National Programme for Education of Girls at Elementary Level

(NPEGEL):

In SSA scheme there is another important programme for Girls’ Education named

‘National Programme for Education of Girls at Elementary Level’ launched in the

country in July, 2003 as a separate Gender distinct with a view to reaching out to the

“Hardest to Reach” girls, particularly those who are never enrolled in school or

dropped out of schooling system. Primarily the programme was implemented in the

Educationally Backwards Blocks where the level of rural female literacy is less than

the national average (46.13%). The programme can also be implemented in other

than the EB blocks having at least 5% SC / ST population and below 10% SC / ST

female literacy. Subsequently, the programme was amended in July 2007 to extend

and expand the facility of education for the girls at risk / difficult circumstances in life.

Now the focus aim of this programme is to provide additional support for both the ‘in’

and ‘out’ of school girls so that they can be retained in the schooling system till

successful completion of elementary education.

Activities undertaken and achievements made under NPEGEL:

• Establishment of 7 Model Cluster Schools.

• Coverage of 470 girl children under Model Cluster Schools.

• Construction of additional classroom in all Model Cluster Schools.

• Introduction of remedial classes.

• Provided 40 sewing machines in all MCSs for vocation based skill development

of children.

• Provided 35 bicycles for the children attending schools from far off distance.

• Organized exposure visits for children of MCSs.

• Introduction of vocational training programmes like weaving, sewing, bamboo &

cane craft etc.

• Provided pre admission bridge courses for the children for recovery of learning gaps.

• Emphasis is given on education of Muslim girl children in MCSs.

• Free textbooks have been provided for all children.

• Introduction of common school uniform and identity card for students and teachers.

• Provided hygienic separate girls toilets to all schools.

• Electricity facility has been provided to 4 schools.

• Creation of database on bio-data of all children.

• Provision of additional inputs and facilities for all children like; School Uniform,

Stipend and Attendance Grant

Objectives of NPEGEL

• Develop and promote facilities to provide access to elementary education for girls.

• Facilitate retention of girls in schooling system.

• Ensure greater participation of women and girls in education.

• Improve quality of education.

• Stress upon the relevance and quality of girls’ education for their empowerment.

Coverage under NPEGEL

NPEGEL will be continued to be implemented in selected blocks based on the following criteria:

• Educationally Backward Block (EBB) - Rural female literacy is less than the national rural female

literacy (46.3%, 2001 census) and the gender gap (between male & female literacy) is higher than thenational gender gap (21.53%, census 2001) in 184 blocks.

• 96 blocks are with at least 5% SC/ST population and below 10% female literacy among SC/ST

categories.

Based on the above criteria, 280 out of 313 blocks are covered under NPEGEL.

Issues

• Reduce gender gap

• Increase access through girls hostels and KGBVs

• Lifeskill Education

• Monitoring using the gender perspective tools

NPEGEL Implementation

National Program for Education of Girls at Elementary Level (NPEGEL) is being implemented in 280

educationally backward blocks in the State.

1. Community Mobilization – making girls education a community agenda

Major factors for girls not going to school are deeply rooted in community, society and parental attitude.Therefore, mobilization campaigns have been carried out to generate awareness among community, society and parents. Programs were implemented in July 2009 to mobilize parents and community towards girls’ education and their mainstreaming in formal education system. Motivation camps like Maa-Beti Melas have been organized for mobilizing out of school girls and their mothers. Motivation camps of community members, door-to-door contact, and orientation of PTA members were also organized. Various mobilization activities have been carried out to ensure maximum enrolment in KGBV, special activities were conducted for enrolling girls. Contact programme and motivation camps organised. Female PTA members were trained.

Kasturba Gandhi Balika Vidyalaya (KGBV)

The Kasturba Gandhi Balika Vidyalaya (KGBV) 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 of the KGBV ran as a separate scheme but harmony with the Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan (SSA), National Programme for Education of Girls at Elementary Level (NPEGEL) and Mahila Samakhya (MS) for the first two years, but has since April, 2007 merged with the SSA Programme as a separate component of that programme.

