

**EDUCATION OF MARGINALISED AND SOCIAL EQUITY OF
GIRLS IN J&K: A STUDY OF RESIDENTIAL SCHOOLS FOR
GIRLS IN POONCH DISTRICT**

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ABSTRACT

Education is an important aspect for the development of a society. In Jammu and Kashmir about 80 percent of the population lives in rural areas, where the educational facilities are not sufficient. The condition of girl education particularly in rural areas among marginalised sections is worst. Mostly girls are drop outs they discontinue their education due to poverty, illiteracy, patriarchal nature of society etc. Jammu and Kashmir state faced a long period of militancy which affected each and every corner of the state particularly border districts, due to fear of sending girls out of their homes education of girls was affected most. Kasturba Gandhi Balika Vidyalayas are operational in Jammu region targeting the girl education. The objective of Kasturba Gandhi Balika Vidyalayas is to ensure access and quality education to the girls of disadvantaged groups of society by setting up residential schools at upper primary level. The present paper is going to examine the Infrastructural arrangements of these residential schools in Poonch district. And also to suggest certain remedial measures for the better functioning of educational institutions which are targeting the education of disadvantaged girls in educationally backward blocks of Poonch district.

Keywords: Education, marginalised, drop-outs, residential schools, social equity, Quality education, residential schools.

INTRODUCTION

The need to empower girls has been recognised by the current educational policies resulting in almost a bundle of programme which aimed at empowering them. Most of these programmes treat empowerment as a one shot measure. Moreover removal of gender disparity is not merely a

function of the physical presence of girls inside school boundary walls. What matters most is range and thoroughness of learning experiences and forms of knowledge made available to girls in the process of schooling, so that they develop the confidence and the skills to shape their destiny and participate in the governance of society. Kasturba Gandhi Balika Vidyalaya is viewed as an educational institution meant to enable them to distance themselves from social practices which are not only morally unacceptable but are also illegal. Child marriage is one such practice. With drawing girls from their homes is a good option as it gives them the opportunity of travelling, interacting, and being with others which is by itself a big educative experience, while it also keeps them away from becoming potential cases of child labour. The dominant mode of socialisation in the family is to teach girls to be independent all the time. Kasturba Gandhi Balika Vidyalayas are the latest illustration of efforts to equalize educational opportunities for children whose social setting is pierced with disadvantages.

The Kasturba Gandhi Balika Vidyalaya scheme was launched by the government of India in August 2004 for setting up residential schools at upper primary level for girls belonging predominantly to the SC, ST, OBC and minorities in difficult areas. The scheme is being implemented in educationally backward blocks of the country where the female rural literacy is below the national average and gender gap in literacy is above the national average. The scheme provides for a minimum reservation of 75% of the seats for girls belonging to SC, ST and OBC or minorities and priority for remaining 25% is accorded to girls from families below poverty line. Educationally backward blocks are those where:

- Concentration of tribal population with low female literacy and or a large number of girls out of school.
- Concentration of SC, ST, OBC and minority populations with low female literacy or a large number of girls out of school.
- Also areas with low female literacy.
- Areas with a large number of small scattered habitations that do not qualify for a school.

KGBV scheme was launched in 2004 was integrated with the already existing Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan to provide elementary educational facilities and set up residential schools at upper primary level. Under KGBV scheme schools are established in the state of Jammu and Kashmir since 2005. There are 97 educationally backward blocks recognized in the state and 99 KGBV schools were sanctioned. 99 KGBV are registered in the state with several of them are non-functional while the number of teachers in these schools is 700. Sources of SSA department reveal that most of the wardens for these schools are already working on higher wages in other schools of the state thus affecting the smooth functioning of the scheme. KGBV schools are working under nodal agency of SSA. And state project director of SSA is the nodal officer. The funding pattern of the

central government and states for the KGBV scheme will be the same as per the Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan, as it is a component of SSA with effect from first April, 2007.

There are three models prescribed for such residential schools.

- Model 1 is school with hostel for 100 girls.
- Model 2 is school with hostel for 50 girls.
- Model 3 Hostels in existing schools for 50 girls.

Jammu And Kashmir State is following 1&2 model of KGBV scheme, for education of girls residential schools with boarding and lodging facility were opened at educationally backward blocks of state. In the present study Poonch district in Jammu region has been selected on the basis of concentration of more disadvantaged population in the district.

METHODOLOGY

The present study is based on both primary and secondary data. For collecting the primary data an interview Schedules is prepared by the researcher and travelled to the Poonch district of Jammu region for getting information from the students. Besides, the Secondary sources including the various reports, Books, Magazines, Newspapers, Articles and websites have been consulted thoroughly.

