

NATIONAL PROGRAMME FOR EDUCATION OF GIRLS AT ELEMENTARY EDUCATION - OUTLAYS, OUTPUTS & OUTCOMES

Education of girls has always been a high priority area with the Government of India. The national commitment to provide free and compulsory education to all children in the 6- 14 years age group is now a Fundamental Right of every child in India after passing of the Constitution (86th Amendment) Act in December, 2002 and 'Right to Education' Act in 2009. The allocations under Gender Budgeting Statements have also been confirming the emphasis of the Government on education sector. Various schemes and programmes are devised and vigorously implemented for substantial improvement in the education sector, which exhibit in the form of increased enrolment and literacy rates, though marginally. Still, the gap in the indicators between boys and girls make it an area of serious concern for the policy makers.

A comprehensive scheme was launched by the Government to give impetus to the cause of 'Elementary Education' in the form of 'Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan' (SSA). The scheme of Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan (SSA) was started in the year 2001-02 with the objective of universalisation of elementary education. It is an ambitious flagship programme of Government of India to address the most vital issue of providing opportunity to all children (including the girl child), for enhancing their capabilities through education at elementary level. SSA has limited financial provisions for girls' education in the form of 'innovations' at district level and free textbooks. As it doesn't have the focus only on girl child, a need was felt by the policy makers for an additional component dealing with the under privileged girl child.

Accordingly, National Programme for Education of Girls at Elementary Education (NPEGEL) was formulated, for education of under privileged / disadvantaged girls from class I to VIII, as a separate and distinct gender component plan of SSA. The programme is a focused intervention to reach the 'Hardest to reach' girls, especially those not in school. Launched in 2003,

it is now an important component of Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan (SSA), which provides additional support for enhancing girl's education over and above the investments for girl's education through normal SSA interventions. The programme provides for development of a 'model school' in every cluster with more intense community mobilization and supervision of girl's enrolment in schools. Gender sensitization of teachers, development of gender-sensitive learning materials and provision of need-based incentives like escorts, stationery, workbooks and uniforms are some of the endeavors under the programme.

The detailed modalities of the programme as obtained from the Department of Elementary Education are described here.

5.1 Objectives of the Programme

The data available with the Department of Elementary Education reveals that a significant gender gap exists in enrolment at the elementary level, which is more acute for scheduled caste and scheduled tribe girls. The gender gap is almost 30% at the primary level and 26% at upper primary stage for the SC and ST girls. The reduction of this gender gap has now come to a stage where nothing less than a strong focus on the 'hard to reach groups' is expected to work. Therefore, it was considered necessary to include certain interventions addressing the specific needs of girl children in the form of this new programme.

The objectives of NPEGEL are:

- (a) To provide for blocks focused projects for girls at risk / difficult circumstances with clearly defined outcomes.
- (b) To develop and promote facilities to provide access and to facilitate retention of girls and to ensure greater participation of women and girls in the field of education
- (c) To improve the quality of education through various interventions and to stress upon the relevance and quality of girls' education for their empowerment

5.1.1 Focus of the Programme

Specially devised for the girl child, it has focus on an inclusive growth of girls. A multipronged approach has been adopted for achieving an all-round development of the girls. An environment free from bias and discrimination is to be created for achieving positive results. The focus of NPEGEL is, accordingly, to facilitate a conducive environment for overall development of girls, as described below -

- (a) To strengthen the capacity of National, state and district institutions and organizations for planning, management and evaluation of girls' education at the elementary level, and create a dynamic management structure to respond to the challenges of girls' education;
- (b) To develop innovative gender sensitisation / training programmes, with the assistance of concerned organisations and women's groups, for teachers and administrators. This will help in gender sensitization of all concerned.
- (c) To initiate networking between different institutions for research, extension and information dissemination to increase output of gender sensitive, quality teaching/learning material.
- (d) To gear the entire education system to play a positive role to enhance self-esteem and self-confidence of women and girls; build a positive image of women by recognizing their contribution to the society, polity and the economy.
- (e) To break gender stereotypes, ensuring that the content and process of education is sensitive to gender concerns.
- (f) To ensure necessary support services to enhance girls' participation and performance in elementary education.
- (g) To build community support for girls' education by providing a conducive environment for girls' education in the school, community and home; and
- (h) To ensure that girls get good quality education at the elementary level.

