

Research Article

Girls' Education and the Policy Challenges: Need for Universalization and Transformative School Education

Aparajita Sharma

Assistant Professor, Council for Social Development, New Delhi, India
Email id: aparajita@csdindia.org, aparajitasharma07@gmail.com

Date of Submission: 10/03/2020; Date of Acceptance: 15/07/2020

ABSTRACT

The Government of India (GOI) has taken several initiatives like Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan, Beti Bachao Beti Padhao scheme and others to enhance enrolment and participation of girls in education. Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan, a flagship scheme by Government of India to implement RTE Act 2009 has been remarkable in terms of ensuring physical access to elementary schools in length and breadth of the country and implementation of the scheme has also reduced gender parity index by bringing more girls to school. However, the implementation of these schemes and programmes has been uneven, often fraught with ground-level hurdles. It is a pressing concern that even after 10 years of RTE Act 2009, compliance rate is only 12.7%. Free and compulsory education is critical for girls' education because of an unequal status ascribed to girls and women in the patriarchal society. Inequality in society is often seen to overlap with inequalities in the school. Further educational content, official knowledge, who to be education when, are centrally determined and education despite being a fundamental right have not been able to build a connection to the live experiences of the subaltern and indigenous groups and girls belonging to these groups gets doubly jeopardized. Gender based violence (GBA) and defined masculinity and femininity through ascribed gender roles also excludes girls from formal education system. This paper will highlight some of the major policy challenges to equal education for girls and how school can act as counter socializers to tackle gender bias and discrimination. Further the paper will also present how universalization of school education will be able to build the pathway to inclusive education instead of incentivizing schemes which is becoming the norm currently. Situating the present status of girls education the paper will explore how The

Draft New Education Policy have also departed substantially from the previous education policies; and have not been able to address the issues which is critical for ensuring universalization of education and connecting to the lived experiences/world view of the girls. Along with that the policy is also not explicit on the role of the state to invest resources on education so that quality and transformative education is possible instead of reducing education to a measure of standardized learning outcomes.

Keywords: Education, Girls, Inequality, Policy, Universalization

INTRODUCTION

Universalisation of education and Right to Education can be seen as closely related to girls education. J.P. Naik in a seminal article, spoke of equality, quantity and quality comprising the elusive triangle in Indian education (Naik, 1979). Historically women have been denied the right to education due to various reasons. The pervasive and entrenched patriarchy in our society has relegated women into a subordinate position, creating deep structural inequity. Traditional beliefs and social bias reinforce conventional gender roles for girls and women, and these include but are not limited to domestic chores and sibling care. In most places, women and girls have little no say in matters of family finance, property or any key family decisions. Norms and practices like early marriage and post-pubertal restrictions are some key hindrances to girls' participation in education. Structural drivers impact gender power relations at all levels and in family, school and public places. Gender overlaps and reinforces exclusion of marginalized groups like SC, ST, Muslims and other social groups.

There was euphoria when universalization of elementary education was actualized in the country through the enactment of RTE Act 2009. Most international human instruments like the Convention of the Rights of Children (CRC), the Convention on Economic and Socio-cultural rights and CEDAW reiterate the right to education, particularly for those of girls. Other conventions like the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) emphatically endorse the importance of education and mention categorically that all girls and boys should be able to complete 12 years of education till 2030. This was also a major step towards universalization of education which also laid the foundation for breaking the barriers which girls face due to the existing social cultural norms.

The coming of SSA as the umbrella scheme to implement RTE Act 2009 addressed the critical concern of access. A statutory provision of a primary school within 1 km and an upper primary school within 3 km led to the opening of new schools across the country. It was found that with opening of new school, GER (Gender Enrolment

Ratio) increased manifold and it reached near 100 percent in 2013. This impacted girl's education immensely.

