

# **An Analytical Study of Education of Muslim Women and Girls in India**

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## Preface

The present study was commissioned by the Ministry of Women and Child Development, Department of Women and Child Development (DWCD), as a step towards the preparation of a National Plan of Action for Advancement of Muslim Women's Education in India for enhancing their participation in elementary and secondary education and in higher education especially in professional and technical education. Specifically, the Study has analysed the present literacy and educational status of Muslim Girls and Women in India, the social, cultural and educational factors and forces hindering their educational participation against the backdrop of existing policies, programmes and schemes to promote education of girls and women in general and those belonging to educationally backward minorities and other socially and economically disadvantaged sections of our society. The Study aimed at exploring future directions and strategies for integrating and galvanizing women of all walks of life for playing their role in building and sustaining the 21<sup>st</sup> Century Knowledge based Society, and more importantly, building an equitable social order and a society that will women not only formal equality but also a life of dignity.

The Study has attempted to build an extensive data and information base on education of Muslim women and girls to facilitate the work of policy makers, planners and researchers and for generating better understanding of their present situation and specific needs, if any. The study has collated, analysed and interpreted existing data on all relevant indicators available from primary and secondary sources, official documents, reports and earlier studies on education of Muslim girls and women. Recording of case studies of some successful experiments and innovations carried out in this area have helped increase our understanding of issues, both general and specific.

The Study does confirm the overall educational backwardness of Muslims, more so of Muslim women and girls as noted by some previous large sample studies and surveys. Equally important is the finding that as usual national aggregate picture hides more than what it reveals. India really lives at many levels and what determines the access and success of female education is the overall social and economic development of a region and the rural urban divide in every region, within all communities, all social groups and among women themselves. Minority-majority status does not really determine equitable access to education. Analysis of regional development/underdevelopment is a crucial caveat for understanding continued inequalities of gender, caste and class. Poverty and patriarchy pin women down more so. The polity is predominantly patriarchal and not truly democratic and desists all attempts for sharing space and power. No religion grants full equality to women and it is the male clergy that lays down prescriptions and proscriptions, the Dos and the Don'ts for women of every group. Lives of women continue to be limited by the Personal laws that govern the private space of Indian family and actual and expected roles and norms for women in the under-life structures. Women are steadily creeping up the crevices to participate in 'overlife' structures of the economy, the polity and decision making. Ironically, they have been accommodated at the grass roots and are making a space for themselves despite male domination and resistance. Middle class urban girls have shot into space to say the least. However, bulk of women remain poor, unlettered, pregnant and powerless - *regardless of their religious affiliations.*

The Study confirms the unequal status of all women and takes note of the State-Civil society efforts to give *defacto* equality and dignity to women and dispels certain myths and prejudices through analysis of hard data and interaction with a few strategic individuals and organizations working for the advancement of education of Muslim females. The Study has noted the extensive policy measures (the intentions!) for women and minorities, the institutional structures and dedicated national programmes accompanied by budgetary allocations and official fiats. Time is perhaps ripe for the Civil Society, the Community leaders and women themselves to make use of the opportunities being offered. In the case of Muslims particularly, the State is going flat out to enhance access (the Supply side) but the Demand lever is low and needs considerable effort for elevation.

Considerable effort was made to access and analyse data on social and educational status of Muslim women and girls from the Census of India 2001. Annual Reports of MHRD and other concerned ministries, NSSO, NFHS and some prominent earlier studies, and Action Projects on the ground and most importantly, *the Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan*, that can provide the foundation for Equality in Education. At present, there is no disaggregated data available on educational participation of Muslim girls at any level. The publication and release of the Seventh All India Educational Survey, NCERT is awaited as data on Muslim minority students and institutions have been generated.

A comprehensive Bibliography was prepared and all available literature, researches and reports were studied for understanding the problems and issues concerning education of women and girls in India in general and Muslim women and girls in particular.

We express our gratitude to the Ministry of Women and Child Development (MWCD) for assigning this very important task to us. We do hope the Report will generate better understanding of the issues and lead to further action. Our special thanks to Ms. Deepa Jain Singh, Secretary to MWCD and Shri R. L. Meena for their unqualified support. We are grateful to Shri Anil Bordia, Doosra Dashak, Dr. Sehba Hasan, Beti Foundation, Shri Ramesh Shekhar Reddy, Mahita Foundation, Hyderabad and Shri Sudhir Bhatnagar of SARD (Society for All Round Development) for allowing free and frank interaction with their colleagues including frontline workers. The field visits were enriching and have deepened our understanding of the problem and the workable strategies for promoting education of Muslim girls in a holistic a holistic framework. The commitment and professional expertise of the core Staff and field functionaries of these organizations were of a very high order and the system owes a lot to them and can learn from them as well.

The study was carried out in a period of six months with a limited budget. We shall feel rewarded if this exercise can inform further action and reflection.

It is my privilege to thank my colleagues Dr. Kusum K. Premi who spent endless hours editing and refining the report. Thanks are due to Dr. Anjali Nayar and Ms. Shashi Raheja and Shri N.C. Dash for ably assisting in the completion of various tasks associated with the project.

The Study Report is offered as a humble effort to profile female education among Muslims and to offer some relevant information and suggestions for policy makers, planners, researchers and activists.

**New Delhi, October 1, 2007**

**Usha Nayar**

# Chapter I

## Introduction to the Study

### Background and Rationale

India now has half a century's experience in dealing with sharp inequalities and disparities rooted in several millennia of its evolution, yet we still see sharp inequalities of caste, creed, tribe and rural urban divide. ***Gender cuts across all these layers making women and girls of the disadvantaged groups the most deprived members of our society.*** Gender disparities in educational and all other social and demographic indicators reflect the unequal position of girls and women in a highly sexist, gender discriminatory social order. Any discussion on the present situation of minority women would be incomplete without looking at the situation of women in general and specifically among the minorities and the disadvantaged sections of population.

The Women's question has received a lot of attention as reflected in the national policies, plans, programmes and schemes resulting in advancement of women in all fields. Besides, special committees and commissions on women have been set up from time to time resulting in policy changes and setting up of institutional structures for implementing programmes and schemes. The Constitution of India not only grants equality to women but empowers the State to take special measures for protecting and advancing their interests in all walks of life and making necessary legal provisions to this effect. The State has not only taken protective discrimination/ affirmative action for removing the cumulative disadvantage of women but also has played a very pro-active role in organizing women for action. Further, India is a signatory to all principal international covenants and conventions such as the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (1948) and the CEDAW (1979); the UN Declaration of the Rights of the Child (1959) and the Convention on the Rights of the Child (1989). There are a vast array of legal and welfare measures aimed at the poor, the backward, the disadvantaged, to include minorities, SC, ST, OBC, BPL ` families, among others.

Women in India have made significant strides during the six decades since independence. entering every field of education, and taking on the challenge of various professions. However, masses of women still remain restricted by the vicious circles of family expectations, gender-role discrimination, social stereotypes and stigma. Women from different socio-economic strata have a great deal of disparity in their life-situations. There are also significant differences in women's specific status across regions, caste and class, communities and religions. Status of women is a composite of their achievements according to various indices – economic, educational, social and political.

***We need to identify factors that account for differential impact of common constitutional and legal provisions, common policies, programmes and schemes on women from different communities especially the minorities and the disadvantaged sections of our population..***

Underdevelopment of rural areas and certain regions are perhaps the principal factors for educational and social lag of these populations in general and of women and girls in particular. Girls and women belonging to socially and economically disadvantaged sections to include SC/ST/OBC and certain minorities are way behind their urban elite middle class counterparts. There are still wide inter and intra regional disparities in development per se. There are islands of affluence (Punjab, Haryana, Delhi) in the Indo Gangetic plains, which also account for bulk of the poor and the illiterate of the

country (Uttar Pradesh, Bihar, Rajasthan, Madhya Pradesh, Chattisgarh, West Bengal). These islands of affluence also dot the western coastal areas, central India and the southern peninsula where industry is concentrated and new services are growing in the IT and other sectors. Bulk of the higher, technical and professional educational institutions are located in the south and the west, with Maharashtra, Karnataka, Andhra Pradesh and Tamil Nadu accounting for the majority of these institutions. This uneven distribution of resources and opportunities between different regions gets reflected in large inter and intra group disparities of gender, caste, ethnicity and religion between and among regions.

