

The Role of Government Schemes in Promoting Female Literacy

A Case Study of Saran District in Bihar

Shruti Goswami*

Abstract: - Among all the indicators of development, education is the most important for the development of any nation. Thus, it has become one of the major concerns for the Indian Government nowadays. Bihar still remains at the bottom of the list in terms of literacy rate. Out of the 38 districts of Bihar, Saran is the 16th district in terms of female literacy. It is one of the most backward district of Bihar and currently receiving funds from the Backward Regions Grant Fund Programme.

Key words:-Female Literacy, Government's role, National development.

Introduction: -Literacy is considered as a right because of the set of benefits it provides to individuals, families, communities and nations. According to Stromquist (2005), 'literacy skills are fundamental to informed decision-making, personal empowerment, active participation in local and global social community'. Literacy can improve the creativity and critical thinking of an individual leading to improved self esteem and empowerment. Improved level of literacy opens doors of new and better job opportunities leading to increased purchasing power and fast economic growth. It is instrumental in maintaining good health and living longer, controlling reproductive behaviour, raising healthy children and educating them.

Although, the constitution of India grants equal rights to everyone irrespective of gender, the current scenario in the country shows disparity between the male and female in terms of literacy. Government of India is working hard to abridge this gap. Educated women are considered capable of bringing socio-economic changes in the society. According to Marstaller, "Educate a man and he will leave home to find work. Educate a woman and she will have fewer children, introduce better health practices to her family and village, run her household more efficiently, and most important, advocate for the education of her children".

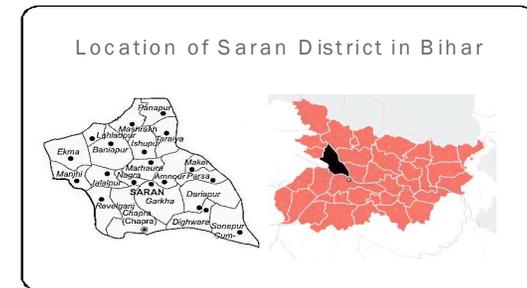
*Research Scholar (UGC NET), Patna University, Patna.

Study Area: -

Table: - 1.1 Geographical Location of Saran District.

Latitudinal Extent	Longitudinal Extent	Surrounding Districts				Total Area (sq.km.)	Population
		North	South	East	West		
25° 36' to 26° 13'	84° 24' to 85° 15'	Gopalganj	UP, Bhojpur, Patna	Muzaffarpur, Vaishali	Siwan, U.P.	2641	3951862

Source: - DCHB Saran, 2011.



Aims and Objectives of the Research:-The aim of this research paper is to analyse the achievements of government programmes in promoting female literacy in Saran district.

Hypothesis: -Government has played an important role in eliminating disparities in the levels of literacy among females of Saran district.

GOVERNMENT EDUCATION SCHEMES -Since independence, there has been number of plans developed to promote literacy. One of these plans was NLM (National Literacy Mission) which was launched in 1988. The objective of this plan was to provide functional literacy to illiterates of the age group of 15-35. After 10th five years plan, NLM made 127.45 million persons literate of 597 districts across the country. The Government of India is laying much emphasis on sustainable development and literacy is the stepping stone for it. Thus, the government is highly focused to achieve high literacy rate.

Several schemes for promotion and expansion of female literacy in Bihar are discussed below:-

SARVA SHIKSHA ABHIYAN (SSA)-Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan is a flagship programme of the Government of India, launched in the year 2001 for achievement of universalization of elementary education by 2010. It aims to attain eight years of schooling among all children of 6-14 years age group. It is an effort to universalise elementary education

by community-ownership of the school system. It is a response to the demand for quality basic education all over the country. It also involves the Panchayati Raj Institutions, School Management Committees, Village and Urban Slum level Education Committees, Parents' Teachers' Associations, Tribal Autonomous Councils and other grass root level structures in the management of elementary schools. It also aims to bridge social, regional and gender gaps in elementary education.

OBJECTIVES OF SARVA SHIKSHA ABHIYAN:-

1. All children of 6-14 years age will be taken back to schools by 2003.
2. By the year 2007, the children of whole country will be provided primary education of five years.
3. By the year 2010, the children of the whole country will be provided elementary education of eight years.
4. Stop gender and social indifference at the elementary stage.
5. Full coverage of educational institutions under SSA.
6. Emphasis quality education at elementary level.
7. Proper remedies will be given to link education to life.

