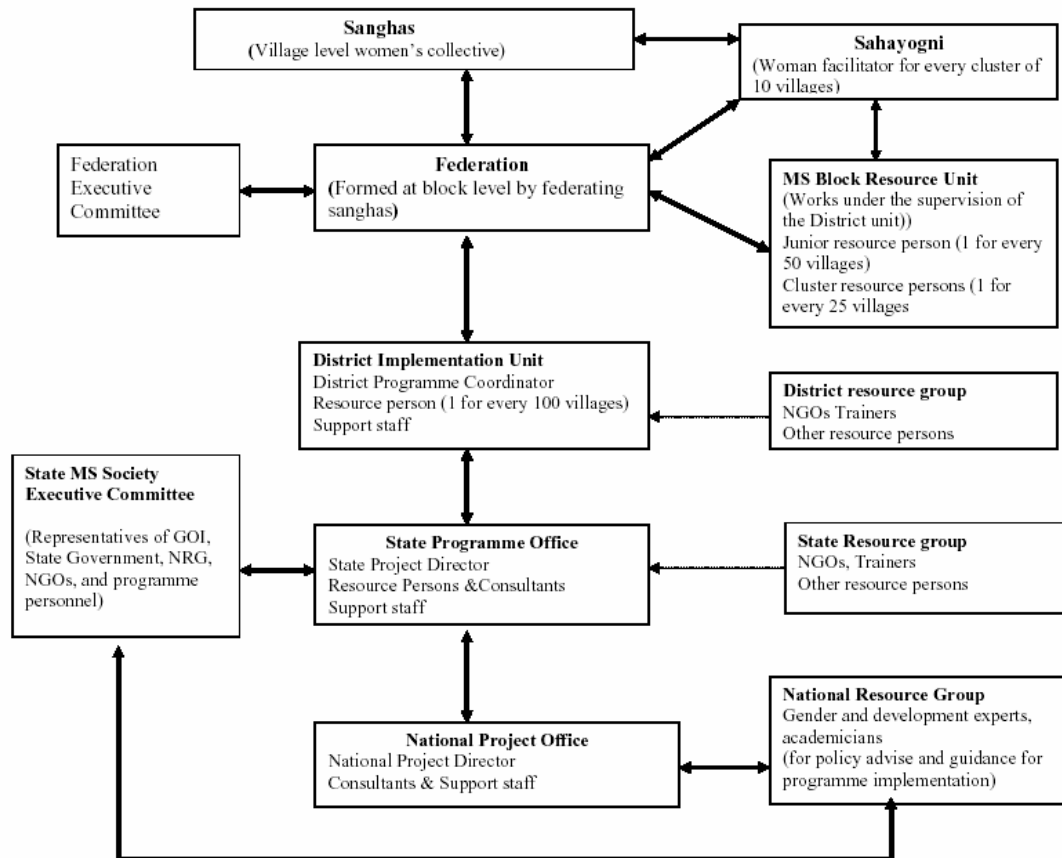
However these are **isolated incidences**. It can easily be seen that the short term goals of the Mahila Samakhya Scheme have barely been defined at all. Success stories have happened but these are not universal- **they are merely inspirational stories about the achievements of a few *Sangha* women- not those of the scheme itself**. The failure of the Mahila Samakhya Scheme lies in its poor and complex organisation.

Organisational Structure

The Mahila Samakhya programme is implemented through autonomous registered societies at the state level. These are sponsored by the Centre through a complex organisational structure that involves a State Programme Office and a District Implementation Unit which forms a Federation of Mahila Sanghas. The body that is actually responsible for the implementation of the Mahila Samakhya Scheme is the MS Block Resource Unit which works under the supervision of the Federation. A woman facilitator known as a Sahyogini is responsible to the Mahila Sangha for every cluster of 10 villages. The State MS Society Executive Committee comprises of the representatives

of the Government of India, National Resource Group (Gender and development expert academicians), NGOs and programme personnel.

MAHILA SAMAKHYA: ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE



Source: MHRD. Mahila Samakhyas Organisational Structure. Accessed on 13 June 2007 at www.education.nic.in///MS/MSorganogram.pdf

The MHRD reports that in Gujarat, the State Programme Office hardly functions due to frequent changes in leadership and management inefficiencies. It affords poor research and documentation support to district implementation units. There is no systematic approach for staff planning, recruitment, training, capability development and retention, assessment and discontinuation. Funds from the Government of India are almost never available within the stipulated time frame. MHRD suspects gross financial irregularities in the districts' and state offices and ad hocism in purchases due to the non existence of a committee for purchases and due to the lack of stringent measures.