The Constitution of India grants Muslims and other Minorities equality of status and opportunities with other citizens to accelerate the process of educational and socio-economic justice. The Constitution of India grants the rights to Equality and Right to Freedom of Religion and Protection of Interest of Minorities in regard to educational rights. For six decades, the nation has worked and moved towards building and sustaining a secular democracy and advancing the interests of the historically disadvantaged sections to include women, the Scheduled castes (SC), the Scheduled Tribes (ST) and the minorities. Concerted efforts have been made towards equality and removal of disparities. Major policy and programmatic inputs are being made to ameliorate the overall situation of the socially and economically disadvantaged sections of our society with a string focus on women and girls in the last two decades with special focus on education and empowerment.

Muslims constitute India's largest minority as well as the second largest Muslim population in the world after Indonesia. Educationally, Muslims constitute one of the most backward communities in the country causing concern. ***Muslim girls and women lag behind their male counterparts and women of all other communities.*** The Nation is committed to educational advancement and empowerment of all Indian women in pursuance of the Constitutional commitment of equality and life with dignity as reflected in our National Policy of Education 1986 and its Revised Programme of Action 1992. Further, we stand committed to ***international covenants like the Declaration of Human Rights, CEDAW, Rights of the Child, ICPD, Millennium Development Goals (MDG) among others.***

Muslims and Neo Buddhists have been identified as educationally backward at the national level by the High Power Panel on minorities, SC/ST and other weaker sections, appointed by the Ministry of Home Affairs headed by Dr. Gopal Singh after the 1981 Census. Subsequently, the Government extended to neo Buddhists all the benefits available to Scheduled Castes. The Committee recommended need for special efforts to bring the educationally backward minorities on par with the rest of the society and to make them participate fully in the national development activities. In May 1983, former Prime Minister Indira Gandhi issued a 15-Point Directive on welfare of minorities. The National Policy on Education, 1986 and its Programme of Action (Revised in 1992) Programme of Action, 1992, first took note of the existing programmes for the Muslim Minorities and suggested a large number of short term, medium term and long-term measures to promote education of minorities and led to the formulation of major programmes like the Area Intensive Educational Development and Modernization of Madrasas as Central Government Schemes of the MHRD. However, ***the implementation of this 15 point programme was far from satisfactory*** and the commitments contained in National Policy Resolutions on education have not brought the desired result. Often the recommendations and suggestions contained in these documents remain on paper only.

A Prime Minister's high Level Committee (Sachar Committee) was appointed in 2005 to look into the socio economic condition of Muslims. Need was felt to review and recast the 15-point programme for Minorities, in order to sharply focus action on issues intimately linked to the social,

educational and economic uplift of the minorities. While points relating to prevention of communal riots and provision of relief to riot victims continue to have an important place in the revised programme, there are additional points more closely linked with the development of backward minorities, relating specifically to employment, education and improved living conditions. The ***New 15-point programme*** was felt to be necessary because of the gaps in the previous programme with regard to amelioration of socio-economic conditions and enhancement of socio-economic status of the minority groups. With a view to removing this lacuna and having a more comprehensive programme for minorities, ***the Prime Minister's new 15-point Programme for Welfare of Minorities was formulated, and approved by the Cabinet on 22 June 2006.***

The 15-point Programme further provides that care shall be taken to ensure that wherever applicable, there is separate earmarking of the physical and financial targets for the minority communities under each programme/scheme, preferably in the ratio of the all-India population of each minority community. Thereafter, these targets shall be further split State-wise for each minority community in the ratio of the population of the minority community in that State. This will ensure that the benefits necessarily reach the target group in the proportion of the population of the group in each State. Budgetary provisions have been made during 2007-08 for specific inputs.

## Education of Muslim Girls and Women

Muslim Girls and women are lagging behind their male counterparts and as compared to other religious minorities except those listed under “ Others’ in the Census 2001. However, education of Muslim girls and women cannot be seen in isolation from the overall situation of female lag in education in India, the rural urban, regional and inter group disparities and the poverty of the households. This needs examination of the present educational status of Muslim women and girls in a comparative framework, across communities, across regions in the wake of The First Religion Report, 2001.

It may also be stated that educational or economic backwardness is not confined to one community. It cuts across religion, regional and caste boundaries. Our society is highly stratified and we find extreme disparities in education and economic development among all the sections of our society. Muslims have to be seen as a part of our social structure rather than studying them in isolation. Also, Muslims cannot be viewed merely from the point of view of a religious entity but also as a society consisting of several socio-economic groups and very wide dispersal across the states and regions.

## Non-adequate Data Base

Till recently, no official statistics on socio economic indicators were put out religion wise.

Needless to say that in deference to strong public pressure, the 2001 Census has for the first time made available religion wise data on a number of indicators critical for understanding the social, economic, demographic, occupational and educational status of minorities in comparison to the majority population and even comparisons among minorities. *For the first time we have hard data on which to base policy interventions for educationally backward minorities, the largest chunk being the Muslims.* The data has come in a good four to five years after the Census operations of 2001, late, but somewhat timely for the Eleventh Five Year Plan. *Table C 8* provides literacy and educational attainments of the population State and District wise, by gender and by rural urban areas by single year /age groups. *Table C 9* gives literacy and educational attainments of the population by religion, by gender and for rural urban areas for all 35 States and Union Territories. Data on District / block wise literacy and educational levels by religion are not available. This still leaves us with a huge data gap, as any meaningful policy/ planning interventions would require the actual numbers to be addressed for programmatic interventions at the District/ Block/Village level.

Earlier, educational and social situation of Muslims could be gauged only on the basis of small studies and sample surveys, the largest being the National Family Health Surveys (I & II), National Sample Surveys and very large sample studies by Aizazuddin Ahmed and Zoya Hasan & Ritu Menon and the works of Abusaleh Shariff. The findings of these studies show that Muslims are comparatively educationally backward minority community as compared to other minority communities.

The absence of gender disaggregated data by religion, particularly in respect of literacy rate, enrolment rates at different stages of education, dropout rates etc., at national, states, districts levels was a formidable bottleneck in the planning and development of strategies and programmes for education of Muslim girls. Thus, *Census 2001 has filled in a major data gap by providing literacy and other population indicators by religion up to the village level.* This data has confirmed the earlier studies and sample surveys that had brought out the educational backwardness of Muslim population, who had been granted the national minority status along with the Neo Buddhists. Regional disparities are a paramount explanatory variable. Gender disparities are prominent and rural urban disparities are the sharpest, even among women themselves.

As yet, there is no availability of official statistics on education, health or for social sectors/ programmes by religion. As the ball has been set rolling by the First Religion Report, Census 2001, it is time to systematize information base on various aspects of educational and social status of Muslim women for drawing up programmes and schemes for the advancement and empowerment of Muslim Women in India.

The Census, 2001 corroborates the findings of the earlier sample studies. At the all India level except the Muslims, all other religious groups have higher literacy rates than the Hindus who are a majority group. Jains have the highest literacy rate of 94.1%, followed by Christians (80.3%); Buddhists (72.7%); Sikhs (69.4%); Hindus (65.1%) and Muslims at 59.1%. The SC/ST who constitute 24.4% of the country's population have literacy rate of 52.2%. ***Rural urban literacy differentials are marked for all groups, the gap is the widest amongst Hindus and lowest among the Muslims. Male female disparities in literacy rates is 22 percentage points for India as a whole; it is 23 percentage points amongst Hindus; 17.5 percentage points amongst Muslims and 24.7 percentage points amongst the SC/ST. Regional Variations are tremendous making development a crucial variable.***

The most common factor for high incidence of non-enrolment, drop outs and low achievement among Muslims girls stated are poverty, lack of women teachers, absence of separate schools for girls, observance of *Purdah*, opposition to secular education for girls, early marriage and conservative attitudes. A few special Central schemes were floated for Education of Muslims, some especially for girls, after 1992. As studies and field observation show, their implementation has been uneven and ineffective. This may be on account of poor dissemination of information about these schemes and even indifference of the States. While all special privileges/ programmes/schemes under the Constitution applicable to SC and ST have been extended to the Neo –Buddhists some sporadic efforts have been made in the form of a few programmatic interventions for the Muslims after the NPE 1986 (revised in 1992).