I. Girl's Education and 10 years of RTE

The enactment of the Right to Free and Compulsory Education Act 2009 for all children from 6-14 years was a historic step in the 'education for all' movement in India. The Act emanated from the 86th Constitutional Amendment which introduced Article 21-A in the Constitution of India, making education a fundamental right. The RTE Act of 2009 incorporates several norms, non-negotiable and child-friendly provisions, like neighbourhood schools, age-appropriate learning, banning of corporal punishment, a favourable pupil-teacher ratio and so on. The RTE Act provides a means for the universalization of elementary education in India. Other international instruments like the Convention of the Rights of Children (CRC) and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) emphatically endorse the importance of education.

The passing of RTE had brought girls back to schools. In 2006, 10.3 percent of girls between the ages of 11 and 14 were out of school. In 2018, the figure stood at 4.1 percent, a significant decline. In 2018, 13.5 percent of girls between the ages 15-16 were out of school, as opposed to more than 20 percent in 2008 (ASER, 2018).

As per the 2011 Census Female Literacy in India is at 65.46% the male literacy rate is at 82.14%, the gap between the two is indicative of the status of women in India. NSSO data (2017-2018) states that female literacy rate is 70.3% while male literacy is 84.7%. The gender parity index also increased from 1.03 in 2009 to 1.15 in 2017.

II. Girl's Education in Education Policies

Universalization of education found a lot of focus in the beginning of 1990's and continued through the decade. National Census 1991, found significant disparities among rural-urban women and highlighted that rural female literacy was about half of urban female literacy. Another striking finding was that for every 100 girls in class I in rural areas, there were only 40 in class V, 18 in class VIII, 9 in class IX and only one in class XII. The corresponding figures for urban areas were 82, 62, 32 and 14 indicating a decline in girl education in higher classes, both in rural and urban areas.

The coming of the RTE Act signaled a policy shift towards a sector-wise attempt to universalize education and introduce many 'firsts' in elementary education in India. As summarized by Dubey, 2018, for the first time, all children were conferred the right to free and compulsory education for eight years. The State assumed legal

responsibility to ensure implementation as a set of norms was established for ensuring quality and equality in the school education system. A holistic approach was adapted for universalizing a segment of school education in the country. Again, for the first time, a new time line was stipulated for achieving universalizing of quality elementary education. The Act recognizes free and compulsory education for 3-18 year olds as a public good and the State is obliged to commit resources for its implementation. The above provisions also challenged the barriers which women/girls faced in accessing equal education like their male counterpart. RTE was summarized in a 4-A scheme which enabled which enabled availability, accessibility, acceptability and adoptability for all children including girls (Tomasevski, 1999).

One of the fundamental goals of Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan (SSA) was for bridging the gender and social gaps in elementary education. SSA was a comprehensive and integrated flagship program of government of India, launched in 2000-01, to attain Universal Elementary Education in the country in a mission mode. The role of Universal Elementary Education (UEE) is strengthening the social fabric of democracy through provision of equal opportunities to all. Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan (SSA) which was implemented as India's main programme for universalizing elementary education is merged with SMSA (Samagra Shiksha Abhiyan). Its overall goals include universal access and retention, bridging of gender and social category gaps in education and enhancement of learning levels of children.

Despite the well intentioned policies, and the massive improvement in the participation of girls in schooling, the numbers of girls never enrolled in schools are high in rural areas, 19.3% girls against 12.6% boys. The estimated total number of children in the age group of 6-13 years is 20.41 Crores, out of which, an estimated 60.41 lakhs (2.97%) are out of school (Survey for estimation of out of school children in India, 2014). RTE Forum/CSD calculation of out of school children for 6-18 years in 2018 was found to be 4.5 crore.

The highest proportion of drop-outs at the elementary level consists of Dalits and Adivasis — 38.8 per cent and 48.2 per cent, respectively (DISE 206-17). Once again, girl drop-outs out number boys amongst Dalits and Adivasis, and this is also true of girls from Muslim communities.