Bridging gender and social category gaps at all levels of school education is one of the major objectives of the Samagra Shiksha. Consequently, to encourage the participation of girls in education, the existing Kasturba Gandhi Balika Vidyalayas (KGBVs) at upper primary level and Girls Hostels at secondary level have been extended/converged to provide residential and schooling facilities upto Class-XII under the Scheme.

Thus, the Scheme now provides for access and quality education to girls from disadvantaged groups of girls in the age group of 10-18 years aspiring to study in Classes VI to XII; belonging to SC, ST, OBC, Minority communities and BPL families to ensure smooth transition of girls from elementary to secondary and upto class XII wherever possible. KGBV provides the facility to have at-least one residential school for girls from Classes VI-XII in every educationally backward block (EBBs).

Scope/ Coverage of the scheme

The scheme was applicable since inception in 2004, in Educationally Backward

Blocks (EBBs) where the rural female is below the national average (46.13%:

Census 2001) and gender gap in literacy is more than the national average (21.59:

Census 2001). Among these blocks, schools may be set up in areas with:

o Concentration of tribal population with low female literacy and / or a large

number of girls out of school;

o Concentration of SC, OBC and minority populations, with low female literacy

and / or large number of girls out of school;

o areas with low female literacy; or

o areas with a large number of small, scattered habitations that do not qualify for a

school

The criteria of eligible blocks have been revised with effect from 1st April, 2008 to

include the following:

o Additional Educationally backward blocks with rural female literacy below 30%;

and

o Towns/cities having minority concentration (as per the list identified by

Minority of Minority Affairs) with female literacy rate below the national

average (53.67%: Census 2001).

Opening of KGBVs have been extended to all Educationally Backward Blocks

(EBBs) during 2010-11, covering the remaining EBBs as per census 2001.

Objective

Gender disparities still persist in rural areas and among disadvantaged

communities. Looking at enrolment trends, there remain significant gaps in the

enrolment of girls at the elementary level as compared to boys, especially at the

upper primary levels. The objective of KGBV is to ensure access and quality

education to the girls of disadvantaged groups of society by setting up

residential schools upper primary level.

Strategies

Initially, the proposed schools shall be opened in rented or other available

Government buildings after deciding the location. Now the unit cost of new

KGBVs hostel buildings has been revised as per the state PWD schedule of Rates

(SOR). The minimum area for KGBV hostel buildings shall be calculated based

on basic amenities and requirements as indicated below:

o For 50 children the carpet of the buildings would be approximately 80 sq.ft/child

o For 100 children the carpet area of the building would be approximately

60sq.ft/child.

Such residential schools will be set up only those backward blocks that do not

have residential schools at upper primary level for girls under any other scheme

of ministry of social Justice & Empowerment and Ministry of Tribal Affairs.

This shall be ensured by the district level authority of SSA at the time of actual

district level planning of KGBV initiatives by co-ordinating with the other

Departments/ Ministries.

Settings up of residential schools where there are a minimum of 50 girls

predominantly from the SC, ST and minority communities available to study in

the school at the elementary level. The number can be more than 50 depending

on the number of eligible girls.

Implementation, monitoring and evaluation

The scheme will be implemented by State Governments through the Mahila

Samakhya (MS) Society in MS states and through the SSA society in case of other

states. Funds will be released as per SSA pattern to the State SSA societies. The

monitoring and evaluation at the State and district level will be undertaken by

the MS State Resource Centers .

Training for teachers and staff at the residential schools will be co-ordinated

by the District Institutes of Educational Training. Block Resource and Mahila

Samkhya Resource Groups.

State support Group

An Advisory State level coordination committee as approved under the

NPEGEL scheme shall provide direction and support to the programme. This

group will consist of nominees from relevant State Government Departments,

Government of India, experts in the field of girls education, educationists etc.