What is true of Gujarat is possibly true of each and every state. The MHRD does not have as detailed an evaluation of other States and is thus unable to state so for sure. Nonetheless, incentives for corruption and inefficiency clearly exist.

4.2.2.1 Recommendations

- 1 To start with, the objectives of the scheme must be clearly defined. The Mahila Samakhya Scheme has no clear aims. The creation of *Mahila Shiksha Kendras* through the formation of a women's association should be its focus.
- 2 Data on the number of *Mahila Shiksha Kendras* in each state is essential. It should be published on the MHRD site.
- 3 Block and District Authorities should launch publicity campaigns adjuring women to organise themselves into *Sanghas*. NGOs and Women's groups should actively persuade women to form associations at the grassroots level. These institutions should be directly funded by the Centre. They should register themselves with the State which must transmit the list of Block and District Authorities, NGOs and women's groups working towards making the scheme a success, and the grants they need, to the MHRD for funding and monitoring purposes.
- 4 Every *Mahila Sangha*, whether formed by NGOs and women's groups, formed voluntarily, or formed by Block or District authorities, should be registered with the District authorities. It should get its funds directly from the Centre. Funds for the next year of implementation should not be provided unless there is evidence of the establishment of at least one *Mahila Shiksha Kendra*.
- 5 Every *Mahila Sangha* must be trained in reading, writing, accountancy and the use of the Right to Information Act by trainers recruited by District Authorities.
- 6 *Mahila Sanghas* should constitute a part of the School Management Committees run under the Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan and they should see to it that girls' toilets, classrooms etcetera are functional and in good condition. They should supervise gender sensitising activities for teachers under NPEGEL and they should ensure teacher regularity.

The trouble with the *Mahila Samakhya* Scheme is that all the existing literature available on it cites instances of success and much rhetoric. It is true that the concept of women working for their own education and equality is a splendid idea but the way in which it has been carried out since the late 1980's is not very organised. It has been under the DPEP in states like Bihar. However, if it has to be a separate scheme, it has to have its own structure. (Else it should be merged with the SSA.) The prevalent structure is much too complex and ineffective. Even MHRD reports corruption at the Block and District levels in Gujarat. Funds are never available within the stipulated time period. The State Project Offices are far too weak to support the Block and District officials with supervision, research and coordination. Instead, the various institutions and the Sanghas must be paid directly by the Centre. Funding should be centralised though supervision, monitoring, publicity and training should be the responsibility of Block and District Authorities.

4.2.3 The Mid-Day Meal (MDM) Scheme

According to the afore-mentioned PROBE Survey, the presence of Mid Day Meals in the villages increased the probability that a girl child would be enrolled in a school by 15%. The MDM has this effect as it increases the benefit of schooling a girl as perceived by her parents. (A girl generally has a higher opportunity cost of schooling as she is expected to look after the household, especially if her mother is working. So an increased benefit will swing the implicit cost-benefit analysis in a parent's mind in favour of schooling the girl child.) The MDM also reduces caste biases as it forces children of all castes to eat together. 100g of food grain per child per school day is distributed to all children in government schools. MDM is also known as the Nutritional Support to Primary Education Scheme.

When it comes to the Mid Day Meal Scheme however, there are huge areas of concern. To start with there are large inter-state variations. Karnataka's centralised cooking and delivery of cooked food to various schools is replicable in other States as well. It has been found to be rather efficient in terms of costs and time. Self Help Groups and NGOs are providing cooked food to school going children in Andhra Pradesh, Karnataka, Orissa and Uttar Pradesh. The MHRD reports the provision of mid-day meals

to approximately 1120 million children in 2005. However, enquiries at a colony in Dakshinpuri, Delhi and a meeting with a member of the office staff of a government school revealed that Mid-Day meals were being provided only at Sarvodaya schools. (For a statewise list of the number of primary schools and EGS/AIE Centres in which the scheme is in operation, see Annexure 2.)

The Planning Commission suggests that a concurrent evaluation of the Mid Day Meal Scheme should be launched in all states. State Governments should make arrangements for Public-Private Partnerships, social audit and greater accountability.

4.2.3.1 Recommendations

The Mid-Day Meal Scheme must be universalised. It should be subject to a social audit in all states and it should definitely be provided in all government schools (not just Sarvodaya Vidyalayas) - both formal and non formal, particularly in girls' schools and even in secondary schools. The trouble with the Mid-Day Meal Scheme is that it is, once again a direct action rather than a policy action. It may address both enrolment and retention but it does not help the provision of an education of quality. Students may enrol themselves just for the meal and may not attend class. This should be actively checked and students should be allowed their meal if and only if they have attended their classes.

The State Government should outsource the delivery of the mid-day meal to local bodies comprising of parents, teachers and local officials like members of the panchayat. They could recruit private contractors to cook and deliver the meals.