Girls' in India discontinue schooling because of many social-cultural and economic reasons, add to these are challenging geographic conditions and wide-ranging systemic issues. The most critical issue is the deep-rooted gender issues in our society, where girls are considered as a liability by families and are loaded with multiple responsibilities through life. India ranks 113 out of a total of 135 countries in The Global Gender

Gap Report 2016¹. Incidence of female infanticide, child marriage, or high school drop-out is all indicative of this malaise. The other pressing challenges which impacted girl's education post RTE Act 2009 have been increasing role of private which makes education a commodity in the market. The gender gap in accessing private schools has been highlighted in many studies including the ASER 2019 which found at both ECCE and primary level more boys are enrolled in private than girls. (56% girls and 50% boys are enrolled in government pre-schools while 43% girls and 50% boys are enrolled in private preschools; in primary also the gap exist substantially.

III. Shift from Universalisation and the Emerging Challenges to Girl's Education

Public private partnership in education: Excludes girls and marginalized children

Free and compulsory education was critical for girl's education. However, very soon the RTE Act was passed the policy on PPP in education was drafted by MHRD. Even though it was not implemented then, the developments following the passage of the Act not only violated the law in many ways, but also failed in its implementation within the stipulated timeline. The number of private schools at elementary and secondary level shot up during the period and corporate-run budget schools became popular. To enable and encourage private sector participation in K-12 schools, the FICCI Committee on School Education has recommended shifting from an input-based to an outcome-based system, wherein schools could be established on short-term rental/ lease model. This would enable pooling of resources from ownership, allow the market to determine teacher salaries and they would be considered operators of schools. Thus, public and private sector could effectively work in cohesion and support each other in contributing to the growth and quality of the Indian school system. The much-publicized study by World Bank Consultant James Tooley in 2001 on Private Schools in India emphasized the role of private schools in elementary education of children. Even though there were counter studies by several scholars, the discourse caught on and during the phase of individual edu-preneurs, gradually brought corporate-run budget schools into India. In a study conducted in Hyderabad, in the Mandal block, it was found that the business plan of schools run by entrepreneurs and tuition-entrepreneurs defined its attraction and desirability for its clientele and additional activities and services it provided usually from a financial angle (Sarangapani, 2018). The schools included both primary and high schools.

Girls are less likely to access private schools than boys, mainly due to the fact that, if forced to choose. The effects of privatisation on girls' access to free, quality

¹World Economic Forum, 2016. *The Global Gender Gap Report 2016*. Retrieved from http://www3.weforum.org/docs/GGGR16/WEF_Global_Gender_Gap_Report_2016.pdf on 26th November 2019.

public education impact girls education as parents will pay to send their son to school rather than their daughter. There are also other discriminatory aspects of privatisation that may hinder girls' education, namely the fact that private schools often suffer from a lack of monitoring and oversight on the part of the state to ensure that girls' rights are protected. In the five countries studied, gender parity has been achieved in terms of enrolment at primary level and in some countries also for enrolment (though not completion) at secondary level. However, when we compare the public and private sector, the trends in gender equality vary significantly from one country to another.

Privatization and the fast proliferating edu-businesses violate the principle of universal education in multiple ways. The premise that universalisation is possible through both, public and private sector, is a myth as universalization is based on social justice and equity and not on market forces. Based on the premise of profit maximization and logic of the market, edu-businesses assume stark forms in both, formal/mainstream school setup, as well as shadow setups such as coaching centers, tuition centers etc.

Budget cuts for girls education and overall education

Simultaneously there have been massive cuts on public financing of education with little or no heed paid to Tapas Majumdar Committee recommendation for a minimum of six per cent of GDP to be invested on education. Even in states where education budget is high, priorities are gradually shifting and money is being allocated to promote businesses of private players. For example, the Beti Bachao Beti Padhao scheme aimed to raise awareness and improve welfare services for girls, spend nearly 60% of its budget on advertisements in 2018-19.² Several studies indicate that there is a general lack of awareness among the people regarding the existence of these schemes. While many of the schemes seek to address girls' participation in education, it often limits itself to purely systemic issues of school infrastructure and fails to take into cognizance the structural and societal discriminations that exist in the society, which act as a significant deterrent to girls' education.