National Support Group

The National Resource Group (NRG) created under the Mahila Samakhya

Programme at the National level shall provide inputs on conceptual issues and

concerns arising in the programme.

Shiksha Karmi and Lok Jumbish, Rajasthan

Education attainments in Rajasthan have been among the lowest in India even till the 1990s.

During the period 1991–2001, however, there has been a substantial improvement in the

literacy, which was over 75 per cent. Despite such improvements, the enrolment rate in the

state was as low as 60 per cent. The proportionate share of girls in total enrolment in the

pre-primary and primary level education has been as low as 36.8 per cent even in 1995-96.

Another fact is the high drop-out rate of girl children.

SKP & LJP Initiatives

Several measures have been implemented in recent years to improve formal education

system, and/or to facilitate access to education. Among these, the Government of Rajasthan

initiated two ambitious and innovative education programmes—the Shiksha Karmi Project

(SKP) in 1987 and The Lok Jumbish project (LJP) in 1992. These projects have developed

novel responses to deep-rooted problems of education and have transformed the delivery of

education in the state. Both Shiksha Karmi and the Lok Jumbish were initiated as micro-level

initiatives and later integrated into state-wide strategies to meet the educational needs of

deprived rural communities.

1. Shiksha Karmi Project

Objectives

Some of the objectives of the SKP were to achieve the following:

Universalization of primary education in remote, socio-economically backward

villages in those blocks of Rajasthan where the existing primary schools have been

dysfunctional

A qualitative improvement of primary education in such villages by adapting the form

and content of education to local needs and conditions

Improvement in enrolment of all boys and girls in the age group 6-14 years

Building of a level of learning equivalent to the norms of Class V

The project also strives to bring about a qualitative improvement in the delivery of education

The Thrust

The Shiksha Karmi Project (SKP) literally means ‘education worker’ and aims to transform

dysfunctional schools into more efficient ones through the provision of quality education with

the help of locally available youth albeit with lower qualification. The programme was

formulated on the basis of a successful project of a non-government organisation (NGO)

called the Social Work and Research Centre (SWRC) at Tilonia in Rajasthan. During a pilot

project in 1984-86, SWRC ran three experimental primary schools using local teachers and

providing continual in-service training. The curriculum and textbook design related directly to

life in a rural environment, and the education outcomes were impressive. When the project

was evaluated, these schools compared very favourably with government primary schools.

The Strategy

The project identified teacher absenteeism as a major obstacle in achieving the goal of

Universalization of Elementary Education (UEE). It realised that a primary school in a remote

village that has a non-village-resident teacher tends

to become dysfunctional, and parents as well as

children fail to relate to such an institution, leading to

high drop-out rates.

The thrust areas of the project are as follows:

1. The basic strategy developed by the Shiksha

Karmi Project, involved substituting each of

these absentee professional teachers with a

team of two local staff members. The premise

of the SKP was that a change agent,

especially in the field of education, can work

effectively if he/she belongs to the same

locality. Hence, greater preference is given to

his/her willingness and ability to function as a social worker rather than only to

educational qualifications.

2. Under the SKP teachers with records of absenteeism are being replaced by

local teachers who are less qualified but are specially trained to teach primary

school children.

3. The Shiksha Karmis or SKs are given intensive training through an induction

programme as well as periodic refresher courses.

4. Enrolment of girls and their attendance and retention in primary schools is one of the

serious challenges in achieving UEE in Rajasthan. The SKP aims at addressing

these through decentralised initiatives involving the community.

5. At the grassroots level, panchayat samitis (block-level administration), Shiksha Karmi

Sahyogis, subject specialists of NGOs, SKs and the village community constantly

interact with each other to achieve the aims of the project.