The scheme is implemented in educationally backward blocks (EBBs) where the level of rural female literacy is less than the national average; in blocks of districts which are not covered under EBBs but are having at least 5% SC/ST population and where SC/ST female literacy is below 10%; and also in select urban slums. As per the records of the Department, about 3262 educationally backward blocks are covered under the scheme in 23 states namely- Andhra Pradesh, Arunachal Pradesh, Assam, Bihar, Chhattisgarh, Gujarat, Haryana, Himachal Pradesh, Jammu & Kashmir, Jharkhand, Karnataka, Madhya Pradesh, Maharashtra, Meghalaya, Mizoram, Orissa, Punjab, Rajasthan, Tamilnadu, Tripura, Uttar Pradesh, Uttarakhand and West Bengal. The data maintained by the Department, (up to July 2010), states that under NPEGEL, around 40,322 Model cluster schools have been opened; 26,838 additional classrooms have been constructed and 2.14 lakh teachers have been given training on gender sensitisation; remedial teaching given to 2.4 lakh girls; bridge course covered 4.37 lakh girls and additional incentives like uniforms etc were provided to about 1.43 crore girls.

5.2 Strategy for Implementation

The stress is on mobilisation for girls' education, including community, teachers, NGOs, etc. This is a process oriented programme, where community ownership is a must for its success. The block is designated as the unit of planning, implementation and monitoring.

A large set of activities has been provided in the scheme. However, all blocks are not required to take up all activities. The projects should be conceived based on the conditions and demand of that block. All interventions must target both 'in' and 'out' of school girls (age 6-14 years) within the block namely:

- Out of school girls
- Drop out girls
- Overage girls, who have not completed elementary education
- Working girls

- Girls from marginalized social groups.
- Girls with low attendance
- Girls with low levels of achievement
- Girls rescued from work, trafficked children, daughters of sex workers,
- Displaced girls including girls in disturbed areas and urban settings.

The focus of the programme is on retention of girls and improvement in quality of learning. Quality of education to girls is expected to bring improvement in their performance in examination results and their transition from primary to secondary level of schooling or even thereafter. Instilling self confidence among girls through exposure to 'other than textbooks' activities is also proposed under the programme. It will also help them in gaining information from other sources, developing capacities for dealing with different situations in life; help them to participate in decision making processes, access resources that will assure them quality of life. Detailed action plans for the target group of girls and the specific strategies to be adopted in the block need to be worked upon by the concerned district functionaries, with defined and measurable outcomes. The NPEGEL blocks specific projects are to be incorporated in the SSA annual plan of districts, so as to facilitate their regular monitoring.

5.2.1 Implementation Structure

The programme is practically implemented at the block level. However, for effective and regular monitoring district and state level structures have also been involved as a part of machinery.

(i) State Level Structure

The SSA state implementation society is the implementing agency of the NPEGEL at state level. Therefore, funds for this programme are routed through the SSA society of the state. At the state level a 'Gender Coordinator' is appointed who looks after the NPEGEL. In states where Mahila Samakhya (MS) programme is operational, the SSA society will have NPEGEL

implemented through the MS Society. Suitable assistance is taken from institutions like Women's studies centers at Universities/colleges, etc. The resource centers under the Mahila Samakhya programme, at the state level, is the nodal institution to coordinate with individuals, Government and other organisations for the development of training /learning material etc.

(ii) District Level Structure

As envisaged in the programme, at the district level, there is a 'District Gender Co-ordination Committee' which ensures the implementation and monitoring of the gender component of SSA and which meets at least twice a year. The committee comprises of nominees of Mother Teacher Associations (MTAs), Women Motivator Groups (WMGs), Mahila Samakhya Sanghas or Mahila Sanghas, female member of SC/ST organisations, etc. in the districts. The State level head of the Gender unit or his/her nominee is also a member of this committee.