Gradual decline in share of government schools

Number of government schools is gradually declining, particularly in the urban areas (Table 1) due to various reasons which impact participation of girls in schooling. In a study on private schools in India conducted by the Council for Social Development found that the number of private schools was on the rise across the states. There

²<https://www.outlookindia.com/website/story/india-news-beti-bachao-beti-padhao-centre-spent-56-of-funds-on-publicity-minister-tells-lok-sabha/324035>

Table 1: Decreasing share of government schools

Year	% of share of private schools to total schools		% of unaided schools		% of government schools to total schools		% of government schools to total schools in urban areas	
	Ele	Sec	Ele	Sec	Ele	Sec	Ele	Sec
2014-2015	22.78	40.1	17.80	39.8	72.98	41.7	36.30	6.8
2015-2016	23.08	41.01	18.50	40.4	72.57	41.1	36.30	6.8
2016-2017	24.01	41.14	19.78	40.5	71.7	41.2	35.02	6.8

Source: U-Dise, Ele=Elementary, Sec=Secondary

is a growing perception among parents that private schools are better than government schools in providing quality education. Other factors that went in their favour were the medium of English for teaching, uniform for students and school transport system. Largely it was found that sending children to private schools was a matter of social prestige (Pankaj, 2019). Even though there has been a 24 per cent increase in the number of government schools in rural areas after 2002, the enrolment in private schools had simultaneously increased manifold and particularly of boys

Very poor RTE compliance

At school, girls are very often exposed to wide-ranging safety concerns due to lack of RTE compliance of schools. It is still at a staggering 12.5%. (U-Dise, 2016-2017). These include lack of separate functional toilet for girls, as lack of proper infrastructure makes girls even more vulnerable, 33.6% schools still lack usable toilets for girls and 35.6% schools still do not have boundary walls³, a significant obstacle in their access to safe and secure education. Lack of menstrual knowledge, along with a non-conducive school infrastructure and lack of sanitary products, often compel girls to remain at home.⁴ Another unique school choice policy was introduced via India's RTE Act, 2009. The policy (hereafter referred to as the RTE 25 per cent mandate/ the mandate) blocks 25 per cent places (hereafter referred to as RTE free places/ free place) in entry grades of all private schools for children from disadvantaged households. Families from certain unprivileged social groups (castes) and families below the specified income cut-offs are defined as disadvantaged and are eligible for free places. The government reimburses the tuition costs to private schools. When fully implemented, the mandate could impact 16 million children/girls in eight years, making it the world's largest program for public funding and private provision in education (Indian Institute of Management, Ahmadabad, 2013. p 17).

³ibid

⁴<https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC6286883/>

Further, there are many cases of discrimination of children admitted under Section 12 (1c) as reported by organizations implementing this provision of RTE⁵. Parents of such children hesitate to give written complaints. The NCPCR also found that almost 14 per cent principals did not favour EWS children studying in their school. Girls from marginalized families were doubly jeopardized.

National education Policy, 2020 and the shift from previous policies

The National Education Policy, approved by the Cabinet in August 2020, came after a long wait of nearly five years. While the policy has reiterated the increase of public investment in education to 6% of GDP, it has failed to give a roadmap for the same. Further its shift from the previous policies is posing further challenges to gender equity in education.

The policy also recommends universalisation of school education for 3-18 years. However, unlike the draft version (released in 2019), the final policy is silent on the extension of the Right to Free and Compulsory Education 2009. Hence there is no mandatory mechanism for the union and state governments to make it a reality. Without the RTE Act, universalisation will be very difficult. There are significant drop-outs after elementary levels, especially among girls, there are nearly 40% adolescent girls (15-18 years) in India without access to education (NCPCR).

