

**STUDY OF THE SPECIAL PROGRAMMES
FOR GIRLS' EDUCATION - 1978**

1. The Study

In line with the Constitution of India, the Government of India initiated in 1957-58 special programmes for the promotion of girls' education with an allocation of Rs.335 lakh during the Second Five Year Plan. The main schemes initiated under the programme were; provision of attendance scholarships for girl students, the appointment of school mothers, construction of quarters for women teachers and payment of stipends for the teachers' training courses. These Schemes were subsequently extended to the State Sector also.

At the instance of the Planning Commission, the Programme Evaluation Organisation (PEO) conducted an evaluation study of these schemes in 1971. The study was not intended to be estimational in character nor it sought to assess directly the impact of the programme on of girls. It was, rather, a diagnostic study with focus on the process of implementation of the programme, difficulties faced and the response received from different sources. The report of the survey was brought out in 1978.

2. Objectives

- i) To study the formulation, administration and implementation of the Schemes for the promotion of girls' education
- ii) To see whether the achievements were in tandem with the objectives or not; and
- iii) To study the response of the relevant sections of the community to the schemes.

3. Sample Size/Criteria for Selection of Sample

The study covered 16 states and the Union Territory of Pondichery, 26 districts, 78 schools and 72 villages. Besides, 125 officials, 169 teachers and 1376 parents were also interviewed. Since the programmes was scattered, the sampling of districts, blocks and schools was purposive.

The number of districts selected from each state was decided on the basis of the twin considerations of the number of schemes for girls' education in operation in the State during the plan period and the total expenditure incurred on the implementation of the same within each selected district. One block with the maximum activity in terms of the schemes implemented was selected in each district. In each selected block, three educational institutions with maximum number of schemes were selected for the study. Head of the selected institution, one trained teacher with maximum length of service and one school mother were selected from each chosen institution. Ten parents of school-going and five parents of the non-school-going girls and three knowledgeable persons were selected as respondents from the sample village.

4. Reference Period

The data were collected for the period 1960-61 to 1973-74.

5. Main Findings

1. There had been a gradual but progressive increase in the enrolment of girls over the plan periods and a reduction in the gap between the enrolment of boys and girls during the last two decades. However, great disparity in the progress of girls' education among states had been observed. The average number of teachers, especially that of lady teachers in the primary schools increased substantially during 1960-70.

2. The overall annual expenditure on the programmes was the highest during the Third Five Year Plan. The number of schemes implemented and the amount incurred on these schemes differed considerably across states and districts.

3. Special arrangements and incentives like the appointment of lady officers for the supervision of girls' education, absorption of school mothers to attend to the needs of the school-going girls, construction of hostels for women teachers and girls, award of scholarships and stipends, introduction of the scheme of attendance scholarships, construction of sanitary blocks for girls, construction of quarters and grant of special allowance for women teachers serving in rural areas and supply of free books, slates, stationery articles and school uniforms etc. were introduced with varying degree of intensity and success in different states. These schemes, by and large, were appreciated by the respondents.

4. These plus points notwithstanding, the fact remained that the programmes were imposed on a defective system without doing enough ground work. There were little consultations with lower tier agencies, nor was there any integrated plan for the selected districts and blocks. Inadequate number of teachers, pathetic state of school accommodation, absence of play-grounds and other amenities, underfurnishing of student hostels, absence of guidelines from the centre, limited coverage, lack of funds from other sources, delay in release of funds etc. were some among the innumerable hassles in the implementation of the schemes.

5. Majority of the respondents felt that it was necessary to educate girls in the present set up of the society as educated girls could manage their household duties and child care in better manner than those who were uneducated. However, the survey, by and large, revealed that the financial stringency of the parents and the preference to hold the girl child back in home for performing household duties were the main reasons for not sending girls to schools.

6. Over half of the parents of school-going children (57%) and three-fourth of the knowledgeable persons reported that school authorities took some measures for increasing the enrolment of girls.

6. Major Suggestions

1. The deficiencies in the planning and implementation of programmes should be categorically addressed and rectified. The widely acclaimed incentive schemes such as attendance scholarships, supply of free books and stationery, school uniforms and appointment of school mother. etc. must be continued and expanded.

2. Schemes should not die out abruptly due to the discontinuation of the flow of funds. There is also a case for increased allotment of funds to the schemes and for proper central monitoring and guidance of the state level implementation of schemes.

3. Utmost care should be taken to assure that the quarters for lady teachers are constructed at convenient places, that the rules governing quarter allotment and administration are transparent and that the quarters are properly maintained.

4. Continuously stepping up the quality of education, increasing the retention rates of girls in the primary and secondary schools and increasing the linkages between schools and college level agencies could be appropriate to achieve the desired ends.

5. The involvement of the village institutions like the Panchayats, co-operatives, youth clubs, mahila mandals as well as the community leaders in the enrolment drives and in the management of the schools should be ensured to the maximum possible extent.