4.3 The Education Schemes of the Ministry of Women and Child Development

The Department of Women and Child Development had been established in 1985 under the Ministry of Human Resource Development. However, it had been constituted into a separate Ministry on 30 October 2006. Since then, it has continued funding and designing several schemes- primarily the *Balika Samriddhi Yojana*, the Integrated Child Development Services and the *Kishori Shakti Yojana*.

At this juncture, it is essential to mention that the MWCD should set up an information facilitation centre for the convenience of RTI applicants. It was almost impossible to file RTIs. The Public Information Officer was "at a meeting".

4.3.1 Balika Samridhhi Yojana

The *Balika Samridhhi Yojana* was started on 2 October 1997 and was revised in 1999. It targets BPL girls and daughters of rag pickers, vegetable/fish sellers, pavement dwellers and the like. Those who wish to avail of the benefit from this scheme must apply to *Anganwadi* workers (who work in pre-schooling, health and supplementary nutrition centres for an honorarium), auxiliary nurses, midwives, revenue village accountants, school teachers and *panchayat* municipal staff who are to collect applications. Under this Scheme, the State deposits Rs. 500 in an interest bearing account in the name of the girl child. When the girl turns eighteen, she may avail of the money if she is still unmarried (as certified by the *Gram Panchayat*). Annual scholarships are also awarded under this Scheme. These are incremental in order to encourage retention.

The money in this account can be withdrawn with sanction from the mother/guardian of the girl child only for premium payments under the *Bhagyashree Balika Kalyan Bima Yojana* and to pay for textbooks and uniforms.

So far, the scheme has benefited 3.15 million girls born on or after 15 August 1997. The girls are to reach class X in 2012. No State Government has reported insuring any of the girls under the *Bhagyashree Balika Kalyan Bima Yojana*. As per the decision of Planning Commission, the *Balika Samridhhi Yojana* is soon to be transferred to the State Sector.

4.3.1.1 Recommendations

To evaluate the *Balika Samridhhi Yojana*, more data on the implementation is necessary. The scheme shows an element of sensitivity to the incremental opportunity cost of the education of a girl child. The number of beneficiaries is fairly impressive.

However, the MWCD should insist on States insuring the girls under the *Bhagyashree Balika Kalyan Bima Yojana*. Also, girls should be enrolled in schools in which textbooks and uniforms are free. Moreover, there should be specific centres in which families can apply for benefits under the BSY Scheme. The annual budgetary outlay for the scheme should be decided on the basis of the number of applicants.

4.3.2 Integrated Child Development Services (ICDS).

The ICDS seeks to promote pre school education and to train 'Anganwadi' workers, primary school teachers and health workers to benefit children between 0 to 6 years of age, pregnant women and nursing mothers from the poorest of poor families, disadvantaged areas, backward and rural areas, tribal areas and slums. Activities under the ICDS include the provision of supplementary nutrition, referral services, nutrition and health education, pre school education, immunisation and health check ups. ICDS also aims to provide a foundation for the proper psychological development of children.

The ICDS is an integrated approach for converging basic services through community based Anganwadi workers and helpers, supportive community structures and women's groups. In addition to providing pre school education, supplementary nutrition and health care, an Anganwadi worker is expected to maintain statistics on birth and deaths, keep records of supplies of food and educational material and to list women eligible to access doles and stipends under various schemes. However, she is not even entitled to the minimum wage. Nor is she rendered professional training as such.

32.1 million women and children have benefited from the ICDS as against a target of 27.7 million as per the Planning Commission's Mid Term Appraisal of the Tenth Five Year Plan. The Planning Commission, however, notes that the number of creches (12470) has not risen since 1993. It believes that creche services should be integrated with ICDS. This is because pre-school education must be focussed upon to keep girls in school (in case sibling care responsibilities keep older girls at home). SCERT (State Councils for Educational Research and Training) should train the Anganwadi workers to meet this critical requirement of pre school education.

Areas of concern

The trouble with the ICDS however, is that it has not been universalised. According to Jean Dreze, there are legal, political and social reasons for the universalisation of the ICDS. To start with, the Supreme Court had declared on 28 November 2001 that the Government should ensure a functional anganwadi centre in every settlement. ICDS should be extended to all children under the age of six. This is necessary not only to ensure that adolescent girls go to school but also to provide nutrition and healthcare to children under six and to prepare them for school. The political argument deals with the United Progressive Alliance government's promises under the Common Minimum Programme. The social argument is most compelling- ICDS provides more equal opportunities for growth and development in early childhood.