The issue of gender and girls education in the policy is subsumed under the section on *Equitable and Inclusive Education: Learning for All* clubbing girls' education within the discourse of Socio-Economically Disadvantaged Groups (SEDGs) and under represented groups. Treating the issue of girls within the terminology of under-represented groups and SEDGs reduces the issue of girls education to numbers, completely undermining the historical structural barriers that prevent girls education. The NEP 2020 fails to recognize the complexities that prevent girls from succeeding in education as such the strategies that policy proposes remain generic, like providing bicycles and organizing cycling and walking groups to provide access to school.

The policy proposes the concept of Special Education Zones (SEZs), where all the schemes and policies are implemented to change the educational landscape, once again the issue of girls education is included in the SEZ 'SEZ are those which contain large proportion of SEDGs, it must be noted that women cut across all underrepresented groups, making up about half of all SEDGs. Unfortunately, the exclusion and inequity

⁵<https://www.tribuneindia.com/news/haryana/child-rights-panel-takes-note-of-bias-against-ews-students/756679.html>

that SEDGs face is only amplified for the women in these SEDGs'. The policy is not only silent on the structural barriers but is also silent on way forward for gender equality and gender empowerment. If we look into the 1986 Education Policy, it envisioned education as a transformative force which would build women's self-confidence, improve their position in society and enable them to challenge inequalities that are prevalent in Indian society. The '86 policy stated that *"Education shall be used as an agent of basic change in the status of women. In order to neutralise accumulated distortions of the past, there will be a well-conceived edge in favour of women. The policy committed that the national education system would play a positive, interventionist role in the empowerment of women"*. The new policy, does not see education as a transformation tool to change the imbalance in the society and move towards empowerment of girls.

In the policy, a lot of emphases has been given on digital education which we fear will promote further segregation. India currently doesn't have adequate infrastructure to support this and girls and children from marginalised background face the risk of exclusion. India accounts for half the digital gender gap worldwide⁶.

The policy envisages a Gender Inclusion Fund to build the nation's capacity to provide equitable quality education for all girls as well as transgender students. The policy mentions that this fund will be for providing access to education to girls and transgender students by making provisions of sanitation, toilets, bicycles etc. The policy, in the name from philanthropic schools and PPP, is laying the roadmap for entry of private players in education, which will further commercialise education and the existing inequalities will be exacerbated.

POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS TOWARDS TRANSFORMATIVE EDUCATION

An analysis of the above policies and the RTE Act in 10 years, Girls' Education has to become a priority with the Government; if Right to Education has to become a reality for all girls, there is a need to adopt a comprehensive transformative approach to addresses the barriers to girls' education. Some key recommendations/asks are:

1. Universalization of Education as a Right
2. Quality Education
3. Inclusive and Strong Public Education

⁶<https://www.livemint.com/Opinion/sD6mVqLAEa7cvfJtmdXXuO/She-is-offlineIndias-digital-gender-divide.html>

UNIVERSALIZATION OF EDUCATION

Lack of universalisation of education exacerbates the issue of inequality and exclusion within and outside the school especially for girls. At community level a girl child is discriminated in many ways, for example, India witnesses the highest number of female infanticides, the discrimination persists in the form of poor nutrition, Gender-based violence (GBV) and early marriage⁷.

Several studies, including MHRD study on Inclusion and Exclusion of children in School and Classrooms (2012),⁸ establish that girls face physical, mental and sexual abuse in schools. When Gender intertwines with the caste, class, religion, then the girl has to face multiple marginalizations. Dalits, Tribals or Muslims are most affected by discrimination and violence. Studies observe that the societal norms around caste and religion are reflected in classrooms, and school systems, segregation, negative attitude of teachers towards Dalit children are common, Dalit girls are invariably given menial tasks of sweeping and cleaning, untouchability in drinking water and mid-day meal scheme, verbal abuse, exclusion of from curricular and co-curricular activities are commonly experienced by Dalit children, especially girls.

The marginalization deepens when the girl is differently-abled or belongs to the LGBTQ community. Teachers are not sensitized and trained to the needs of LGBTQ children, and sometimes instead of taking an anti-bullying stance, they often are complicit in their harassment⁹. Another survey by Ministry of Women and Child Development, “Study on Child Abuse: India” (2007) reveals that at least 50 per cent of girls between ages 5-18 years had experienced one or more forms of physical or sexual violence and emotional violence¹⁰.