**The** The Census, 2001 has, for the first time, given the literacy rates of different religious groups. Preliminary analysis of Census 2001 data on literacy and educational attainments of different religious groups corroborates the findings of the earlier sample studies. Muslims are educationally backward compared to the majority (Hindus) and the other minority groups (Jains, Sikhs, Christians and Buddhists). But then educational or economic backwardness is not limited to Muslims who according to some scholars are somewhat ahead of the Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes. Further regional variations are mind boggling and uneven economic development of different regions of the country has resulted in uneven distribution of educational facilities and uneven literacy rates and educational attainment levels of these populations.

At the all India level except the Muslims, all other religious groups have higher literacy rates than the Hindus who are a majority group. Jains have the highest literacy rate of 94.1%, followed by Christians (80.3%); Buddhists (72.7%); Sikhs (69.4%); Hindus (65.1%) and Muslims at 59.1%. The SC/ST who constitute 24.4% of the country's population have literacy rate of 52.2%. Rural urban literacy differentials are marked for all groups, the gap is the widest amongst Hindus and lowest among the Muslims. . Male female disparities in literacy rates is 22 percentage points for India as a whole; it is 23 percentage points amongst Hindus; 17.5 percentage points amongst Muslims and 24.7 percentage points amongst the SC/ST. Regional Variations are tremendous making development a crucial variable.

***Religion wise distribution shows concentration of Muslims at the lower levels of education and considerable decrease is noticed at successive higher levels both for males and females.*** Educational attainment levels are the highest amongst Jains, followed by Christians, Sikhs, Hindus, Buddhists and the lowest amongst the Muslims. Gender gap exists in every religious group but is considerably narrow amongst the Sikhs, Jains and Christians. The Muslims have lower literacy and educational attainments in the States having higher concentration of their population. Muslim girls in Maharashtra, Karnataka, Andhra Pradesh and Kerela are doing much better than the states like Uttar Pradesh and Bihar.

*While analyzing the figures collected by different surveys it is necessary to keep in mind some vital factors effecting female education, such as the regional imbalances, social-economic class structure, urban rural settings etc., in order to evolve a comprehensive policy and to formulate strategies for a break through in Muslim Women's Education.*

A correct estimate of Muslim girl's education at the primary level becomes difficult as many of them also receive it in *Dini Madaris*. A healthy trend is the growing realization of the necessity to combine religious instructions with secular education. According to available statistics, though at the elementary level the enrolment of Muslim girls appears to be "quite fair", but in comparison to Christians and Sikhs, it comes almost to half. Certain factors responsible for a higher percentage of dropouts in case of girl students enumerated by the National Perspective Plan for Women equally hold good for Muslim girls too, particularly in rural areas and urban slums. The gap between the Muslim and general girls becomes wider, when moved upward i.e., from lower to the higher ladders of education. However, in spite of these observations, the overall situation is not as dismal as it appears to be.

Some of the emerging concepts, such as Human Rights, Social Justice and Equity, and the active involvement of women's groups, community leaders, youth, the PRIs and mass media in their propagation have greatly influenced prospects of women's education. Old social structures, obsolete customs and practices are being challenged. The question of women has assumed great importance throughout the world today and among all the communities. Change of status can be possible only through education and Muslim women cannot be isolated from the mainstream. What is required is concerted and sincere efforts, both official and voluntary.

## The Present Study

### Objective

The present study was commissioned by the Ministry of Women and Child Development, Department of Women and Child Development (DWCD), as a step towards the preparation of a National Plan of Action for Advancement of Muslim Women's Education in India for enhancing their participation in elementary and secondary education and in higher education especially in professional and technical education. ***Specifically, the Study has analysed the present literacy and educational status of situation of Muslim Girls and Women in India, the social, cultural and educational factors and forces hindering their educational participation against the***

*backdrop of existing Policies, Programmes and Schemes to promote education of Girls and Women in general and those belonging to educationally backward minorities and other socially and economically disadvantaged sections of our society.* The Study aimed at to exploring future directions and strategies for integrating and galvanizing women of all walks of life for playing their role in building and sustaining the 21<sup>st</sup> Century Knowledge based Society. And more importantly building an equitable social order and a society that will give its women not only formal equality but a life of dignity.

## Methodology

**The Study was an attempt to build a sound database on education of Muslim women and girls for policy makers, planners and researchers. The study collated, analyzed and interpreted existing data on all relevant indicators available from primary and secondary sources, official documents, reports and studies on education of Muslim girls and women. Case studies on some successful experiments and innovations carried out in this area have helped increase our understanding will be attempted.**

Considerable effort was made to access and analyse data on social and educational status of Muslim women and girls from the Census of India, 2001, Annual Reports of MHRD and other concerned ministries, NSSO, NFHS and some prominent earlier studies, and Action Projects on the ground. And most importantly, the *Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan* that can provide the foundation for Equality in Education. At present, there is no disaggregated data available on educational participation of Muslim girls at any level. The publication and release of the Seventh All India Educational Survey, NCERT is awaited as data on Muslim minority students and institutions has been generated, including information on Madrasas.

**The Study has attempted to build an extensive data and information base on education of Muslim women and girls to facilitate the work of policy makers, planners and researchers and for generating better understanding of their present situation and specific needs, if any. The study has collated, analyzed and interpreted existing data on all relevant indicators available from primary and secondary sources, official documents, reports and earlier studies on education of Muslim girls and women. Recording of Case studies of some successful experiments and innovations carried out in this area have helped increase our understanding of issues, both general and specific.**

A comprehensive Bibliography was prepared and all available literature, researches and reports were studied for understanding the problems and issues concerning education of women and girls in India in general and Muslim women and girls in particular.

## Sources of Data

At present, there is no disaggregated data available on educational participation of Muslim girls at any level. Considerable effort was made to access and analyse data on social and educational status of Muslim women and girls from the following sources:

- i. Census of India, 2001
- ii. MHRD Annual Report, Department Elementary Education and Literacy; Department of Secondary (and Higher Education (2005-06).

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- vi. Seventh All India Educational Survey, NCERT, 2002.
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- viii. NFHS I, II and III data.
- ix. Report of Prime Minister's High-level Committee on Social, Economic and Educational Status of the Muslim Community of India, November 2006.
- x. Earlier Studies, Action Projects and other social evidence.
- xi. Successful Experiments on Education of Muslim girls

**The Study does confirm the overall educational backwardness of education of Muslims, more so of Muslim women and girls as noted by some previous large sample studies and surveys. Equally important is the finding that as usual national aggregate picture hides more than what it reveals as India really lives at many levels and what determines the access and success of female education is the overall social and economic development of a region and the rural urban divide in every region, within all communities, all social groups and among women themselves. Minority-majority status does not really determine equitable access to education and the analysis of regional development/underdevelopment is a crucial caveat for understanding continued inequalities of. Gender, caste and class. Poverty and patriarchy pin women down. The polity is predominantly patriarchal and not truly democratic and desists all attempts for sharing space and power. No religion grants full equality to women and it is the male clergy, the male religious literati that lays down prescriptions and proscriptions, the Dos and the Don'ts for women of every group. Lives of women continue to be limited by the Personal laws that govern the private space of Indian family and actual and expected roles and norms for women, the under life structures. Women are creeping up the crevices to participate in overlies structures of the economy, the polity, decision making. Ironically, they have been accommodated at the grass roots and are making a space for themselves despite male domination and resistance and middle class urban girls have shot into space, but the bulk remain poor, unlettered, pregnant and powerless, regardless of their religious affiliations.**

Further, the Study confirms the unequal status of all women and takes note of the State-Civil society efforts to give *defacto* equality and dignity to women and dispels certain myths and prejudices through analysis of hard data and interaction with a few strategic individuals and organizations working for the advancement of education of Muslim females. The Study has noted the extensive policy measures (the intentions) for women and minorities, the institutional structures and dedicated National Programmes accompanied by budgetary allocations and official fiats. Time is perhaps ripe for the Civil Society, the Community leaders (males!), women themselves to make use of the opportunities being afforded. In the case of Muslims particularly, the State is going flat out to enhance access (the Supply side) but the Demand lever is low and needs extensive and intensive coordinated efforts for elevation.