EDUCATIONAL FACILITIES UNDER SARVA SHIKSHA ABHIYAN: -

1. Teacher: - One teacher will be provided for 40 students in primary and upper primary schools. In every primary school, at least two teachers will be provided and for upper primary class, one teacher will be appointed for every class.
2. School Facility: - the school will be within the area of 1 km of children's easy reach. For two primary schools, one middle school can be established.
3. Class-room: - As far as possible, one room should be made for every class but at least two airy and large sized rooms along with veranda should be built. There is provision of one room for the school's head.
4. Free Text Books: - Free books will be provided to all students in primary and middle schools. The cost should not exceed Rs 150/- per child.
5. Maintenance of School Building: - Every school will be given grant of Rs. 5000 every year for the maintenance of school building.
6. Teaching Learning Equipment: - Every primary and middle schools are provided Rs. 10,000 and Rs. 50,000 for purchasing and management of teaching learning equipment. The responsibility of expenditure will be of school management/development committees.

7. School Grant: - Every school will be given Rs. 20,000 annually for buying furniture.
8. Teacher Grant: - Every teacher of primary and upper primary school will be given Rs. 500 for teaching learning material so that they may prepare material according to requirement.
9. Teacher Training: - Every in-service teacher will be given training of 20 days annually. Those teachers who are trained, and newly appointed, will be given training of 30 days whereas non-trained teachers will be given training of 60 days. Training will be given by SCERT/DIET.
10. Disabled Children: - The economic help of Rs. 1200 per child will be given to disabled children to bring them in the main stream of education.
11. Research, Evaluation and Supervision: - To bring about qualitative improvement at the elementary level, research, evaluation and supervision has been made effective. Monitoring of grants is done periodically to make sure whether they are being used for the desired purpose or not.
12. Education for Different Groups: - Special facilities such as separate schools, scholarships are given to the students of SC/ST & girl students.
13. Computer Education: - Realising the importance of technical education, special provisions have been made for computer education for children of upper primary schools. Free computers are provided to schools under ICT project.
14. Education for Out of School Children: - Special schools, Alternative and Innovative Education (A&IE) Programmes are being started under SSA for out of school children.

Thus, SSA makes every effort so that the goal of universalisation of elementary education may be achieved.

MID-DAY MEAL SCHEME (MDM)-Mid Day Meal Scheme is designed with twin objectives to increase and retain school enrolment on one hand and support children's nutritional needs on the other by providing one time free cooked meals to children in schools. Experimented successfully in erstwhile Madras in 1923, this scheme was subsequently launched as the National Programme for Nutrition Support to Primary Education (NP-NSPE). This is centrally sponsored scheme covering all 526 districts of India including Bihar.

RASHTRIYA MADHYAMIK SIKSHA ABHIYAN-This is a flagship scheme aimed at universalisation of secondary education by the year 2020. The underlying focus is on making quality education available, accessible and affordable for all persons in the age group 14-18 with following specific objectives: -

1. Ensuring physical facilities, staffs and supplies in all secondary schools as per the prescribed standard.
2. Improving access to secondary schools through institutional development in proximity i.e. creation of secondary schools within the radius of 5 kilometres and higher secondary schools within the radius of 7-10 kilometres, efficient and safe transport arrangements, residential facilities etc.
3. Eliminating gender, socio-economic, cultural and any other form of barrier to access quality secondary education.
4. Improving quality of secondary education resulting in enhanced intellectual, social and cultural learning.

MAHILA SAMAKHYA-Mahila Samakhya scheme is aimed to address gender imbalances in educational access and achievements. This scheme focuses on enabling women especially those from socially and economically disadvantaged and marginalized groups to address and deal with the problems of isolation, lack of self confidence, oppressive social customs as well as absence of economic independence.

NATIONAL PROGRAMME FOR EDUCATION OF GIRLS AT ELEMENTARY LEVEL-The NPEGEL is additional component within Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan targeted towards elementary education of girls from the disadvantaged sections of society. The scheme is being implemented in identified Educational Backward Blocks (EBB), where the level of rural female literacy is less than the national average and the gender gap is above national average, and also in blocks of those districts that have at least 5% of SC/STs in total population and female literacy within the SC/ST groups is less than 10% in the year 1991.