There are also various other quality constraints. In Bihar, 85% of the supervisory posts under ICDS were found to be vacant. 18% of ICDS projects in the state had no supervisors at all. In Jharkhand, the post of Child Development Project Officer was vacant in approximately half of the projects. On a statewise analysis on the basis of the FOCUS (Focus on Children Under Six) Index, Tamil Nadu fared better than Maharashtra, Uttar Pradesh and the North Indian States- Chattisgarh, Himachal Pradesh, Rajasthan and Uttar Pradesh combined for most indicators. It had the lowest number of Anganwadi Centres in which the overall functioning was rated as 'poor' by the Survey Team. In Tamil Nadu, the motivation of mothers to send their children to school was the highest. Uttar Pradesh on the other hand, fared miserably. It had the highest number of Anganwadi Centres in which the survey team declared the overall functioning as 'poor' and the lowest proportion of villages in which mothers were motivated to send their children to school. (See Figure 4.)

Dreze partly attributes the success of the ICDS in Tamil Nadu to women's agency. In Tamil Nadu, the ICDS was managed almost entirely by women and not just at the Anganwadi level. The women of the community had an incentive to run the ICDS well. They wanted to ensure their children's health and pre-schooling. Meanwhile,

mothers could go to work and elder sisters could go to school. Thus, women helped to hold the system accountable and to make health and nutrition into political issues.

Figure 4: Statewise Comparison of Anganwadi Centres on the basis of the FOCUS Survey.

Proportion of Anganwadi Centres in which:	Tamil Nadu	Maharashtra	North Indian States (Chattisgarh, Himachal Pradesh, Rajasthan, Uttar Pradesh.)	Uttar Pradesh

Overall function was rated as 'poor' according to the FOCUS survey team.	13	32	41	42
Supplementary nutrition was not being provided.	0	9	13	25
Percentage of villages in which:				
Motivation of mothers to send their children to school was 'high' or 'very high'.	60	55	29	23

Source: Adapted from Dreze Jean. Universalisation with Quality and Equity. *Economic and Political Weekly*.

4.3.2.1 Kishori Shakti Yojana (KSY)

The *Kishori Shakti Yojana* is a redesign of the Adolescent Girls' Scheme which was under the ICDS. Like its precedent scheme, the KSY seeks to benefit girls of 11 to 18 years of age. Its objectives involve improving the nutritional, health and development status of adolescent girls, promoting awareness of health, hygiene, nutrition and family care, sending out of school girls back to school through bridge courses and non formal education channels as well as imparting vocational training and sex education.

It differs from the Adolescent Girls Scheme as it has an extended coverage of the earlier scheme, significant content enrichment and a strengthened training component.

6118 blocks have been covered under this scheme. It also functions through Anganwadi Working Centres.

4.3.2.2 Recommendations

- 1 More crèche services need to be offered to increase girls' enrolment by relieving them temporarily of sibling care responsibilities.
- 2 *Anganwadi* workers need to be paid a higher honorarium.
- 3 The MWCD should not release the grants for the next year to the State without sufficient evidence of training programmes to *Anganwadi* workers and helpers through NGOs dealing with health and pre-school education.
- 4 In areas in which the *Mahila Samakhya* Scheme is in operation, *Mahila Sanghas* should operate the ICDS Centres.
- 5 The MWCD should not release grants to the State Government without sufficient evidence of an *Anganwadi* Centre in every settlement. The State Governments should provide reports of the number of settlements and on whether each has an ICDS centre. NGOs and social workers should file applications under the Right to Information to ensure that this has been done.

5. Looking Ahead

What contributes to the inefficiency of the Centrally Sponsored Schemes with regard to quality of education provided is the lack of local participation. State Governments, Block and District Authorities cannot ensure that these schemes function smoothly. The targeted beneficiaries should be empowered to ensure proper service delivery. This can be done through massive publicity campaigns to exhort parents, teachers and women etcetera to get together, organise and register themselves with the District Authorities. The Block Authorities and *Panchayats* should also persuade beneficiaries to form Self Help Groups.

Once these Self Help Groups, School Management Committees and *Mahila Sanghas* are formed, they should be funded directly from the Central Accounting System set up by the RBI, on a release order from the concerned Ministry in the Government of

India once it receives a list of all the Committees. This will save inefficiencies in the trickle down of funds from the Centre to the State to the District to the Block Authorities, in which case funds might be 'parked' or simply, siphoned away. Consider Figure 5.

While measures like free uniforms and textbooks are effective in raising enrolment, they may not increase retention. For the latter, there should be a greater focus on proper service delivery and on the quality of infrastructure and teaching.

Lastly, research institutes should run social audits on all these schemes and should evaluate and criticise them regularly. The Right to Information Act should be used constantly by Social Service Activists and Feminists to seek data on ground implementation.

Figure 5: Recommended flow of funds for CSS