The Study Report is offered as a humble effort to profile female education among Muslims and to offer some relevant information and suggestions for policy makers, planners, researchers and activists. Chapter I give a brief introduction to the Study. Chapter II provides the Policy Framework and the Social and the Demographic Context. Chapter III is devoted to Literacy Analysis. Chapter IV discusses *Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan* (Elementary Education). Chapter-V gives a profile of Second and Third Level Education. Chapter VI gives a summary of findings and suggests a framework for the National Plan of Action for Educational Advancement of Muslim Women and Girls in India.

## Chapter II

### The Socio Legal and Demographic Context

#### A. The Social Context

Any discussion on the present situation of education of Muslim women would need looking at the situation of women in general in India and specifically among minorities and the disadvantaged sections of population. It goes without saying that in the last 60 years after independence, the Women's question has received a lot of attention as reflected in the national policies, plans, programmes and schemes resulting in advancement of women in all fields. Besides, special committees and commissions on women have been set up from time to time resulting in policy changes and setting up of institutional structures for implementing programmes and schemes. The Constitution of India not only grants equality to women but empowers the State to take special measures for protecting and advancing their interests in all walks of life and making necessary legal provisions to this effect. The State has not only taken protective discrimination/ affirmative action for removing the cumulative disadvantage of women but also has played a very pro-active role in organizing women for action. Further, India is a signatory to all principal international covenants and conventions such as the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (1948) and the CEDAW (1979); the UN Declaration of the Rights of the Child (1959) and the Convention on the Rights of the Child (1989). There are a vast array of welfare measures aimed at the poor, the backward, the disadvantaged to include minorities, SC, ST, OBC, BPL families, among others. ***We need to identify factors that account for differential impact of common constitutional and legal provisions, common policies, programmes and schemes on women from different communities especially the minorities.***

The Indian women appear to have come a long way from an obscurantist past and complete subordination to a position where theoretically they are the equals of men and there is a vast array of laws, policies and programmes trying to contend with the cumulative disadvantage of women arising out of the predominant patriarchal family and kinship structures, customs, traditions and beliefs.. Yet at the level of reality, the promise of equality and dignity remains an unfinished agenda. There are gains in educational participation and literacy but the gender gaps are substantial. Women have higher longevity now but tremendously high MMR and higher female infant and child mortality persists in most parts of the country. Millions of girls and women are missing between each census. The child sex ratio (females per thousand males) in the age group 0-6 years, has touched an all time low and the entire north western region has turned out to be a major killer of females- born and unborn. Crimes against women are on the increase with more and more laws but negligible enforcement. Women are making a mark in all fields among the middle classes and the elite. At the grass root level, the elected women's representatives are coming into their own, slowly but surely, but the Parliament and the State legislatures remains a male bastion.

Underdevelopment of rural areas and certain other regions appear to be the principal factors for educational and social backwardness of the socially and economically weaker amongst Scheduled Castes, Scheduled Tribes, Other Backward Classes and minorities in general and of women and girls in particular. ***Girls and women belonging to these communities are way behind their urban elite middle class counterparts.*** There are still wide inter and intra regional disparities in development per se. There are islands of affluence (Punjab, Haryana, Delhi) in the Indo Gangetic plains, which also

account for bulk of the poor and the illiterate of the country (Uttar Pradesh, Bihar, Rajasthan, Madhya Pradesh, Chhattisgarh, West Bengal). These islands of affluence also dot the western coastal areas, central India and the southern peninsula where industry is concentrated and new services are growing in the information technology and other sectors. Bulk of the higher, technical and professional educational institutions are located in the south and the west, with Maharashtra, Karnataka, Andhra Pradesh and Tamil Nadu accounting for the majority of these institutions. This uneven distribution of resources and opportunities between different regions gets reflected in large inter and intra group disparities of gender, caste, ethnicity and religion between and among regions.

Women are breaking new grounds. While elite urban middle class women and girls of *all socio religious groups* have made significant strides during the six decades, entering every field of education, and taking on the challenge of various professions, masses of women still remain restricted by the vicious circles of family expectations, gender-role discrimination, social stereotypes and stigma. At the grass roots level, the elected women's representatives are coming into their own, *slowly but surely*, but the mother Parliament and the State legislatures remain a male bastion, hard to break as men of all persuasions and beliefs have closed up lest their last bastion falls. *However, there are also significant differences in women's status across regions, caste and class, communities and religions.* Status of women is a composite of their achievements according to various indices – economic, educational, social and political.

## Diversities, Discrimination and Disparities

**India is known for its cultural diversity. The plurality of language, ethnicity and religion are in fact rooted in the interplay of its geography and the historical forces. In as much as India is a land where people of different racial stocks and faiths have mingled to produce a composite culture and a variety of complex social formations. Diversity of topography, land formation, waterways, fauna and flora is immense and wide ranging – with the tallest / youngest mountains, the Himalayas and the oldest Aravali ranges stretching into the sea, the tropical forests, the formidable deserts and the physically isolated island groups.**

The inter play of the ecology and technology over several millenia have given rise to cultures which display a strong tendency to resist acculturation as regards social institutions of family, kinship, belief systems and gender roles while accepting several modern technologies and institutions in the economic and the political arenas. Needless to say, in India, as elsewhere, the social stratification is not only on the lines of gender and class but is very strongly laced with the very indigenous social *institution of caste within every religious group.* Besides, socio economic and political considerations, the geography – ecology – culture formations have historically determined the gender based division of labour and resources in each of the settings and thus impinge on the educational and social participation of girls and women. *The proposition is that the access of girls to educational institutions is in great part determined by the socio cultural and ecological system in the region and the position of women and girls in this system.*

The multi ethnic cultural fabric is equally interesting as within the same country, girls and women have different possibilities, depending on the status accorded to its women. For instance, Ladakhis are a gender egalitarian group who profess Buddhism but may not be free from gender stereotyping. Garhwal with a strong Shaivite presence and worshippers of Durga, have a woman centered subsistence economy – with all able-bodied males out in the plains for better economic prospects and where the joint family system and community cohesion is now threatened. Not all girls are sent to school and scattered habitations at times comprising four to twenty households defy all governmental effort to provide subsidized electricity, piped water, schools and health services. Nagaland, home to earlier inter warring tribes, continues to be plagued by the lethal underground

movement that saps earnings of families raised through the sweat and labour of their women. Post primary schooling is a major bottleneck for girls and even primary schools give children very little. All development funds are heavy on paper, with very little to see on the ground. Meghalaya, another mountain state interests us. Besides Lakshadweep, this is the only state where matriliney still prevails, having disappeared from the Malabars from where it entered the Lakshadweep Islands. Our Rajasthan desert region is part of the highly sexist north western plains which could be termed as the medieval tract culturally and where bulk of our poor, and the illiterate reside and where female infanticide and child marriage still prevail in defiance of the laws of the land. Amongst the Central tribal tracts where women are the fulcrum of the economy, girls are not decimated for they bring in bride price and are considered more useful than the boys who largely grow up to be idlers and addicts contributing only to the misery of the women and the children. But, even here, as the development bag is normally brought in

by the urban males, females are increasingly being devalued and are open to exploitation and formal education, howsoever worthless is seen more of a male prerogative unless conscious intervention is done by the State and the NGO sector.