KASTURBA GANDHI BALIKA VIDAYALAY (KGBV)-Kasturba Gandhi Balika Vidyalay (KGBV), scheme provides residential schools at elementary level for female students, predominately from SC, ST, Other Backward Class (OBC) and minority communities. 750 residential schools are being created in relatively backward areas in terms of literacy and education. The backward blocks are identified as those blocks where rural female literacy is below national average and gender gap in literacy is above national average. In addition, these schools are also to be

considered in areas having concentration of tribal population with low female literacy rate.

JAN SHIKSHAN SANSTHAN (JSS)-JSS or the Institute of People's Education is a multifaceted adult education programme created for enhancement of vocational skills and overall quality of life. Specifically, the objective of the scheme is to promote educational, vocational and occupational development among disadvantaged sections within both urban and rural areas. JAA particularly focuses on the neo-literates, semi-literate, SC/STs, women, slum dwellers and migrants.

SCHEMES OF BIHAR GOVERNMENT

MUKHYAMANTRI BALIKA CYCLE YOJANA-Launched in the year 2006, this scheme aims to reduce dropout rates among female students usually propelled by difficult access to schools owing to long distances and conveyance problems. The scheme provides for incentive in the form of cash grants of Rs. 3000 per female student of class IX, to continue schooling. The cash incentive is meant to purchase bicycles so that female students are able to address communication based barriers to schooling and dropout rate among them is reduced.

Table: 1.2 Targets and Achievements under Mukhyamantri Balika Cycle Yojana

Financial Year	Target (Rs.)	Achievement (%)
2007-08	32,60,00,000	95.7
2008-09	54,43,40,000	95.3
2009-10	87,33,40,000	94.8
2010-11	1,07,00,74,000	99.5
2011-12	1,62,07,27,500	92.1

Source: -ANSISS Report, 2013.

BIHAR SHATABDI MUKHYAMANTRI BALIKA POSHAK YOJANA-Introduced during 2011-12, this scheme targets female students of class IX, X, XI AND XII in Government and Government aided schools. The scheme provides cash grant of Rs. 1000 per candidate to purchase school uniform.

Table:-1.3 Targets and Achievements under Bihar Shatabdi Mukhyamantri Balika Poshak Yojana

Financial Year	Target (Rs.)	Achievement (%)
2011-12	1,98,00,00,000	70.8

Source: - ANSISS Report, 2013.

The above table shows that 70.8 percent of the total girl students were eligible for this Poshak Yojana. Those who don't have 75 percent attendance were not eligible for this grant.

MUKHYAMANTRI BALIKA PROTSAHAN YOJANA-This scheme was introduced during 2009-10 with an objective to encourage female students to continue education after standard X. All female students who have matriculated through the Bihar School Examination Board with first division are given scholarship of Rs. 10,000 per student.
Table: - 1.4 Targets and Achievements under Mukhyamantri Balika Protsahan Yojana

Financial Year	Target (Rs.)	Achievement (%)
2009-10	26,65,00,000	100
2010-11	52,05,10,000	100
2011-12	43,60,90,000	97.3

Source: - ANSISS Report, 2013.

ELIGIBILITY TO AVAIL INCENTIVES UNDER THE SCHEMES-Only those candidates within the targeted group, who have recorded of at least 75% attendance in schools during April-September, are eligible to avail the incentives under the listed schemes. This criterion has helped in reducing the gender gap between levels of enrolment and attendance on one hand while reducing the dropout rates on the other.
Table: - 1.5 No. of Enrolled and Eligible Female Students across Sample Schools

District	No. of Schools	Enrolled Girls	Eligible Girls
Saran	285	51313 (50.72%)	40683 (79.28%)

Source: -ANSISS Report, 2013.

About 79.28% of total enrolled girls were eligible to avail the incentives under the listed schemes in Saran district.

ACHIEVEMENT OF GOVERNMENT SCHEMES IN SARAN DISTRICT: -

Table: - 1.6 Performance Indicators of Elementary Education in Saran District.