The Process

The SKP is initiated by identification of a remote and backward village where a government

primary school is dysfunctional. The criteria to verify the targeted village includes factors like,

extremely low enrolment, low attendance of children, low retention of boys and girls, low

academic attainment among children, pattern of irregular attendance, and absenteeism of

teacher resulting in frequent closure of school. The villagers and the SKB, collectively decide

on the appointment of a SK teacher for the school.

The SKP has reached its present level of expansion through high level of local participation,

allied to strong logistical support. Villages are selected on the basis of requests from the

panchayat samiti. Candidates for teacher’s training have to qualify through a written and an

oral test and must possess knowledge of numbers and basic teaching and learning

processes and awareness of hygiene and environment. The selection board comprises

representatives from SKB, a local NGO, the Pradhans (members from the local selfgovernment), and the Block Officer of the Government of Rajasthan.

There is also an in-built monitoring process at the village, block, headquarter and state

levels. There is a provision of joint biannual reviews by SIDA, the Government of India and

the government of Rajasthan and of independent evaluation by teams consisting of national

and international experts.

Review and planning meetings are held regularly as support interventions to the SKs at the

block level, while at the village level, support is provided by the VEC with respect to

monitoring enrolment and attendance rates as well as school mapping and micro-planning

exercises. An elaborate monitoring structure is built into this programme on a monthly basis

by the SKs themselves and on quarterly basis by the VECs. In addition, monitoring activities

are carried out at the regional level by the resource unit and the members of the SKB and at

the state level by the executive committee of the SKB. The regional activities are monitored

by the SKB and the state level by the executive committee of the SKB.

The structure of the programme is relatively de-bureaucratised, as SKs are not permanent

government employees. However, many problems remain to be addressed. Because of

traditional society’s attitude towards working women, it has proven difficult to recruit female

teachers, who still account for only 27 per cent (1999-2000) of total teachers in the state.

The target now is to have at least one female SK teacher in each school.Gender contributed

significantly in enabling girls to attend SK schools.

The concept of Aangan Pathshalas (courtyard schools) was introduced in 1992-93 to

provide effective contextual intervention to encourage sustained participation of girls in

primary education. A rural woman, with a minimum education qualification of Class V and

willingness to teach girls, is engaged to teach a group of at least 15 girls in the age group of

6-14 years in her neighbourhood.

Prehar Pathshalas (PPs) or schools with convenient timings provide educational

programmes for out-of-school children who cannot attend regular school due to

preoccupation at home. In PPs, a condensed formal school curriculum and simplified

learning materials are followed. Angan Pathshalas have proved effective in attracting girls to

primary schools.

Major Achievements

The SKP has been responsible for several tangible achievements, which are:

• The project was extended in two Prehar Pathshalas (25 learners) phases to cover

300 villages by 1991 and 2,000 remote villages in 140 blocks by 1995. The project

now covers 2,715 villages in 146 blocks of 32 districts of Rajasthan and 6,285 SKs

provide primary education to 2.16 lakh children in day schools. There are 2,715 day

schools and 4,829 PPs.

• In 1998-99, the SKP was functional in 146 out of a total 237 blocks in 32 districts of

Rajasthan.

• The state runs 2,600 day schools, 48,229 PPs and 97 Anganshalas. In these

schools, 6,213 SKs serve 2.16 lakh children, 40 per cent of which are girls.

• Although retention rates are still low, at 50 per cent between Class I and V, it is an

improvement over the 30 per cent retention rate in 1989. Over 40 per cent of the

children successfully complete Class V.

• There has been a six-fold increase in the enrolment of children in the age group of 6-

14 years (from 37 per cent to 83 per cent) in Shiksha Karmi Schools and Prehar

Pathshalas.

• Retention of children in schools increased from an average of about 19 per cent to

65 per cent. $ Monthly attendance of children in SKP schools has improved from 58

per cent to 84 per cent. $ Nearly 67 per cent of the children belong to

disadvantaged social groups.

• An outstanding achievement is 100 per cent enrolment of children in the age group

of 6–14 years in 576 villages, i.e. more than one-fourth of the project villages.

