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Government Initiatives for Promoting Girls Education

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Abstract:

Education empowers the people. The growth of a nation depends on the skilled and well educated youth. As India has sizeable young population, the youth can change the future of the country. To get the benefits of our young population, we should educate our youth both female and male. Girls are well behind the boys when we consider the gross enrolment ratio. Government of India started many schemes and programmes for educating girls. In this research paper, schemes run for educating girls are discussed. The Government of India has launched an umbrella programme “Beti Bachao Beti Padhao” to cater the educational needs of girls and also minimise the social discrimination against girls. These programmes and schemes are fully funded by the Government of India.

Key words: Girls education, Beti Bachao, Beti Badhao, Udaan, Pragati Scholarship

Introduction

Education is one of the most important means of empowering women with the knowledge, skills and self-confidence necessary to participate fully in development process. The female literacy rate in India is much lower than male literacy rate. As per Census 2011, female literacy rate is 65.46 and male literacy rate is 82.14. We should take all steps for educating girl child and educate women through adult education programmes. The Constitution of India provides equal status to women. Article 14, 15 and 16 explicitly forbade any discrimination on the basis of the sex. The Article 15 also empowers the States to take positive steps favouring girls. Government of India and State Governments have started many projects and schemes for wellbeing and welfare of girls and women including schemes for education them.

Beti Bachao Beti Padhao

The Beti Bachao Beti Padhao or 'Save the girl child, educate the girl child'. This is an ambitious campaign of Government of India to protect girls from social problems such as gender based abortions and promote girls child education. The child sex ratio (0-6 years) is continuously decreasing in India since 1961. According to Census 2011, there were only 919 girls per 100 boys. This is very alarming situation. To tackle this problem, the Government of India started this campaign. The scheme was launched by the Prime Minister on January 22, 2015 in Panipat, Haryana and later the scheme was extended to whole of the country on March 8, 2018. This scheme is fully funded by the Central Government and the funds are released directly to the District authority/committee concerned. The Scheme is jointly run by Ministry of Women and Child Development, Ministry of Health and Family Welfare and Ministry of Education.

Objectives of the Scheme

The primary objectives of the scheme are as follows:

1. Preventing gender based girl child abortions.
2. Ensuring girl child safety and welfare during infancy.
3. Ensuring girl child education.
4. Promoting inclusiveness.
5. Promoting gender equality
6. Reducing gender stereotypes
7. Supporting girls' right to inherit property

The Scheme is divided into three components:

1. Advocacy campaigns to address the issue of declining Child Sex Ratio (CSR) and Sex Ratio at Birth (SRB).
2. Multi-sectoral interventions implemented in the field
3. A financial incentive linked scheme-Sukanya Samriddhi Scheme to encourage parents to build a fund for female children.

Progress of the Scheme

Till date the Government has allocated Rs. 664 Crore. Rs 364.6 crore (56.3%) of this amount is spent on publicity and Rs. 159.2 crore (24.5%) are allocated to the States and District. Rs. 124 crore (19.2%) are left unutilised. The progress of the scheme is not very impressive. The key developments of the scheme are:

- a) The Sex ratio at birth index (SRB) has shown an upward trend.
- b) 422 District out of 640 districts covered under the scheme has shown improvement in SRB.
- c) The National Gross Enrolment Ratio of girls in secondary schools has improved.
- d) Institutional delivery rate increased.
- e) Proportional of schools with separate toilet facility for girls has increased.

CBSE Udaan Scheme

This Scheme is being run by the Central Board of Secondary Education under the aegis of Ministry of Education. This programme aims to increase the number of girls enrolment in prestigious engineering and technical college across India. The objective of the Scheme is to provide a platform that empower the girl students and facilitate their inspiration of joining the prestigious engineering and technical institutes. Teaching-learning of mathematics and Science at school is encouraged by addressing the three dimensions of education- curriculum design, transaction and assessment.

Salient features of the Scheme

Under this scheme free of cost support to girl students of class XI and XII preparing for engineering entrance examination is provided.