In 2015-16¹¹, for every hundred elementary schools (classes I to VIII) in rural India, there were only fourteen offering secondary (classes IX-X) and only six offering higher secondary grades (classes XI-XII). The absence of secondary schools means that girls have to travel vast distances to avail education and the risk of sexual violence and abduction looms large, often discouraging the parents from sending their girls to schools.

⁷<https://www.downtoearth.org.in/news/health/india-witnesses-one-of-the-highest-female-infanticide-incidents-in-the-world-54803>

⁸<http://www.eruindia.org/files/National%20Synthesis%20Inclusion-exclusion%20study%20Formatted%20final%201%20Oct%202012.pdf>

⁹<https://www.hrw.org/news/2019/06/24/section-377-history-young-lgbt-indians-need-concrete-policies-protect-them-bullying>

¹⁰The study was a national survey of 6,460 boys and 5,987 girls aged 5–18 years

¹¹U-Dise 2015-2016

In the era of rapid digitization of education and the rampant use of technology, girls are also susceptible to cyber-crimes. The Global Youth Online Behaviour Survey conducted by Microsoft ranked India third in cyberbullying, with 53% of the respondents, mainly children admitting having experienced online bullying, falling behind only China and Singapore¹².

Universalisation of education is a prerequisite for creating an enabling learning environment for children. Safety encompasses physical, mental, psychological, social and emotional dimensions. A school environment should be free from physical harm, mental stress, discrimination based on gender, caste, class, region, religion (RTE Forum, 2016-17)¹³.

QUALITY AND EQUITY IN EDUCATION

Not only are a large number of girls out of school, but many of those attending school fail to demonstrate basic learning attainment. 'Although 193 member states of the United Nations have committed to ensuring their children receive a quality education by 2030, it remains a distant reality for millions of girls'¹⁴. Quality education, inclusive of equitable practices is needed to guarantee that both girls and boys are empowered equally. Advocates urge that global commitment for girls' education needs to translate into concrete, sustainable and effective action to achieve 12 years of quality education for all girls, especially the most marginalized girls¹⁵. Poor quality of education limits learning of children from marginalized groups the most, it is acknowledged that the global learning crisis cannot be overcome unless policies aim to improve learning among the disadvantaged¹⁶.

RTE has well stated norms to ensure quality education for all children. Efforts for quality should work on all the components defining quality education - quality learning environment, trained and adequate number of teachers, appropriate teacher-learner ratio, good classroom management with active learning/child-centred pedagogy,

¹²<https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC5914259/>

¹³<http://www.intl-academy.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/04/Paper-3-Educational-Status-of-Dalit-Girls-in-India-An-Evaluative-Study-Dr.-Meera-Subramanian-JIES-Vol-5-No-1-Fall-2016.pdf>; <http://dalitstudies.org.in/wp/wps0101.pdf>

¹⁴<https://www.globalpartnership.org/blog/all-girls-need-12-years-quality-education>

¹⁵<http://www.educ.cam.ac.uk/centres/real/publications/26-EN-POLICY-NOTE-Political-leadership-LNGB-Feb-2020-DOUBLE-SPREADS.pdf>

¹⁶https://unesdoc.unesco.org/in/documentViewer.xhtml?id=p::usmarcdef_0000225660&file=/in/rest/annotationSVC/DownloadWatermarkedAttachment/attach_import_2b1516f2-c6df-4518-9c96-28656c767fa1%3F_%3D225660eng.pdf&updateUrl=updateUrl1716&ark=/ark:/48223/pf0000225660/PDF/225660eng.pdf.multi&fullScreen=true&locale=en#page=228&zoom=110.00000000000001

continuous and comprehensive learner assessment, appropriate and meaningful curriculum, content and learning material, adoption of appropriate technologies.