(iii) Block Level Structure

At the block level, the coordinator, with the help of the national, state and district level, coordinates the training of teachers and educational administrators, mobilisation of the community, regular monitoring of girls' enrolment, retention, and achievement, and works with communities to devise strategies.

A core group is selected for looking into the implementation aspect. Selection of core groups is done at two levels:

- (i) Coordinator: 1 (selected from among the teachers)
- (ii) Resource person: 1 (selected from among the teachers)
- (iii) Other members of resource support group at field level.

These community level activists for community mobilisation, local level monitoring, and on site resource support are selected from among youth groups and women students. The core group at the block level is responsible for coordinating with the DGU and existing programmes. At the cluster level

there are coordinators (one for every 5 - 25 villages), who work as honorary women workers and have the assistance of a core group. At the cluster level, the coordinator, with the help of the national, state and district level, coordinates the mobilisation of the community, regular monitoring of girls' enrolment, retention, achievement, and works with the core group and communities to devise strategies to achieve project goals. The village level efforts are co-ordinated by Mahila Samakhya Sanghas, core groups, Mothers Committees or Parent Teacher Associations etc. The district unit, cluster coordinators and village sanghas respectively, decide the prioritisation for activities and incentives to be taken up in the cluster/ village.

5.3 Model Cluster School (MCS)

This programme has also introduced the concept of Model Cluster School (MCS). These schools, as a model girl-child friendly school at cluster level, are opened in all selected districts/blocks where the scheme is operational. A cluster is for about 5-10 villages with each block having about 8-10 clusters. This girl-child friendly infrastructure is used by all the schools in that cluster, by rotation. It has facilities in terms of teaching aids, learning equipment, books, games, etc. Facilities available, like books are also circulated to the schools in the clusters. Facilities are used for learning through computers, film shows, reading material, self defence, life skills, riding bicycles, reading, games etc. Instructors are hired or employed on contract, for imparting vocational and other training. These are aimed at improving the achievement of girls, generating interest in education among them, and raising the importance of girls' education in the community. The facilities are also used for teacher training in the cluster. Clusters have been taken up in a phased manner, and those schools were selected which have shown the best performance for enrolment of girls over the baseline, and which are accessible to around 10 villages / schools, whose girls can use this infrastructure and which has land for additional civil works and play fields. While selecting the location of the model cluster schools, the density of SC/ST population is also taken into consideration. An existing school can be identified for opening of 'MCS for Girls' having the density of

SC/ST/OBC/Minority girls. A 'MCS for Girls' should have the provision of an additional classroom, supply of drinking water, electrification, and toilet for which one time grant up to a maximum of Rs.2.00 lakhs is provided. Infrastructure development will be used for additions to schools, residential facilities, girl's toilets, water supply, electrification and barrier free features etc. in the upgraded cluster schools. A one time grant amounting to Rs.30, 000/- is also provided for teaching learning equipment, library, sports, vocational training, etc.

The other interventions include-

Recurring grant to Model Cluster School, awards to schools/teachers, student evaluation, remedial teaching, bridge courses, alternative schools, learning through open schools, teacher training, child care centers etc.

Some other activities which are permissible within the allocated funds are –

- Learning through computers ,especially at upper primary level,
- Educational Tours/Exposure Visits to enhance their information base,
- Interaction with important people of the area,
- Designing of accelerated learning for older girls and development of residential and non-residential bridge courses for older, drop out girls,
- Engagement of older women as escorts for school going girls where schools are at a distance or passage is not safe, and
- Monitoring regular attendance of girls and their retention in schools.

5.4 Additional Incentives

SSA provides for free textbooks to all girl-children up to a limit of Rs.150/- per child at primary level and Rs. 250/- per child at upper primary level. In addition to the existing norms, a package of incentives is available to the girl-child under this programme. For each school, a Mother's/ Women's Committee, depending upon the real needs decide on additional incentives within the already prescribed financial ceiling under SSA. However, if there are any

savings after providing for free text books to the girls, the balance money out of this amount may be used for providing additional items such as stationery, slates, work books, uniform, providing escorts in difficult areas, etc.