- Organisation of virtual contact classes in 60 cities,
- Availability of tutorials, videos and study material,
- Distribution of pre-loaded tablets with study material,
- Assessment and feedback on learning,
- Motivational sessions with students and parents,
- Student helpline services to solve their doubts,

Eligibility

- a) Only Indians residing in India are eligible.
- b) All girl students studying in Kendriya Vidyalayas/ Navodaya vidyalayas/ Government Schools of any recognised board/ CBSE affiliated private schools.
- c) Girls students should have opted Physics, Chemistry and Mathematics in Class XI.
- d) Minimum 70% marks overall and 80% marks in Science and Mathematics or Boards with CGPA overall grade 8 and 9 in Science and Mathematics.

- e) Reservation as per JEE (Advanced)- 27% OBC-NCL, 15% SC, 7.5% ST and 3% PWD.
- f) Annual family income should be less than 6 lakhs.

Scheme of Begum Hazrat Mahal National Scholarship

This scheme is meant for meritorious girls students of minority communities. This scheme was initially launched as Maulana Azad National Scholarship for Meritorious Girls belonging Minorities by the then Prime Minister of India Late Atal Bihari Bajpayi in 2003.

The objective of the Scheme is to recognise, promote and assist students belonging to national minorities who can't continue their education due lack of financial support. The scheme is being implemented through National Scholarship Portal. Rs. 5000/ is provided for each class IX and X and Rs. 6000/ is provided for each class XI and XII. The girls from the six nationally recognised minority communities- Muslims, Sikhs, Jains, Christians, Parsis and Buddhists are eligible for this scholarship. State-wise community-wise quota is fixed on the basis of minority population of the state in accordance to Census 2011.

Post Graduate Indira Gandhi Scholarship for Single Girl Child

In order to promote and achieve girls education, University Grants Commission has introduced this scheme to compensate direct costs of girls education to all levels especially who happen to be the only girl child in their family. The objective of the scheme is to support post-graduate education of single girl child and to recognise the value of observance of small family norms.

Salient features of the Scheme

- a) Girl students taking admission in first year of the post graduate course who happen to be single child are eligible.

- b) University/ college/ institute should be included under section 2(f) and 12 B of the UGC Act.
- c) Deemed to be Universities under section 3 of UGC act and receiving funds from UGC are also eligible.
- d) Upper age limit 30 years at the time of taking admission in the first year of the PG course.
- e) 3000 fresh scholarships are available every year.
- f) Admission to PG courses in distance mode are not covered under the scheme.
- g) Rs. 36200 per annum is paid for two years.

AICTE-Pragati Scholarship for Girl Education

This scheme is started by All India Council for Technical Education with the motto “Empowering women through Technical Education”. The gross enrolment ratio of girls in technical education is much lower than boys. To boost up admission of girls in technical education this scheme has been started.

Eligibility of the Scheme

- a) The girl student should be admitted to first year of the degree level course or second year through lateral entry.
- b) Maximum two girl child per family are eligible.
- c) Family income of the family should be less than Rs 8 lakhs per annum.
- d) Total 5000 scholarships are earmarked per annum. Besides these 5000 scholarships, every eligible candidate from 13 Union territories and North-Eastern States i.e. Andaman and Nicobar Islands, Jammu & Kashmir, Lakshadweep, Ladakh, Dadara and Nagar Haveli & Daman and Diu, Sikkim, Arunachal Pradesh, Assam, Nagaland, Manipur, Meghalaya, Mizoram and Tripura.
- e) Rs. 50000 per year is provided during the course.

- f) The scheme is being run through National Scholarship Portal.
- g) State wise quota is fixed.

Conclusion

The Government initiatives have shown positive impact on girl education. The gross enrolment ratio has increased at all levels of education-primary, secondary and higher education. Girls are entering into engineering professions and other male dominated professions. The composition of work force of many sectors of the industry and service is changing giving more place to female workers. These Government initiatives need public support and positive mindset.

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