• The SKP has constituted 2,600 VECs to promote community involvement in primary

education and encourage village-level planning, supervision and management in

improving effectiveness of schools

• PPs have enabled out-of-school children, especially girls in the remote areas, to

avail of opportunities for primary schooling at their own pace and with sufficient

flexibility. At present, 22,138 girls (who constitute 68 per cent of learners in PPs) are

benefiting from this facility.

• Angan Pathshalas (APs) have been set up for young children, particularly girls who

cannot travel long distances to attend schools. At present, 97 AP centres are in

operation with 4,023 children.

• In order to facilitate and increase the enrolment of girls in villages where literate

women are not available to work as SKs, 14 Mahila Prashikshan Kendras (Women

Training Centres) have been set up in interior rural areas where 334 women are

being trained.

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2. Lok Jumbish Pariyojana

The Lok Jumbish (People’s Movement) programme is a joint initiative developed by the

Government of Rajasthan in cooperation with local NGOs. The programme, which has been

underway since 1992, is functioning in 13 districts of Rajasthan. It aims at providing

elementary education by mobilising the community and soliciting its involvement in the

running of local schools.

Objectives

The primary objective of the Lok Jumbish Project (LJP) is to achieve the universalization of

elementary education through mass mobilization and the participation of people. It places

special emphasis on the education of girls and disadvantaged sections of society and views

education as a tool for empowerment. Some of the main goals of the LJP are as follows:

o Providing access to primary education to all children between five and 14 years of

age

o Striving to enrol children in regular schools, as far as possible and in Sahaj Shiksha

centres wherever necessary

o Ensuring that all enrolled children regularly attend school Sahaj Shiksha centres and

complete primary education

o Improving quality of education by emphasising active learning, child-centred

processes and achievement of at least minimum levels of learning by all children

o Creating necessary structures and processes to empower women, making education

an instrument of women’s equality

The Thrust

The thrust of the programme is to view education both as an end to and means of socioeconomic change and transformation, especially with respect to gender equality.

The Strategy

The core strategic areas of the project are:

• De-bureaucratisation and the decentralisation of decision-making in the sphere of

primary education.

• Creating structures, forums and partnerships between people from the village-level

community on one hand and educationists and NGOs on the other.

The Process

The unit of decentralisation planning and administration in the LJP is the village and block

respectively. The links between the village and the block are provided by a cluster of 25-35

villages with similar geographical and socio-economic conditions. Each development block is

further divided into five to seven compact clusters. The role of the cluster personnel is to

translate the ideas of the LJP into action in the villages. The responsibility at the cluster level

rests on the Block Steering Group (BSG) or an established the NGO, wherever available.

The LJP aims at establishing a decentralised education system, with VECs taking a central

role. Each VEC comprises about eight members who are nominated by community

assemblies. In addition to these village-level structures, LJP has established block-level

committees, including government, NGO and VEC appointees. These committees, covering

100-150 villages, are vested with the power to open and upgrade schools and to appoint

new teachers.

Members of the informal VECs manage the education system in their village. They provide a

link between the larger village community and the LJP personnel, help in implementation of

the programmes and also assess the requirements of the village and seek to fulfil them.

The next rung in the administrative ladder is the block. At this level there are two main LJP

outposts—the BSG and the Block Education Management Committee (BEMC). The BEMC

is a powerful decision-making body of the LJP. The BSG is constituted by representatives

from the panchayat samitis (elected local self-governing bodies) and officers from the

Department of Education, Government of Rajasthan.

The Lok Jumbish Parishad is the headquarters of the whole project. The Parishad is a

society registered under the Rajasthan Societies Registration Act, 1958. It is the main

coordinating and guiding agency of all the regional offices of LJP. All review and planning

meetings at the state level are organised by the Lok Jumbish Parishad.