The inter play of the socio cultural factors of kinship, marriage, belief systems with the forces of production and distribution are governed by the familial, and, the extra familial power structures represented by the political institutions of the State, the religion and now increasingly the corporate sector. ***These greatly determine whether a girl will go to school and for how long and what education is considered necessary and relevant by her primary group, the immediate family and the community.***

It may be, however, be stated that the very strong exogenous factors in the form of State interventions, international pressure and technological advancement appear to be influencing the access and direction of girl's education but social class appears to be a major variable of female educational participation. In positions of great poverty, gender gets highly exacerbated and rural and remote areas of the country have their share of poverty and underdevelopment with typically subsistence economies in which women toil for 15 to 16 hours a day. Further, the river of rural poverty (and unemployment) flows into urban areas ending in growth of massive slums, which no civic administration can cope with for provision of basic amenities of water, housing, schooling and health care. On the one hand is the urban elite middle class girls are doing better than the boys, in secondary / higher secondary examinations and gender discrimination is low. On the other, poverty groups where being girls is an additional handicap also have very low participation and survival rates in education, even boys belonging to poverty groups. The educational and skill deficits of rural girls continue to be large and the national, even state averages hide more than what they reveal in terms of equity and equality.

It is interesting to note that apart from the rural urban disparities, there are ***intra rural disparities*** as between larger village settlements and small isolated habitations in remote areas. We could state that transportation difficulties caused by the geographic and the climatic conditions, hinders school attendance of girls relatively more than that of boys and the absence of schools in small and scattered settlement units/habitations hinders enrolment of girls. Providing schools within the easy reach of children is a major challenge in rural and remote areas especially in the light of relatively low physical mobility of girls. The small size of the habitations and scattered populations and long inter settlement distances make it difficult to open schools within habitations or within easy walking distance. At times, even relaxation of norms does not help in situations where the physical distance measured in kilometres, is compounded by the ecological and topographical constraints. In certain areas, there is the added problem of mobile populations who keep on moving from one location to another in search of food and livelihood.

### Women and Religion in India

Religion acts as an important cultural factor, which reinforces the traditional perception of women as subordinate to males. The unequal position of women in the family is determined and reinforced by the dictates of the organized religion. ***None of the major religions – Hinduism, Buddhism, Islam and Christianity ever conceded complete equality to women and have in fact institutionalised the secondary position of women versus men through written word and oral interpretations by the male clergy. The ideal of womanhood is still modelled on the Brahmanical tradition and linked to a strongly patriarchal culture assigning a secondary position to women.*** Buddhism and Christianity offer a relatively more egalitarian existence to women but within the patriarchal mode. Caring for the husband and the children and other members of the family is clearly enjoined on women as a 'first duty' and no laxity on this score on the part of women is tolerated. In popular Buddhism and Islam, women are not allowed to participate in certain religious ceremonies along with men. This is largely

due to the myth of uncleanness. For example, women are allowed into the *Devalayas* to perform the *Pongal* ceremony or participate in funeral rites. In certain parts of the country, women are not allowed to step on the threshing floor since uncleanness, it is believed, can lead to low yields. In the Indian mythology, male female equality and complementarities are visible and the concept of *Ardhnarishwar* (Half male, Half female God) exists, but, all the *major prophetic religions* assert male superiority and lay down *prescriptions and proscriptions* for females barring the Bhai faith which gives complete equality and respect to women as men and see them as the two wings of a bird.

Patriarchal family is the norm in India, with a few exceptions. Father as 'head of the household' is a common stereotype even when proportion of women headed households is on the rise especially in rural areas. Men are placed in positions of power vis-à-vis women, irrespective of their religious allegiances. However, there are some specific features marking out the daily life practices, educational and work status etc of women in different religious groups. Within each of the religious groups, there is no homogeneity as regards women's status. *Women belonging to the same religion might yet have very different conditions of life, which are influenced by their earning capacity, employment, rural-urban setup, educational level, and so on. Within every minority groups, some women subsist below the poverty line (BPL), while others enjoy a higher standard of living. Caste divisions also influence the status of women, not only in the Hindu religion but also in other (minority) religions.* Thus, Women in India share certain features of social and economic discrimination, whichever religious community they belong to.

However, there is perhaps need to raise some valid questions regarding the established viewpoints on the status and position of women among different socio religious communities in different regions of the country. Though economically backward and politically isolated, the North East region presents *an inconsistent picture* of the situation of girls and women both in high and low literacy states. Meghalaya a mountain state with 70% Christian population interests us and so does Lakshadweep (96% Muslim), the only two states where matrilineal system still prevails (having nearly disappeared from the Malabars). Lakshadweep presents a peculiar admixture of matriliney (inherited from Malabars) with an overlay of patriarchal Islam to the *relative advantage of women* who enjoy equality and freedom and even run/govern the Minicoy island and its economy on their own as most of the able bodied men are at sea. Lakshadweep is crime free; literacy is universal and divorce a rarity. Women have double inheritance rights, from their mothers under the *Tarawad* system and from the father under Islam. Meghalaya in the North east of the country is matrilineal and not matriarchal, In this state (Garo and Jaintia Hills) women have the advantage of inheriting property as descent is through the mother and yet they do not have the right to participate in any community matters or village councils. Mizoram is both tribal and Christian, with second highest female literacy, very high educational and work participation rates but female presence in the state legislature and in the district and the village councils is almost nil. *Patriarchy remains supreme even in matters of marriage and divorce.* Women are married in the Church but are divorced as per the tribal customs under which a woman is bought on payment of bride price and owns neither land nor assets and has to give up her children as well to the husband after divorce. In Mizoram, where female literacy is the highest in the country and 50% women are in workforce and hence are earning. But these *Mizo women marry in the Church and are divorced according to tribal customs* which do not allow them any share in parental or husband's property and even children belong to the Husband and are taken away once the marriage breaks down. The situation of these Mizo women is perhaps not too different from the Manipur or Assam *Muslim women* who face the threat of unilateral pronouncement of *Talaq* and often are illiterate and totally dependent on their family males for food, shelter and security. *The 73<sup>rd</sup> amendment does not apply to Mizoram, Meghalaya or Nagaland as the Traditional Councils perform duties of local Government.* Naga women can only watch important political get together and meetings from outside, as they are not allowed to participate or hold office

in the village councils. In these tribal/Christian-dominated states, the status of women remains embedded in the traditional frame with women not allowed participation in extra domestic sphere.

The myth that tribal women are more liberated in the North East needs to be exploded considering that Manipur has majority non tribal population. Manipur has 46% Hindu Population; 34% Christians and about 9% Muslims. ***The status of women in Manipur and their participation and decision-making is high.*** In Manipur, Sikkim and Tripura, women are among the elected representatives in the local bodies on account of the policy of reservation. ***In Manipur, there are more women in the local bodies than the reserved quota.*** There are many question marks regarding the negligible political participation of women in state legislatures. These diverse trends need to be understood better. May be there is a need to look at the tribal customs and beliefs which continue to impede women's due of human rights and constitutional guarantees of equality in Christian majority states of Mizoram, Nagaland and Meghalaya for ending all forms of discrimination against women.

***Around the world women continue to be the worst victims of violence within the family and armed conflict.*** In situations of armed conflicts between and within nations, women face direct violence or lose their near and dear ones and are left to fend for themselves and their children without any support. Very often, they face sexual terrorism as violating women of the enemy group has been a cruel method of getting even with the (male) enemy. The economic conditions of women and children are affected during and post conflict period. ***In the strife torn North eastern region, women are making their peace efforts, for instance, the Kuki Women's Association or the Meira Pabis of Manipur or the Naga Mother's association and the Mizo Women's Association are fighting silent battles for safeguarding their lives and dignity.***

## Gender Roles

Though cultures are always changing, most cultural behaviour patterns, for instance, gender roles of their members show a considerable degree of persistence and continuity over long periods. (Epstein, 1973). Division and ascription of social status in relation to sex seems basic to all societies and gender differentiation is "more ancient, more widespread than any form of social differentiation" (Holter, 1970). All societies ascribe different attitudes and activities to men and women. Most of these prescriptions are rationalized in terms of biological and psychological differences, differences in roles in reproduction and physical characteristics of height, weight, muscular strength etc. However, comparative studies of roles / status ascribed to women and men in different cultures seem to show that while such factors might have seemed as the starting point of division of labour between sexes, mostly, these are culturally defined (Ralph Linton, 1961, pp 202-208; Mead, 1935, 1950). Even the psychological characteristics ascribed to men and women in different cultures vary so much that they can have little psychological bases. Although, preferred female attributes and behaviour vary universally over a considerable range in most societies there is a core of preferred and imputed feminine attributes and behaviour.

