



Empowering girls through Education: Role of KGBV Schools

¹Tawseef Ahmad Parrray and ²Dr. Arshid Ahmad Najar

^{1,2}School of Education, Shri Venkateshwara University, Uttar Pradesh, India

Corresponding Author: Tawseef Ahmad Parrray

Abstract

When we look towards the initiatives taken by government of India to empower girls and eradicate female literacy, KGBV (Kasturba Gandhi Balika Vidyalaya) scheme played an important role in enrollment, education and empowerment of girls belonging to weaker sections in India. These schools have been established in educationally backward blocks especially from OBC, SC, ST and minority background. These backward blocks had witnessed gender gap in literacy above the national average and female literacy rate below the national average. Significant number of studies and reports produced the results that education as an agent, effect and instrument of social change enabled women to face the challenges of modern day socio-economic life. Further educated women played crucial role in economic and social transformation of traditional societies into modern and knowledgeable societies. Hence the role of education in empowering girls cannot be neglected anyway. The present study was conducted in order to gauge the role of KGBV schools in empowering girl child. The investigator relied on face to face interview schedule and personally contacted the target sample. The results of the study revealed that the KGBV initiative in girl education has positively transformed the enrolled girl students and influenced girl empowerment significantly. The study also concluded that girls enrolled in KGBV schools are performing well in socio-educational and cultural scenario as compared to girls enrolled in other secondary schools.

Keywords: KGBV schools, women empowerment

Introduction

“If we do not educate the women, we can’t see the nation to rise”

Since independence, government of India has launched so many programs and policies to eradicate female literacy and incorporated women empowerment schemes into the system. In this context educational measures played a vital role in the empowerment of women in the socio-economic sphere of the country. The Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan (SSA) has not only worked for better enrollment at the primary level but has also played a key role in enrolling girl child and uplifting them through primary education. The major intervention strategies launched by Government of India for girls: NPEGEL (National Program for the Education of Girls at Elementary Level) and the KGBV to target the marginalized sections of the society. These schemes remarkably produced significant changes in the lives of female students, raised their standards through dissemination of knowledge and skills. Girls enrolled in KGBVs have experienced great support in terms of hostel

facilities, remedial tutoring, and life skills and through integrated curriculum that already runs at the school education level. KGBV girls are supported by teachers based on their level and given empowerment programs after vocational training, life skills training, yoga etc. all of which aim to empower and develop girls in a holistic nature. The facilities at KGBV are quite supportive, including free textbooks, residential education, individual care, CCE, vocational training and all-round development. Girls enrolled in the KGBV have a lot of support in hostel facilities, tutoring and life skills and curriculum that already runs at the school education level. The girls were supported by continuing education teachers at upper primary level to support them in coping with school learning and also to enable them to acquire life skills, from critical thinking skills to physical education needs. Thus KGBV teachers work towards empowering girls by creating a supportive and encouraging learning environment. They aim to instill confidence, self-esteem, and a belief in the girls' abilities. Empowering girls through education helps them to overcome societal barriers and discrimination.

Review of Literature and Theoretical Framework

- Narayan, 2002 ^[2]; Alsop *et al.*, (2006) ^[16] referred female empowerment as an capability of an individual to achieve power and control and to develop decision making ability among women which also influences her life.
- Wazir, 2000 ^[14]; Jha & Jhingran, (2002) ^[15] concluded that besides constitutional provisions of empowerment and numerous empowerment oriented schemes, women’s are still feeling neglected in economic, domestic, health & wellbeing, literacy and social parameters.
- Kirti, Prof. Hemant Lata Sharma, Ritu Rani (2014) ^[6] studied that the objective of all empowerment oriented policies and interventions including KGBV is to foster the environment where women can take their own decisions, participate in all spheres of life at par with men and excel as equal members of society.
- Payal P. Shah (2011) ^[8] conducted a study on KGBV schools in Gujarat and concluded that KGBV schools have profound impact on the empowerment of teachers and girl students, and especially those that hold the model of KGBV proved motivating and supportive environment which facilitates the intrinsic abilities of teacher and student empowerment.
- Pandey S (2015) ^[9] conducted a study on the role of KGBV and the results show that KGBV teachers are initiating the activities related to life skills, mental health and hygiene. Further teachers are trying their best to develop sound communication skills and activities aiming to all-round development and adjustment of the personality are being prioritized.
- Krishna Kumar, Lalit Gupta, (2008) ^[5] studied that the schools are not only eliminating the effect of gender disparity during the presence of girls within four walls of school. But curricular and co-curricular activities for girls in the school are of utmost importance when it comes to the development of self confidence, self reliance and participation of girls in the society. This is one among the crucial roles of women education
- The Center for Budget and Policy Studies (CBPS, 2015) ^[1] reported that residential education has become the main school education delivery system over the world. Funding from different sources has been utilized for these schools. Private as well as government initiatives playing their effective roles.
- Ms. Taira Perveen, Dr. Rouchi Chaudhary (2019) ^[19] conducted study and concluded that Kasturba Gandhi Balika Vidyalyayas are playing an important role in promoting girl education especially in those places of country in which female literacy rate is very low as compared to national average. When we look at the school infrastructure of KGBV schools, 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.
- Rekhamoni Baruah (2013) ^[13] conducted a study and revealed that trainings in boarding schools for girls are sufficient to foster all-round development primarily focusing on producing disciplined, confident and

prosperous people. Such achievements definitely help them to act as perfect women in present day life.