5.4.1 Nutrition and School Health

Through various studies health has been identified as a critical issue for girls' education. Greater malnutrition among girls and lower family priority towards their health affects their formal education as well as their learning capacity. School health, under this programme, involves general health check up with a more intensive follow up of such girls who require special attention. On sanctioning of a 'MCS for Girl Child', a list of such schools mentioning the nearest Government Hospital or Referral Hospital or PHC Centre to the school is proposed to be provided to the concerned state health authorities under intimation to the Department of Elementary Education & Literacy. An integrated approach of providing education and health services was envisaged for this programme. Convergence of 'Mid-day Meal Scheme' with this programme is also envisaged in the plan.

5.5 Community Mobilisation for Enrolment, Retention and Learning

Any programme for girls need to be pushed through community mobilisation. The SSA programme already includes scheme for mobilisation at village / urban slum level. For this purpose, a cluster coordinator along with a core group at cluster level comprising of women workers, volunteers and mothers/ parents etc. assists in bringing girls from the villages, as well as monitoring their achievement, attendance, retention etc. Training of the community / resource groups involving Mother-Teacher Association, Women Management Groups, Sanghas, etc. is also to be taken up under this component. At the cluster level there is a coordinator (one for every 5 - 25 villages), who works as an honorary woman worker. This core group plays an important role in the implementation in terms of planning, mobilisation and implementing the

package of activities. It is this group which actually helps the programme to be accepted in the local context and gets community ownership.

5.6 Outlays, Outputs and Outcomes

The Department of Elementary Education, Ministry of Human Resource Development, Government of India, has been monitoring the implementation of the programme. The detail about the Outlays approved during the last five years and the cumulative outcomes achieved till 15 July 2009 has been obtained from the Department to facilitate analysis of status of implementation of the scheme.

Since the programme is a component of SSA, separate allocation in BE or RE under the Gender Budgeting statements is not available for the programme for analysis. However, when analysed closely with reference to the REs for SSA under Gender Budgeting statements for these years (placed at Appendices II to VI), it can be seen that this scheme, an exclusive GB component of SSA received a share of about 19% and 16% respectively in the initial two years, which dropped to about 10% and 7% respectively in the last two years. Most likely, initially infrastructural developments might have required a large sum.

The data with respect to outlays for the programme is tabulated below-

Table No.5.1
Outlays for NPEGEL

S.No.	Year	<u>Outlay</u> (Rs. Crore)
1.	2005-06	676.69
2.	2006-07	825.50
3.	2007-08	708.44
4.	2008-09	578.18
5.	2009-10	417.70

Source: Department of Education, Ministry of HRD, Govt. of India

As the programme NPEGEL is part of the Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan, the funding pattern is accordingly an arrangement of sharing of expenditure between center and state governments in a specified ratio. It was initially 65:35, which was to be finally brought to the level of 50:50 for both center and state governments at the end of the eleventh plan. The programme is primarily implemented by the state governments. The Union government keeps a watch on the implementation through physical inspections and reports – returns furnished by states.

The data pertaining to output and outcome of the programme may be seen in the document 'Status of physical progress on 'NPEGEL' at Appendix VII. This document shows the cumulative targets of the programme as well as the cumulative achievements (till 2008-09) against certain heads under the programme. For some parameters only absolute numbers have been compiled as no targets can be set for these. The figures reflect the tangible cumulative targets set and achieved by 23 states where the programme is functional, as on 15th July 2009. An attempt is made here to analyse the status of physical progress made under the scheme. The reliance will also be made on the data/analysis available through any other study made to evaluate the programme and the field experience during the village study in Jaisalmer district from Rajasthan.

The document on physical progress is providing information on cumulative targets and cumulative achievements, as on 15th July, 2009. The analysis of the progress under some indicators is described in the succeeding paras.