As each culture has its own prescription of sex role appropriate behaviour, these prescriptions are accepted as fact. Children are brought up to fit the designated patterns and any deviation from the norm is punished. These cultural stereotypes become the evaluative framework that affects the judgment and beliefs of men and women regarding the appropriateness of various roles. Women as well as men acquire through a process of socialization, a set of attitudes and choices and behaviours which are consistent with the sex roles they are expected to play in society (Bem and Bem, 1970). The sex role belief system operates in several ways. Given, a thorough socialization, a woman may never consider roles other than the traditional feminine roles as mother and wife. The socializing agent does not present any alternative attitudinal behaviour models to a child, nor is a girl expected to question the validity of her beliefs. Therefore, this ideology is internalized by girls and women as a matter of fact and the restrictions placed on her self development are likely to be accepted as very

normal and unchallengeable. (Epstein, 1973 p 19). Children who derive a set of expectations from their culture about themselves, 'learn what to like and what to cherish and disdain'.

Ascription of occupations to men and women in different societies also varies likewise. Arapesh women carry heavy loads (as do most African and Asian women because their heads are so much harder and stronger. Among Marquesas, cooking, housekeeping, baby tending are proper male occupations as observed by Ralph Linton (op. cit.).

Sex role socialization does more than incline the individuals to choose occupations traditionally assigned to their sex. It also fosters needs, values, and skills that cause women not to enter the labour force at all and others do so in term intermittently. Traditional sex role socialization lays more emphasis on achievement and occupational success in boys than girls. There are investigations to support this idea and go to demonstrate an inverse relationship between sex role ideology and achievement aspiration. A study found that holding traditional sex role values was significantly related to a low level of aspiration as defined by education, income and work plans. These traditional values include beliefs such as women should not achieve greater success than their husbands or else the emotional balance of the family suffers. (Parsons, 1976; Kapur, 1970; Nayar, 1988).

The institution of family forms the core of the South Asian societies. The traditional cultural ideas regarding roles of women are very strong in the sub continent especially in the area of family organization. Great social, economic and political changes have swept the sub continent but the stable family structure and the spirit of family solidarity has remained a sustaining power, largely on account of the subservience of women and their tendency to accept the unequal division of labour and resources. (Even women feel great being martyrs, making all the sacrifices and adjustments). The Indian family is predominantly patriarchal. Emphasis and the authority structure even in nuclear households is similar to that of the traditional joint family in which the male head of the household has power over all younger males and all females (Shukla, 1981; Beteille, 1964).

The restrictive effect of traditional sex roles, socialization in the family has its parallel in educational practices in educational institutions traditionally. Most educational fields remain sex typed, a phenomenon that compounds the occupational stratification by sex. Further, sex biased educational practices, differential curricula and text books perpetuate the traditional division of labour between sexes. This limits not only the range of occupations chosen by women but also lands them in low ranking occupations corresponding to their assisting roles in the household. Thus traditionally education has contributed to educational and occupational stratification between the sexes by encouraging and preparing girls to pursue an extremely limited number of traditionally feminine roles. High level of sex segregation exists in the work force and women enter a limited number of feminine sex stereotyped occupations, which are also low in status.

***In sum, Discrimination is a process and disparity and inequality is its end product:*** Apartheid of gender continues to stare at us despite proactive policies and laws for girls and women. The lives of girls and women continue to be controlled by the patriarchal belief systems and structures, which use prescriptions and proscriptions and even naked force to keep women in their place. All decisions are taken by men and all assets are owned by them. The process of gender discrimination begins even before birth and continues throughout the life of a female. That there are 36 million fewer females in the population of India is disturbing but even more alarming is the sharper decline in the proportion in the age group 0-6 years. There are 6 million fewer girls in this age group. Besides women and girls do more work than males but get much less than their legitimate share in food, health, education and training. The traditional socialization practices of a society with a marked son preference, are highly discriminatory to the girl child not only in matters of food, health care, education and play but also succeed in making her believe that she is inferior and less competent than her male counterparts.

## B. The Legal Framework

In post independence India, a large number of constitutional and legislative measures and many forward looking policies and programmes have been directed at integrating women in the mainstream of national development. The State guarantees equal opportunities to women and forbids discrimination in all matters relating to employment and appointment to any public office. Under the protective discrimination clause, the State has passed several social and labour legislation and drawn up special programmes and schemes for the protection, welfare and development of women and children. There are laws to protect women and children from hazardous work; laws providing maternity benefits and child care services, and equal wages for work. Additionally, women have reserved quotas and seats in many educational and training institutions, development schemes, and local bodies and in government jobs.

### The Constitutional Provisions

#### Fundamental Rights

**Article 14** confers on men and women equal rights and opportunities in the political, economic and social spheres. **Article 15** prohibits discrimination against any citizen on the grounds of religion, race, caste and sex. **Article 15 (3)** makes a special provision enabling the State to make affirmative discrimination in favour of women. **Article 16** provides for equality of opportunities in matters of public appointment for all. **Article 21** provides for protection of life and personal liberty. **Article 23** prohibits traffic in human beings and forced labour. **Article 24** prohibits employment of children in factories etc. **Article 51 e** makes it a fundamental duty of all Indian citizens to promote harmony and the spirit of common brotherhood amongst all the people of India transcending religious, linguistic and regional and sectional diversities, *to renounce practices derogatory to the dignity of women.* **Article 21 A** (The 86<sup>th</sup> Constitutional Amendment Act 2002) makes education is now a fundamental right of all children of the age of 6-14 years. The added a new to direct the state to provide free and compulsory education to all children of the age of 6-14 years in such a manner as the state by law determines. A new **Fundamental Duty Article 51 A (k)** in part 4 makes it a duty of a parent or a guardian to provide opportunities for education to his child or , as case may be, ward between the age of 6 & 14 years.

#### Directive Principles of State Policy

The Directive Principles of State Policy have been the guiding beacons for social policies and legislation Article 39 (a) the State shall direct its policy towards securing all citizens, men and women equally, have the right to an adequate means of livelihood. Article 39 (d) directs the State to ensure equal pay for equal work for men and women. Article 39 (e) that the health and strength of workers, men and women, and the tender age of children are not abused. Article 39 (f) that children are given opportunities and facilities to develop in a healthy manner and in conditions of freedom and dignity and that childhood and youth are protected against exploitation and against moral and material abandonment. Article 41 right to work, to education and to public assistance in certain cases. Article 42 enjoins the State to ensure just and humane conditions of work and maternity relief. Article 44 a uniform civil code for the citizen. Article 45 (amended in 2002) give a directive to the State to provide early childhood care and education for all children till they attain the age of 6 years. Article 47 the State is further committed to raising the nutritional levels health and living standard for the people.

#### Specific Safeguards for Religious Minorities

- Freedom of conscience and free profession, practice and propagation of religion (**Article 25**); Freedom to manage religious affairs (**Article 26**); Freedom as to payment of taxes for promotion of any particular religion (**Article 27**); Freedom as to attendance at religious instruction or religious worship in certain educational institutions (**Article 28**).

- **Articles 29 and 30** of the Constitution of India defend the rights of the minorities to conserve the language, script and culture and to establish and administer educational institutions of their choice whether based on religion or language.

**Articles 29 and 30** have been grouped together under a common head namely, **“Cultural and Educational Rights”**. Together, they confer four distinct rights on minorities. These include the right of - any section of citizens to conserve its own language, script or culture;

- (a) all religious and linguistic minorities to establish and administer educational institutions of their choice;
- (b) an educational institution against discrimination by State in the matter of State aid (on the ground that it is under the management of religious or linguistic minority); and
- (c) the citizen against denial of admission to any State-maintained or State-aided educational institution.