Performance Indicators (%)	2003-04	2016-17
Single Classroom Schools	13.9	4.1
Single Teacher Schools	11.9	7.8
Schools with Girl's Toilet	1.9	73.7
Schools with Drinking Water	82.7	87.9
Schools with Enrolment<=50	4.4	2.3
Pupil Teacher Ratio	78	46
Student Classroom Ratio	88	49
Girls Enrolment	47.4	50.5
Female Teachers	14.9	42.4
GER	75.6	111.76
Total Classrooms	3324	5786

Source: -U-DISE.

From the above table, we can easily analyse the improvement made at the elementary level in Saran district. The core aim of SSA is to attain universalisation of elementary education in the country. So far it has brought many positive changes in the elementary education. Many new schools have been opened to achieve the goal of universal access and retention. Gender and social category gaps in education have been narrowed. In the period of more than 10 years, the percentage of single classroom schools has declined by 9.8%, while that of single teacher schools decreased by 4.1%. The percentage of schools with girl's toilet and drinking water facility has increased to 73.7 percent and 87.9 percent respectively. Girl's enrolment has increased to 50.5 percent which indicates gender equality in education. Students are provided free textbooks and uniforms and mid day meal to improve retention and quality education.

SECONDARY EDUCATION:-Falling in the line of the trends witnessed in many developed countries, India has to push its vision forward towards Universalisation of Secondary Education. The vision statement is as follows: -

- To make quality education available, accessible and affordable to all young children in the age group of 14-16 years.
- The vision statement points towards three A's i.e., Availability, Accessibility and Affordability of secondary education to the Target group and the overarching objective of providing quality.

Based on these guidelines, the Education Department of Bihar defined the following Road Map of reforms under XII Five Year Plan: -

Table: - 1.7 Road Map of Reforms for XII Five Year Plan

Sl.No.	Guiding Principle	Activity
1.	Curriculum Reform	Revision state syllabi and text books at second and higher secondary stage in accordance with NCF 2005/BCF.
2.	Improving classroom process	Pedagogic slight for enhancing participation in Learning process and providing success Experience for all learners
3.	Assessment and Examination	In consonance with the emerging perspectives on continuous comprehensive evaluation.
4.	Teacher's Training	Continuous in-service professional development of secondary stage teachers.
5.	Research and Monitoring for quality	Skill based achievement test, subject specific achievement test and hard spot identification.
6.	E- Governance in Schools	Concrete measurable and observable measures to enhance Governance. 1. Internet facility 2. E-correspondence 3. E-establishment 4. E- students attendance monitoring 5. E-teacher attendance monitoring 6. E-online teachers' support 7. E-counselling
7.	Quality and important indicators	Monitoring progress of essential educational indicators and quality interventions.
8.	Strengthening existing Schools as per RMSA Norms	1. Classroom pupil ratio to 1:40. 2. Secondary/H.Sec. Science, Computer, Math and Language Lab. 3. H.M, office and staff rooms 4. Separate toilets & Drinking water facilities 5. Girls Activity, P.E.T., craft rooms.
9.	School provision nearer to the habitations	Secondary school at 5 km distance to all habitations.
10.	GER=100%, all Secondary school age Children in schools	SEMIS reflects the enrolment achievement of 100%.
11.	Repair & up keep of Secondary classrooms	So far only 500 schools are covered under min repair. The remaining classrooms to be covered within five years.
12.	Learning Disability Redresses	1. Identification 2. Student specific activity cards 3. Redress and special care centre.
13.	Habitat Learning	1. Awareness about Environment and Biodiversity 2. Global warming and prevention measures 3. Protects flora and fauna
14.	Heritage Craft	1. Local relevant craft 2. Craft mela 3. Fine art and music
15.	SMART	e-Learning content development and SMART classrooms for secondary classes.
16.	YOGA & Meditation Well being of an Individual, sound body and mental health.	YOGA, PT Drill(weekly), Moral classes, Safety Health activities, Adolescence life skill training

State: -

- Recruitment of adequate number of teachers.
- Capacity building of teachers.
- Provision of library facilities.
- Rejuvenated vocational education.
- Cash prize for top rank students in class X&XII/Bihar Gaurav Scholarship.
- Inclusive education for differently abled students at secondary stage.
- Implementation of Scouts and Guides schemes.
- Operation of eco-clubs, Junior Red Cross Society.
- Rural student Talent Search Scheme
- Effective functioning of PTA to ensure cent percent of enrolment while preventing dropouts.