5.6.1 Coverage

In so far as the identification of districts, blocks and clusters for implementation is concerned, the progress of all states except Uttarakhand appears to be matching with the targets. Uttarakhand has not been able to meet the targets, where 404 clusters were identified as against a target of 414. Here it may be pertinent to mention that findings of a national evaluation

of the programme commissioned by the department of school education (in 2007-08) may be referred to wherein it was found that work on implementation of the programme has started in almost all the 12 states which were part of the evaluation . As per the evaluation report, Chhattisgarh had well integrated the programme with SSA, but Manipur had not initiated the implementation process by then. The position in 2009 appears to have improved. In Bihar, number of model cluster schools were targeted at 3652, but 3638 could come up, showing a shortage by about 0.37 % only. Hence overall progress appears to be satisfactory on the aspect of coverage.

5.6.2 Construction of additional classrooms, toilets, drinking water facility and electrification

About construction of additional classroom, many states are not able to meet the targets. Assam has not been able to build even a single additional classroom as against the target of 98. Achievements of Andhra Pradesh, Gujarat, J & K, Karnataka, Maharashtra, Mizoram, Uttarakhand, Punjab and Tripura have been very good where either full or considerable targets have been met. Other states have not performed really well on this aspect. The achievements for providing facilities of girl's toilet and drinking water appear to be on the same pattern as that of additional classroom. Karnataka and Himachal Pradesh are achieving more then the target and Assam has not just taken off for any infrastructure target. Position is more or less same for the electrification targets also.

5.6.3 ECCE Centers opened and children covered

A revealing fact in this aspect is that many states have no targets for ECCE centers. Bihar, Chhattisgarh, Himachal Pradesh, Madhya Pradesh, Punjab, Rajasthan, Tamilnadu, Tripura, Uttar Pradesh and West Bengal- all fall in this category. Some states like Assam and Manipur have not been able to achieve the set targets. Rests of the states have covered a sizable number of children in ECCE centers. The position can not be considered as very good in this area.

5.6.4 Linkages with open schooling

Not all the states have covered this important aspect. Only few states have covered girls under open school. This is a very important link for girls to enter into mainstream of education. Open school help the dropped out or otherwise left out girls to enter in studies at secondary school level. This observation was also made by the study committee of the earlier evaluation.

5.6.5 Teachers trained on gender sensitisation

Except Bihar, Madhya Pradesh and Tamilnadu, all other states have got the teachers trained in gender issues. Though number varies vastly among different states. As the scheme has a strong gender focus, it is desirable that teachers are sensitive towards gender issues. Seeing the availability of infrastructure in Bihar, it is difficult to understand as to why importance is not being given to gender training. Same is the case with Madhya Pradesh. However, the data shows lack of infrastructural support in case of Tamilnadu. Department has to look into these aspects for ensuring effective delivery.

5.6.6 Girls covered under bridge course and remedial teaching

Remedial teaching has been used by a large number of girls in Andhra Pradesh, Bihar, Himachal Pradesh., Karnataka, Orissa and Rajasthan. Madhya Pradesh and Tamilnadu did not figure in the list of states where girls got the advantage of remedial teaching. Total 2.4 crore girls were covered under remedial teaching. The number represents a fairly good picture about the implementation status. However, it appears that not very many states have provided the facility of bridge courses. Only 4.3 lakh were beneficiary of the bridge courses. Provision of these facilities for girls is a real achievement of the scheme as this attempt will help them in moving ahead on their journey of acquiring education.

5.6.7 Total No. of girls benefiting from the programme

A very large number of girls have received the benefits – this is the indication from the data. In all 2, 44, 06,895 girls got the benefits from the programme. However total number of the girls that need to be covered is not properly documented. The state of Manipur is an exception as not even a single girl has been reported as beneficiary of the scheme. This needs to be further checked as to why so? In other states, number appears to be considerably large. Not much appears to have been done on providing additional incentives in the form of uniforms or other incentives.

5.6.8 Community mobilisation

It is an important aspect of the programme as the community has to be involved in deciding and implementing the programme from the very beginning. For this, training is given to community members. The achievement of Andhra Pradesh, Assam and Punjab are nil whereas other states appear to have done satisfactorily, as the data reflects. The evaluation report of the Department has observed that the programme has the community support at some places but not every where. In most of the states study team members found that the parents appreciate additional incentives, vocational training, cycles and other specific activities. Community leaders and PTA members, especially older men were emphatic in stating that girls need education even beyond the elementary level.