**Article 29** provides that –

- (1) any section of the citizens residing in the territory of India or any part thereof having a distinct language, script or culture of its own shall have the right to conserve the same, and
- (2) no citizen shall be denied admission into any educational institution maintained by the State or receiving aid out of State funds on grounds only of religion, race, caste, language or any them.

**Article 30** is a minority-specific provision that protects the right of minorities to establish and administer educational institutions. It provides that “all minorities, whether based on religion or language, shall have the right to establish and administer educational institutions of their choice”. Clause (1-A) of the article 30, which was inserted by the Constitution (Forty-fourth Amendment) Act, 1978 provides that “in making any law providing for the compulsory acquisition of any property of an educational institution established and administered by a minority, referred to in clause (1), the State shall ensure that the amount fixed by or determined under such law for the acquisition of such property is such as would not restrict or abrogate the right guaranteed under that clause”. Article 30 further provides that “the State shall not, in granting aid to educational institutions, discriminate against any educational institution on the ground that it is under the management of a minority, whether based on religion and language”.

*It is, however, notable that in the chapter of the Constitution relating to Directive Principles of State Policy, Article 46 mandates the State to “promote with special care the educational and economic interests of the weaker sections of the people..... and shall protect them from social injustice and all forms of exploitation. This Article refers to Scheduled Castes/ Scheduled Tribes “in particular” but does not restrict to them the scope of “weaker sections of the society.*

### Latest Amendments

**Article 15** has recently been amended by the Constitution (Ninety-third Amendment) Act, 2005 to empower the State to make special provisions, by law, for admission of socially and educationally backward classes of citizens or scheduled castes/tribes to educational institutions including private educational institutions, whether aided or unaided by the State, other than minority educational institutions.

**Article 16**, too, has an enabling provision that permits the State for making provisions for the reservation in appointments of posts in favour of “any backward class of citizens, which in the

opinion of the State, is not adequately represented in the services under the State”. **Article 16 speaks** of “any backward class of citizens”. The words ‘class’ and ‘caste’ are not synonymous expressions and do not carry the same meaning. **While Articles 15 and 16 empower the State to make special provisions for backward “classes”, they prohibit discrimination only on the ground of ‘caste’ or ‘religion’.** In other words, positive discrimination on the ground of caste or religion coupled with other grounds such as social and educational backwardness is constitutionally permissible and therefore, under a given circumstance it may be possible to treat a caste or religious group as a “class”. **Even though Article 15 does not mention minorities in specific terms, minorities who are socially and educationally backward are clearly within the ambit of the term “any socially and educationally backward classes” in Article 15 and ‘any backward class’ in Article 16.**

Indeed, the Central Government and State Governments have included sections of religious minorities in the list of backward classes and have provided for reservation for them. The Supreme Court in *Indira Sawhney & Ors. Vs. Union of India*, has held that an entire community can be treated as a ‘class’ based on its social and educational backwardness. The Court noted that the Government of Karnataka based on an extensive survey conducted by them, had identified the entire Muslim community inhabiting that State as a backward class and have provided for reservations for them. The expression ‘backward classes’ is religion-neutral and not linked with caste and may well include any caste or religious community as a class suffered from social and educational backwardness. Though economic backwardness is one of the most important - or, perhaps, the single most important - reasons responsible for social and educational backwardness alone of a class, the Constitution does not specifically refer to it in Articles 15 and 16. In *Indira Sawhney case*, the Supreme Court had observed –

“It is, therefore, clear that economic criterion by itself will not identify the backward classes under Article 16(4). The economic backwardness of the backward classes under Article 16(4) has to be on account of their social and educational backwardness. Hence, no reservation of posts in services under the State, based exclusively on economic criterion, would be valid under clause (1) of Article 16 of the Constitution.”

## Women And Legislation

India has one of the most impressive sets of laws for women and children/girls and yet little is known about them either by women themselves or by men. Laws in India by and large cover the women belonging to each and every religious community. However, there is one notable exception. This is in the realm of personal laws, that is the laws governing marriage, divorce, inheritance, child custody and maintenance etc. Since different religious communities display wide variations in their personal beliefs and customs, it was considered appropriate to respect the differences and make personal laws commensurate with the customary practices within each community. These laws have been framed keeping in mind the varied religious beliefs, since India is a multi-religious country. From time to time, there are some changes in the personal laws governing different communities. Often, these changes are suggested by members of the communities themselves, including women of the communities. Human rights organizations and women’s groups have suggested appropriate changes in the various personal laws. A Common Civil Code governing personal laws for all the communities has been mooted in the Directive Principles of State Policy (Article 44). This is a sensitive issue and has not been handled adequately by any government so far. Registration of all marriages is perhaps the very first step in ensuring justice to women who are at times not even able to establish the validity of a religious marriage.

In post independence India, several Constitutional amendments have been carried out and a series of legislations have been enacted to safeguard and protect the interests of all women. Major recent

acts/bills affecting women and girls are i) Pre-natal Diagnostic Techniques (Regulation & Prevention of Misuse) Act, 1994; ii.) Protection of Women from Domestic Violence Act, 2005; The Protection Against Sexual Harassment of Women Bill, 2005 and Right to Education Bill . The 73<sup>rd</sup> and 74<sup>th</sup> Amendment *reserving one third of seats for women in Panchayat Raj Institutions (PRIs) and in urban local bodies and one third positions of chairpersons for women in each of these bodies. This has unleashed the woman power in 2,25,000 PRIs and in urban local bodies who are gradually coming into their own.*

**The 86<sup>th</sup> Constitutional Amendment Act 2002** :For children in the age group 6-14 years Education is now a fundamental right. The 86<sup>th</sup> Constitutional Amendment Act 2002 added a new Article 21 A to direct the state to provide free and compulsory education to all children of the age of 6-14 years in

such a manner as the state by law determines. The said act also substitutes Article 45 with a Directive to the State to provide early childhood care and education for all children till they attain the age of 6 years. It has also been made a part of the fundamental duties enjoining the responsibility of the parents to send their children to school. Introduction of a new Fundamental Duty Article 51 A (k) in part 4 a is as follows: "Who is a parent or a guardian to provide opportunities for education to his child or, as case may be, ward between the age of 6 & 14 years". The onus of providing elementary education to all children lies on the state and the parents both.

**The Pre natal Diagnostic Techniques (Regulation and Prevention of Misuse), 1995:**

Section 6(b) of the Act prohibits the determination of the sex of the fetus. Section 5(2) prohibits any person conducting pre natal diagnostic procedure from communicating to the pregnant women or her relative, the sex of the fetus by means of word, sign or in any other manner. Section 20(3) empowers the appropriate authority to suspend in public interest the registration of the clinic or laboratory without issuing any show cause notice. Section 23(3) lays down that any person who seeks the aid of genetic counseling center or a medical geneticist, gynecologist or a registered medical practitioner for applying pre natal diagnostic technique on any pregnant women, can be fined to the extent of Rupees Ten Thousand and imprisonment for three years and subsequent conviction may involve imprisonment for five years and fine up to Rupees fifty Thousand. The Government of India outlawed pre natal sex determination on January 1, 1996. The New Law makes it illegal to advertise or to perform the test (with a few exceptions) and punishes the doctor, a relative, the woman herself.

**The Protection of Women from Domestic Violence Act, 2005:** This is an extremely significant enactment, The Act provides for protection of the Constitutional rights of women who are victims of domestic violence. It includes within its ambit physical, sexual, emotional and economic abuse. The aggrieved woman is entitled to orders for protection, residence, monetary relief, custody and compensation. The Act provides for appointment of Protection Officers, and recognizes and involves non-governmental organizations as service providers for assistance to the abused with respect to her medical examination, legal aid, safe shelter etc.