Initiatives of RMSA, Bihar:-

- Instituting Model Schools & Girls Hostels.
- Upgrading Middle Schools into High Schools.
- Creation of additional posts of graduate and post graduate teachers.
- Creation of posts of non-teaching staff and lab assistants.
- Providing school grants.
- Minor repair grants.
- Capacity building measures for teachers.
- Content enrichment programmes.
- Promotion of sports and games.
- Promotion of cultural activities.
- Life skill programmes.
- Leadership Training programmes.
- Excursion visits.

Table: - 1.8 Achievements of Rashtriya Madhyamik Shiksha Abhiyan in Saran District

Performance Indicators	Saran	Bihar
Number of Sec. Schools	216	6621
Schools with Building	211 (97.68%)	5484 (97.52%)
Schools with HM Room	211 (97.68%)	5424 (96.49%)
Schools with Library	32 (36.36%)	2329 (39.68%)
Computer Laboratory	24 (27.27%)	2242 (38.2%)
Toilets	598	19383
Girls Com. Room	26 (29.55%)	1560 (26.58%)
Gross Enrolment Ratio	55.57	49.45
Pupil Teacher Ratio	92.72	85.51
Student Classroom Ratio	119.96	119.79
Gender Parity Index	1.01	1.02

Source: - Bihar Madhyamik Shiksha Parishad Report, 2014.

The total number of secondary schools in Saran district is 216, of which only 97.68% schools have their own buildings and HMs' rooms. Only 36.36% of schools have library facilities and only 24 schools have computer labs. GER is also on low side. It has increased from 37.48 percent in 2009-10 to 55.57 percent in 2013-14. Low GER indicates towards the social, cultural and religious constraints and poor learning environment.

Pupil Teacher Ratio has also shown considerable increase, from 77.56 percent 2009-10 to 92.72 percent in 2013-14. The Right of Children to Free and Compulsory Education (RTE) Act, 2009 states that the PTR at primary level should be 30:1 and at the upper primary level it should be 35:1. The Rashtriya Madhyamik Shiksha Abhiyan (RMSA) stipulates that the PTR at secondary level should be 30:1. So, increase in PTR indicates that more teachers should be recruited.

Student Classroom Ratio (SCR) at secondary and higher secondary level indicates that as 55 and 53 students sit in one classroom. The SCR in Saran district has increased from 117.77 in 2009-10 to 119.96 in 2013-14. The high SCR have adverse impact on teaching-learning process and need immediate attention of the planners.

The other important indicator which has got direct relevance with universal secondary education is transition rate. The total transition rate is 95.34 percent while it is only 90.85 percent among the girls. Among the SC&ST girls it is 98.02 percent and 80.47 percent respectively. Even though enrolling all children is a necessary condition but the sufficient condition is that whoever enters into the education system must continue and transit from one level to the next level of education. The main reason behind low transition rate and GER is that Secondary level is not receiving enough number of elementary graduates. This shows low efficiency of primary education in the district. Thus, unless the efficiency of primary education is improved significantly, the goal of universal primary education is likely to be achieved in the near future. Unless and until this happen, we may not move towards achieving the goal of Universalisation of Secondary Education.

Conclusion: -Ultimately we come to the conclusion that government has made many efforts to achieve the goal of universalisation of education. The programmes like SSA and RMSA have shown positive impact on girl's education in Saran district. The Girl's Education component has now been supported through two programmes under

SSA namely National Programme for Education of Girls at Elementary Level (NPEGEL) and Kasturbha Gandhi Balika Vidyalaya (KGBV) and also through Mahila Samakhya. Many new schools have been opened to achieve the goal of universal access and retention. Gender and social category gaps in education have been narrowed. In the period of more than 10 years, the percentage of single classroom schools has declined by 9.8%, while that of single teacher schools decreased by 4.1%. The percentage of schools with girl's toilet and drinking water facility has increased to 73.7 percent and 87.9 percent respectively. Girl's enrolment has increased to 50.5 percent which indicates gender equality in education. Students are provided free textbooks and uniforms and mid day meal to improve retention and quality education. But still there are miles to achieve and there is a need to put more emphasis on improving quality of education along with the quantity of students.

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