School mapping: One of the most important Lok Jumbish innovations has been the villagemapping exercise. Over 4,000 villages have participated in developing maps’, which go

beyond identifying the location of schools and road, to establishing the social and cultural

problems faced by local communities in accessing schools. Issues of elementary education

quality, curriculum relevance, distance and teacher attitudes all figure prominently in this

exercise. Women’s groups were involved to identify the major deterrents to girls’ education.

Micro-planning: The Micro-planning process is initiated after necessary education

infrastructure is provided to the village. Micro-planning involves family-wise and child-wise

monitoring by the teachers and VEC and occasionally by the cluster-level staff. The VEC

identifies the child out of

school and from the Village

Education Register (VER),

contacts the concerned

families and undertakes

relevant action to ensure

regularity of attendance and

retention of children in

schools. The micro-planning

process involves three

instruments—(1) Praveshotsav (Festival of Entry), (2) Retention Register, and (3) Village

Education Plan. The main objective of the Praveshotsav is to create a positive and creative

environment for education among children and develop a sense of responsibility in the minds

of the parents to send their child to school.

Gender Equality

The status of gender sensitivity and equity permeates all the programmes and processes in

the LJP Women workers at every level are considered indispensable and appointment of

workers in specific proportion is considered mandatory. The state-level committee

‘Samvadika’ reviews LJ activities from a gender perspective and provides suggestions for

women’s development and to weave measures conducive to gender issues in to the content

and process of education.

Quality of Education

The activities to improve the quality of education in LJP have been through the introduction

of competency-based education or the Minimum Levels of Learning (MLL) scheme in 1992.

The MLL to be achieved by children at various grade levels then forms the basis of the

curriculum development and its implementation in the field. The MLL scheme started in 45

schools in Arain Block (Ajmer) covered 2,096 children. In 1998-99, the MLL scheme has

been extended to 5,945 schools employing over 16,905 teachers and covered over 5.4 lakh

children.

Non-formal Education

LJP introduced a non-formal education programme: Sahaj Shiksha (SS) in 1993. It was later

revamped in 1996 and was equivalent to formal system i.e., it was also linked to a

competency-based curriculum and provided a certificate, built the teaching personnel from

the community and provided teacher training, back-up support personnel for the teachers

and structured the management as resource groups for the SS and formed cluster- level

monitoring groups or the Sanchetan Dals.

Major Achievements

• Between 1992-98, the initiative had extended to 75 blocks, comprising nearly onethird of rural Rajasthan. About 1,000 elementary and 300 upper primary schools fall

under its administration, along with over 1,000 non-formal education centres. The

project has developed its own teacher training modules, through which over 2,300

teachers have benefited.

• Over the first four years of the project (1992-1996), enrolment rates in Lok Jumbish

villages increased by 24 per cent. Enrolment of girls increased faster than that of

boys (from 29 per cent to 59 per cent) narrowing the gender gap, even though

enrolment of girls continues to account only for about one-third of total enrolment.

One of the most important concerns identified by women in the mapping exercises was the

shortage of female teachers. A Women’s Teachers Forum has been established to attract

new recruits. Considerable emphasis has also been given to teacher training. Two-week

motivational courses are run every year and 900 master trainers provide constant in-service

assistance.

Lessons Learnt

• The SKP and LJP initiatives have changed the mechanism of the delivery of

education in the state. Their innovative community-centric approach has achieved

tangible results making them worthy of replication across Indian states.

• The programmes illustrate that concerted cooperative action between local

communities, NGOs, government and international donors can achieve concrete

results. The lessons from these micro-level projects are being replicated at the state

level.

• Another positive feature of the two projects has been the high standard of evaluation

carried out by participants in Lok Jumbish and SIDA. These have helped to identify

problems and shortcomings, notably in relation to achievement of gender equity in a

non-partisan and bias–free way.

• The two programmes demonstrate that successful approaches to partnerships

between the government and local communities are based on cooperation, flexibility,

and a willingness to learn in the pursuit of shared objectives rather th