From the above analysis of physical progress, it can be concluded that the programme is getting accepted and results in the form of infrastructure development and number of beneficiaries are somewhat satisfactory. However quality of the delivery part can not be commented upon with the data available. For quality in delivery and other implementation aspects, evaluation report of the study commissioned by the Department has been seen. The results of the evaluation pertain to the period 2007-08 hence may not be fully relevant in the present context. A summary of the evaluation report is described in the succeeding paras.

5.6.9 NPEGEL Evaluation Report Summary

An evaluation of 'National Programme for Education of Girls at Elementary Level' (NPEGEL) was commissioned by the Department of School Education and Literacy, Ministry of Human Resource Development, Government of India in 2007, in 12 States, as listed: *Assam, Meghalaya, Haryana, Maharashtra, Jammu & Kashmir, Punjab, Manipur, Mizoram, Uttarakhand, Chhattisgarh, West Bengal & Tripura.*

The scope of the evaluation included assessing the NPEGEL scheme with reference to its objectives and its implementation strategies adopted in different states. The study was to highlight the good practices and point out the shortcomings. Suggestions were also sought for making the programme work effectively. The study gave its report in Feb 2008.

The evaluation results of the study were, however, not very encouraging about the status of implementation and the fulfillment of objectives. The study teams had assessed that by and large objectives of the scheme are not being met. They found that some confusion prevailed between the girls' education aspects of SSA and the specific provisions of this scheme. Some duplication was found which was causing this confusion. The concerned officials were not able to comprehend the spirit of the scheme. The functionaries were not able to visualize the requirement of the local people and convert it into some programme. Concerned officials in many states were not found having an understanding of gender issues despite the fact that they have undergone some kind of gender trainings organised by the SSA state offices.

The 'out of school' were not being included and hence the intended benefits were not going to them. At some places, the dynamic local leadership did manage to have good work done by having a vision and getting community support. The team was of the view that the scheme was not fully being implemented in spirit of the design. More funds for effective delivery were also recommended. It was suggested that the state Governments should be assisted through regional resource groups/national resource group in

perspective building and in communicating the scheme in its totality and share strategies adopted by different states.

5.7 Observations regarding implementation of the Programme in Jaisalmer District in Rajasthan (Information obtained during Village study visit)

The NPEGEL programme is actually implemented at the block and village level. Therefore, efforts were made to gather information about implementation of the scheme in the blocks/villages in Jaisalmer district. The District scheme co-coordinator, Jaisalmer district had given a briefing about the implementation of the programme and also provided the statistical data/official figures. According to records, 123 model cluster schools have been established under the scheme in three blocks of the District, namely Jaisalmer, Sum and Pokaran, identified as Educationally Backward Blocks. Various activities are organized to attract community support to promote the girl's education in the district, where gender discrimination was quite visible. The district authorities had organized "Mother –Daughter Sammelans" to garner community support, by convincing mothers about the importance of girl education and to ensure their co-operation. Around 40 schools have constructed special rooms for organizing innovative teaching classes for the children of classes 1st and 2nd. Three residential schools (Kasturba gram vidyalayas) under the scheme have also been established in the district with facilities of hostels, free boarding, food, dress and other useful material. All three hostels have computers, televisions, refrigerators, telephones, sewing machines, cycles etc. This intensive approach has helped the State Government in attracting the children and in retaining them in schools in this district. A summary of the enrollment numbers of boys and girls in the 3 blocks under the district for years 2008-09 and 2009-10, for the age group 6-11 years and 11-14 years, obtained from the district programme coordinator is placed at Annex VIII and IX respectively. The statement includes the details with respect to the total enrolment for boys and girls taken together and also separately for boys and girls – for all communities as well as for SC, ST and minority community.