- Rouf Ahmad Bhat (2015) ^[10] conducted his study and revealed that education surely reduces inequalities and acts as an agency to improve the standard of living and raises their status in family in particular and society in general. In order to improve women education and to reduce inequalities of gender, several schools, colleges and universities have been exclusively established in the state. Major participation of women in public affairs, domestic affairs and local panchayats has remained main concentration of education.

Rationale of the study

The principle objective of KGBV scheme is to enhance female literacy rate in rural India which in turn enhances female empowerment at primary level. Education is the prerequisite of the empowerment of human civilization and it brings the developing nations at par with the nations who achieved remarkable growth in the empowerment of women and eradication of female literacy. Several policies and initiatives taken by government of India had proved tangible improvements in the lives of women especially those focused on health, nutrition and employability. So the evaluation of the KGBV Scheme in terms of enhancing female empowerment seems justified. This research will also produce facts for the management, stake holders and policy makers.

Objective of the study

The primary objective of this study was to gauge role of KGBV schools in empowering women at primary level especially in Educationally Backward Blocks of Anantnag District of Kashmir (J&K)

Population and Sample

The research study includes KGBVs of Anantnag district in which the investigator selected five through random sampling method. Six students from every class, five teachers from every KGBV and five parents from three different KGBVs have been randomly selected.

Table 1: KGBVs in Anantnag District of J&K UT

S. No	Name of the KGBV	U-DISE Code
1.	KGBV AKINGAM Upper Primary only	210 01060102014
2.	KGBV LOGRIPORA Upper Primary only	269 01060201805
3.	KGBV ANANTNAG Upper Primary only	318 01060301604
4.	KGBV NAGRASS Upper Primary only	593 01061301808
5.	KGBV SHANGUS Upper Primary only	645 01061400619
6.	KGBV DEHWATOO Upper Primary only	705 01061500605
7.	KGBV DANDIPORA Upper Primary only	789 01061600907

Methodology

Descriptive survey research method was used in the present study. For the collection of primary data, the investigator visited the schools and used Interview schedule to collect the data from students, teachers and parents. The secondary sources including the various research studies, reports, Books, Magazines, Newspapers, Articles and websites have been consulted thoroughly. Content and narrative analysis has been used to analyze the data.

Conclusion, Discussion and Suggestions

- The findings draw its support from the earlier findings of Dr. Lakshmi Pandey & Richa Kumari 2019^[7], Payal P. Shah 2011^[8], Ms. Taira Perveen, Dr. Rouchi Chaudhary 2019^[19], Rekhamoni Baruah 2013^[13], Kirti, Prof. Sharma Hemant, Lata & Ritu Rani 2014^[6]. So the present study revealed that the KGBV initiative in girl education has positively transformed the enrolled girl students and influenced girl empowerment significantly. The study also concluded that girls enrolled in KGBV schools are performing well in socio-educational and cultural scenario as compared to girls enrolled in other secondary schools.
- The study also revealed that the KGBV scheme provides girls with learning opportunities to develop self-confidence, self-concept and ability to shape their own destiny and participate in social participation. So women's living in rural areas of J&K should be empowered through education as they form an important part of the society. Education would help them realize new productive opportunities in the areas of acquiring entrepreneurial skills, generating more income and better opportunities in the world of employment.
- The study also draws its support from the study conducted by Kavita.S (2013)^[4]. In this study the investigator opined that women living in rural areas must be inclined to participate in literacy programmes as initiated by formal agencies of education or by adult education programme. They must be sensitized about the significance of education and about the fact that education is much more beneficial than monetary or economic benefits.
- The objective of government schemes and policies leading to empowerment including KGBV, are intentionally created to empower girls and build the democratic environment where girls can express their views, can take their own decisions and fulfill the demands of self in particular and of society in general. The study conducted by Kirti, Prof. Hemant Lata Sharma, Ritu Rani (2014)^[6], Payal P. Shah (2011)^[8] KGBV also supports the current study and concluded that KGBV schools have profound impact on the empowerment of teachers and girl students, and especially those that hold the model of KGBV proved motivating and supportive environment which facilitates the intrinsic abilities of teacher and student empowerment.
- KGBVs have a greater impact on social change by promoting the intrinsic dimensions of teacher and girl empowerment. Pandey S (2015)^[9] conducted a study on the role of KGBV and the results showed that activities related to better quality of life, necessary life skills, mental health and hygiene are taken serious by KGBV teachers.
- Educators in KGBVs should offer the variety of learning experiences which would foster better skills of communication and stage for self expression. Activities aimed for all-round development of personality must have equal importance in the school curriculum.
- Kasturba Gandhi Balika Vidyalayas plays an important

role in promoting girls' education, especially in EBBs of the country, but if we look at the school infrastructure provided by Kasturba Gandhi Balika Vidyalayas, the main problem is related to the school building. So the school buildings must be built according to the guidelines laid down in the KGBV scheme.

- KGBV teachers should also undergo training and orientation programs to develop moral, spiritual and professional values among female students to make them self reliant, disciplined, progressive and prosperous members of society. These achievements in personality will definitely help them to become empowered women's of the society.
- KGBV often provides girls with role models and mentors who can guide and inspire them. Having positive role models encourages girls to aspire to higher education and career goals.
- The residential nature of KGBV schools ensures that girls have a safe and supportive learning environment. This is particularly important in areas where traditional gender norms or safety concerns may limit girls' ability to attend school.

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