Table No.1.1: (Questions related to School Facilities)

S. No	Statement	Yes (%)	No (%)	Total respondent
1.	Do you have Adequate number of classrooms in your school?	20 (66%)	10 (33%)	30 (100%)
2.	Do you have desks in your classroom?	0	30 (100%)	30 (100%)
3.	Is your class room is in good condition	15 (50%)	15 (50%)	30 (100%)
4.	Do you get free uniform from school?	30 (100%)	0	30 (100%)
5.	Does school have a play ground?	30 (100%)	0	30 (100%)

Source: Primary data

The above table reveals about the school infrastructure provided by these residential schools in the backward block of Loran Mandi in district Poonch. The first statement is about the number of classrooms available in the school, out of 30 respondents comprised of students from three classes 6th, 7th and 8th .66 per cent said that classrooms are adequate but 10 per cent are of

opinion that the class rooms are not sufficient.2nd statement is regarding the availability of desks in the school all the respondents said that there is no desks in their school they used to sit on jute mats. On statement regarding the condition of classrooms during rainy season out of 30 respondent 15 said that their classrooms are good during rainy season and 15 said that their classrooms are not good during rainy season this means that the school building is old and in some rooms there is roof holes and water enters through them. All the respondents said that they get free uniforms from the school.100 percent of respondents said that they have a well spacious playground. It is clear from the above responses that the main problem in these schools is related to the school buildings.

Table no 1.2: (Questions related to Free Textbooks and Teaching)

S. No	Statement	Yes (%)	No (%)	Total respondent
1.	Do You get textbooks from school?	30	0	30(100)
2.	Does textbooks distributed in time?	10 (33)	20(66)	30(100)

Source: Primary data

The above table no.1.2 shows that the 100 per cent respondents said that they get free textbooks from the school; secondly 33 per cent said that textbooks are distributed in time and 66 percent said that they are not getting books in proper time. It means that they are provided with free textbooks but the consistency in distribution is not followed.

Table No: 1.3 (Questions related to Teaching Staff)

S. No	Statement	Yes (%)	No (%)	Total respondent
1.	Do you have separate subject teachers?	0	30 (100%)	30 (100%)
2.	Does a teacher use teaching aids while teaching?	15 (50%)	15 (50%)	30 (100%)
3.	Do you have computer in your school?	0	30 (100%)	30 (100%)

Source: Primary data

The above table no.1.3 is showing responses about the adequate reaching 100 per cent of respondents said that they are not having separate subject teachers, when asked about the way of teaching and use of teaching aids in the class rooms 50 per cent said that teachers use teaching aids while 50 per cent said that teachers does not use any teaching aids while teaching, 100 percent of respondents said that there is no computer available in their school.

Table. 1.4 (Questions related to basic Amenities in Hostel)

S. No	Statement	Yes (%)	No (%)	Total respondent
1.	Do you have hostel facility?	30 (100%)	0	30 (100%)
2.	Does hostel have proper security arrangements?	0	30 (100%)	30 (100%)
3.	Do you have electricity in Your hostel?	15 (50%)	15 (50%)	30 (100%)
4.	Are you provided with good quality food?	30 (100%)	0	30 (100%)
5.	Does water facility is Proper?	0	30 (100%)	30 (100%)

Source: Primary data

The above table no 1.4 is showing the availability of basic amenities in hostel the first statement is related to the availability of hostel facility 100 per cent of respondent said that they have hostel with their school. The second statement is about the proper security arrangements in the hostel 100 per cent of respondents said that the hostel security arrangement is not so safe and proper. As the school is located in a remote area where the population is very scanty and security of girls is a major issue. Electricity is a basic need in a hostel when asked about the electricity 50 per cent said that they have electricity in their hostel but remaining 50 per cent told us that electricity facility is not sufficient because due to frequent electricity cuts in the area the inverter is not a solution. When inquired about quality of food 100 per cent of respondents said that the food quality is very good. When asked about the proper availability of water 100 percent said that water supply is not sufficient.

CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTIONS

It is concluded on the basis of above analysis that no doubt Kasturba Gandhi Balika Vidyalayas are playing an important role in promoting girl education especially in those pockets of country where female literacy rate is below the national average and gender gap in education is very high. When we look at the school infrastructure provided by the Kasturba Gandhi Balika Vidyalayas the main problem is related to the school building, as the scheme is operational in Jammu and Kashmir since 2005 but still the school buildings are not constructed. Schools are running in rented building that is why there is scarcity of class rooms. KGBV Loran is presently running in a government school building and the school building is old and also not good during rainy season. That is why classrooms are not sufficient and more than one class is taught in the same room. Free uniforms and books are provided to the students. Sometime the teaching learning material provided to the students is also not distributed on proper time. There is also

inadequacy of teaching staff in the school. The school also lacks in subject teachers. The basic objective of these schools is providing quality education but the schools are not having any computers in the school to teach computer to the students. Teachers are not enthusiastic to use teaching aids in the classrooms because classrooms are not sufficient sometime they have to teach them in verandas and outside. School is providing hostel facility to the poor girls of disadvantaged sections but due to lack of own school building the girls are accommodated in the government school building. Fifty girls are accommodated in one hall and in such kind of environment they are only kept for free food and free education and least learning set up. Since these are residential schools and that too for girls the security arrangement was seen poor. Boundary wall is also broken at some places. The school is located at a far flung area where electricity cuts are frequent and hostel has only inverter facility. Water supply is also not proper sometime girls used to go nearby natural spring to wash clothes and for bathing.

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