The data about the enrollment of boys and girls and the gap between the two for the years 2008-09 and 2009-10 indicates that the situation about enrolment of girl child has improved, though very marginally, in all the three blocks. The trend of high drop out in 11-14 age group appear to have been partially tackled with the help of this programme. It appears that the scheme has helped in achieving an improved enrolment status of the girl child, in the age group 11-14 years. The number of boys was 2.34 times the number of girls in 2008-09 and this ratio declined to 2.25 in 2009-10. It implies that the enrollment rate for girls has gone up. The data regarding total enrolment (all communities), as extracted from the compiled information, is shown in Table No. 5.2-

Table No. 5.2
Enrolment (11-14 Age Groups)
(Jaisalmer, Sam & Pokaran Blocks)
(All communities)

Year	Boys	Girls	Total	No. of Boys: No. of Girls
2008-09	16301	6978	23279	2.34
2009-10	16654	7418	24072	2.25

Source: District Scheme Coordinator, Jaisalmer

A number of other activities are also organized in these model cluster schools such as Sports training, Yoga, Martial art, upkeep and maintenance of school building, vocational training, study tours for girls, prizes for best school, teacher and girl; development of gender material, providing transport vouchers to girls coming from a distance of more than 1.5 Kms etc. Some innovative teaching practices, called, Lehar programme, have been developed for children of classes I and II. Teachers have been specifically trained for that. Special kits and charts are devised for these innovative methods. With this method, the learning has become interesting and children have been relieved of the burden of heavy school bags.

The visit to two of these blocks also provided opportunity to see the school and hostel buildings. However, due to vacation time, any live activity could not be seen. Interaction with the villagers, especially the women folk and focused discussion with them revealed that actually state is doing a lot of constructive work under the scheme. The detail of the programme was, however not known to them. The awareness about the importance of education for girls has definitely reached the mothers of all age groups. Presently almost all mothers in the district are trying to ensure education for their daughters, at least up to primary or secondary level .A few girls have shown tremendous interest and have gone out to cities like Jaisalmer and Jodhpur to get higher education. Some earlier drop out girls has also shown interest in studies and were provided opportunity through open schools. From the interaction and discussion with the women and young girls of the villages it emerged that in general, women were satisfied with the implementation of scheme/ efforts of government related to education in their villages. It has raised their awareness about the things happening out side their village and in the world. Some of the young girls showed keen interest in the current affairs which gives an indication of their changed mind sets from the stereo type role they were used to play some time back. Mothers had a feeling of pride in intimating about good performance of their daughters, not only in academics but in other co-curricular activities too. They now feel to be a part of the mainstream and are happier about their daughters. The SC households were found to be really taking interest in ensuring that their girls are enrolled in the model cluster schools and get meaningful education. However, at the same time the women folk also complained about the absenteeism or non-availability of teachers for considerably long periods. Some women also expressed their concern about the standard of education.

A very brief interaction with villagers on the implementation issue is definitely not sufficient to make any judgment about success or otherwise of the programme. As the visits and interactions with villagers, especially mothers and daughters, were impromptu; it can be presumed that the feedback of village women folk was honest. With this presumption, it can be inferred that the programme has been able to instill some confidence and raise their self-

esteem. If that be so, the objective of the programme has been achieved to some extent.

One aspect which appears to be an issue to be looked into is the convergence of various schemes / programmes with this programme, as envisaged. This was not found to be in place on ground. Still, the programmes of different sectors are being implemented independent of each other, thereby, not bringing the desired results to the society as well as for the Government. Some concerted efforts on the part of implementing agencies are desired for the same to happen.

This analysis of the programme NPEGEL establishes that the programme is implemented in a manner where it is bringing good results for the girls and for the community as a whole. The objectives of the scheme are really good. However the state, district and local machinery has to be briefed properly about the desired outcomes so that a vision can be developed at the local level for effective delivery. The areas that need attention for an effective delivery are still very many. The implementing machinery has to work on all such areas. Proper training to the personnel involved in implementation is to be ensured. More funds are needed for extensive implementation in all the identified blocks and districts. Physical progress should also match with the real objectives of the scheme. It should not become another scheme thrust upon the local Government by the Union Government.