INCLUSIVE AND STRONG PUBLIC EDUCATION

Boys are significantly more likely to be enrolled in private schools than girls. The size of this female disadvantage is significantly higher among non-eldest girls¹⁷. While the gender gap in enrolment appears to be closing in government schools it is shown to be opening further in private schools in India¹⁸. This mirrors trends reported from other countries where the growth of private provisioning of education contributes to segregation and negative impact on the education of girls from marginalized communities. Private school fees provide strong disincentive for girls' enrolment, relative to that of boys. At the same time, the weak regulatory frameworks for private schools in India have contributed to a number of high profile instances where children's safety failed to be ensured.

- Enhance regulation of private schools, including regulation of fees, to close the gender gap in enrollment.
- Enhance quality of education in government schools

REFERENCES

- DHS (2015) Government of India. <https://www.nature.com/articles/s41598-019-52793-3>
- Global Education Mon. <https://safecity.in/the-status-of-womens-education-in-india/11>. DHS,2015
itoring Report, 2012
- Menon, Geeta (2012) Education of Children in Areas of Civil Strife: Context and Challenges, Note presented in National Consultation on Education in Areas Affected by Civil Strife. NUEPA, NCPCR and UNICEF. <http://uis.unesco.org/sites/default/files/documents/a-situational-study-of-india-out-of-school-children-en.pdf>
- Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation, Registrar General of India, GOI. *Census 2011*. New Delhi, India. https://apps.who.int/iris/bitstream/handle/10665/329783/seajphv2n2_p106.pdf
- National Education Policy (2020) MHRD. Government of India, <http://art.eurekajournals.com/index.php/IJCRECS/article/download/255/289>
- NCPCR, National Colloquium Report, 2018 <https://safecity.in/the-status-of-womens-education-in-india/>
- Sarangapani, P.M. (2009) 'Quality, feasibility and desirability of low cost private schooling', *Economic and Political Weekly*, pp. 67-69. https://itforchange.net/sites/default/files/ITfC/3_Quality_feasibility_and_desirability_of_low_cost_private_schooling-PadmaSarangapani-%20EPW_Oct_24_2009.pdf

¹⁷<https://www.econstor.eu/bitstream/10419/141567/1/dp9808.pdf>

¹⁸<https://www.econstor.eu/bitstream/10419/58728/1/690182880.pdf>

- Sarangapani, P.M. (2018) Institutional Diversity and Quality in Handbook of Education in India (Ed) by Kumar, Routledge, Delhi.
- Sarin, A., Dongre, A. and Wad, S. (2017) State of the nation: RTE Section, <https://www.cprindia.org/research/reports/state-nation-rte-section-12-1-c-2017>
- Sen, P. (1999) 'Enhancing women's choices in responding to domestic violence in Calcutta: a comparison of employment and education', *The European Journal of Development Research*, Vol. 11, No. 2, pp. 65-86.
- Udise (2016-17) http://udise.in/Downloads/Publications/Documents/Flash_Statistics_on_School_Education-2016-17.pdf, page 37
- Udise (2016-17) http://udise.in/Downloads/Publications/Documents/Flash_Statistics_on_School_Education-2016-17.pdf, page 31
- Winthrop, R. and McGivney, E. (2015) Why Wait 100 Years? Bridging the Gap in Global Education. The Brookings Institution, June 2015. <https://www.brookings.edu/research/why-wait-100-years-bridging-the-gap-in-global-education/>
- World Bank, Measuring the Economic Gain of Investing in Girls, Policy Research Working Paper 5753, 201116.
- World Economic Forum (2016) *The Global Gender Gap Report 2016*. Retrieved from http://www3.weforum.org/docs/GGGR16/WEF_Global_Gender_Gap_Report_2016.pdf on 26th November 2019.

How to cite this article: Sharma, A. (2020) 'Girls' Education and the Policy Challenges. Need for Universalization and Transformative School Education', *Journal of Exclusion Studies*, Vol. 10, No. 2, pp. 151-163.