**The Protection Against Sexual Harassment of Women Bill:** This Bill, conferring upon women the right to protection against sexual harassment, has been put on the website of the Ministry of Women and Child Development seeking comments from the general public on the provisions of the Bill. The NCW organized a National Consultation in October 2005 to discuss the Bill, during which a number of suggestions came up, on the basis of which NCW is re-drafting the Bill.

**Special Laws Concerning Women Under Review by Ministry of Women and Child**

**Development (MWCD):** The NCW has reviewed in detail the following four laws concerning women, with a view to making the provisions more effective and to remove existing lacunae. The Indecent Representation of Women (Prohibition) Act, 1886; The Dowry Prohibition Act, 1961; The Commission of Sati (Prevention) Act, 1987; Immoral Traffic Prevention Act, 1956; Medical Termination of Pregnancy Act, 1971; Child Marriage Restraint Act, 1929; Family Courts Act, 1984; Foreign Marriage Act, 1969; Guardians and Wards Act, 1890; Indian Succession Act, 1925; Married Women's Property Act, 1874; Hindu Marriage Act, 1959; Pre-natal Diagnostic Techniques (Regulation & Prevention of Misuse) Act, 1994; and the Minimum Wages Act, 1948. The NCW has also made recommendations on certain sections of IPC, Cr. PC and the Indian Evidence Act.

## Personal Laws

Laws in India by and large cover the women belonging to each and every religious community. However, there is one notable exception. This is in the realm of personal laws, that is the laws governing marriage, divorce, inheritance, child custody and maintenance etc. Since different religious communities display wide variations in their personal beliefs and customs, it was considered appropriate to respect the differences and make personal laws commensurate with the customary practices within each community. These laws have been framed keeping in mind the varied religious beliefs, since India is a multi-religious country. From time to time, there are some changes in the personal laws governing different communities. Often, these changes are suggested by members of the communities themselves, including women of the communities. Human rights organizations and women's groups have suggested appropriate changes in the various personal laws. A Common Civil Code governing personal laws for all the communities has been mooted in the Directive Principles of State Policy (Article 44). This is a sensitive issue and has not been handled adequately by any government so far. Registration of all marriages is perhaps a very first step in ensuring justice to women who were at times not even able to establish the validity of a religious marriage. We have noted elsewhere, the most unenviable position of Mizo women sandwiched between tribal customs and Christian vows of marriage with the sword of **MAK** hanging on their heads and their lack of any right over the property of their husband and even right over their own children.

### Women Specific Legislation

- \* *The Immoral Traffic (Prevention) Act, 1956@*
  - ❖ *The Dowry Prohibition Act, 1961 (28 of 1961)@*
  - ❖ *The Indecent Representation of Women (Prohibition) Act, 1986@*
  - ❖ *The Commission of Sati (Prevention) Act, 1987 (3 of 1988)@*
- Women-related Legislation**
- ❖ *The Guardians and Wards Act, 1860 (8 of 1890)\**
  - ❖ *Indian Penal Code, 1860\*\**
  - ❖ *The Christian Marriage Act, 1872 (15 of 1872)\**
  - ❖ *The Indian Evidence Act, 1872 (yet to be reviewed)*
  - ❖ *The Married Women's Property Act, 1874 (3 of 1874)\**
  - ❖ *The Workmen's compensation Act, 1923\*\**
  - ❖ *The Legal Practitioners (Women) Act, 1923@*
  - ❖ *The Indian Succession Act, 1925 (39 of 1925)\**
  - ❖ *The Child Marriage Restraint Act, 1929 (19 of 1929)\**
  - ❖ *The Payments of Wages Act, 1936\*\**
  - ❖ *The Muslim Personal Law (Shariat) Application Act, 1937)\**
  - ❖ *The Factories Act 1948@*
  - ❖ *The Minimum Wages Act, 1948@*
  - ❖ *The Employees' State insurance Act, 1948@*
  - ❖ *The Plantation Labour Act, 1951\*\**
  - ❖ *The Cinematograph Act, 1952\*\**
  - ❖ *The Special Marriage Act, 1954\**
  - ❖ *The Hindu Marriage Act, 1955 (28 of 1989)\**
  - ❖ *The Hindu Adoptions & Maintenance Act, 1956\**
  - ❖ *The Hindu Minority & Guardianship Act, 1956\**
  - ❖ *The Hindu Succession Act, 1956\**
  - ❖ *The Maternity Benefit Act, 1961 (53 of 1961)@*
  - ❖ *The Beedi & Cigar Workers (Conditions of Employment) Act, 1966\*\**
  - ❖ *The Foreign Marriage Act, 1969 (33 of 1969)\**
  - ❖ *The Indian Divorce Act, 1969 (4 of 1969)\**
  - ❖ *The Medical Termination of Pregnancy Act, 1971 (34 of 1971)\**

- ❖ *Code of Criminal Procedure, 1973\*\**
- ❖ *The Bonded Labour System (Abolition) Act, 1976@*
- ❖ *The Equal Remuneration Act, 1976@*
- ❖ *The Contract Labour (Regulation & Abolition) Act, 1979@*
- ❖ *The Inter-State Migrant Workmen (Regulation of Employment and Conditions of Service) Act, 1979@*
- ❖ *The Family Courts Act, 1984@*
- ❖ *Juvenile Justice Act, 1986\**
- ❖ *The Child Labour (Prohibition & Regulation) Act, 1986\*\**
- ❖ *National Commission for Women Act, 1990 (20 of 1990)\**
- ❖ *The Infant Milk Substitutes, Feeding Bottles and Infant Foods (Regulation of Production, Supply and Distribution) Act, 1992\**
- ❖ *The Pre-Natal Diagnostic Technique (Regulation and Prevention of Misuse) Act, 1994.1996\**
- ❖ *The Protection of Women from Domestic Violence Act, 2005*
- ❖ *The Protection Against Sexual Harassment of Women Bill*

\*Reviewed by National Commission for Women (NCW)

\*\* Reviewed by the Task force on Women & Children

@ Reviewed by both NCW and the Task Force on Women & Children, Source: Tenth Five Year Plan (2002-2007)

*It is, however, important to note that the Constitution is only sixty seven years old and is superimposed on a highly stratified, iniquitous social fabric of great antiquity, where the regulatory forces had rested with religion and the State.*

India has one of the most impressive sets of laws for women and children/girls and yet little is known about them either by women themselves or by men. The Indian socio legal framework has; therefore, to contend with deeply entrenched customs and traditions, beliefs and practices of a highly patriarchal and feudal past and present that contributes to the continued subordination women. We are not to forget that bulk of the civil and criminal laws are conceived by, and meant for men, for a society which did not envision any public roles for women, and, was not particularly interested in interfering with the personal laws that sanction an uneven division of labour and resources among the two sexes.

The lives of girls and women continue to be controlled by the patriarchal belief systems and structures, which use prescriptions and proscriptions and even naked force to keep women in their place. Men take all decisions and they own all assets. The process of gender discrimination begins even before birth and continues throughout the life of a female. That there are 36 million fewer females in the population of India is disturbing but even more alarming is the sharper decline in the proportion in the age group 0-6 years. There are 6 million fewer girls in this age group. Besides women and girls do more work than males but get much less than their legitimate share in food, health, education and training. The traditional socialization practices of a society with a marked son preference, agree highly discriminatory and not only physically short changed the girls child on food, health care, education and play but also succeed in making her believe that she is inferior and less competent than her male counterparts.

All women work but majority do unpaid family labour, domestic chores and child rearing tasks which sustain life. Women do use value work more than cash value work and are placed in undifferentiated, unskilled, and low skilled, low paid, under paid and low prestige occupations. On accounts of deficits and training, women continue to be marginalized in the economy and the polity. The values of patriarchy – the unquestioned supremacy and dominance of males inform the familial and all extra familial spheres in matters of relations between men and women. Only 8% of the chief national policy makers (Members of Parliament) are female and there are fewer women than the fingers of our hands in the state legislatures even after five decades of India's freedom from an alien power. The recent phenomenon of one million Indian women joining the grass roots democratic institutions, the panchayats and urban local bodies, is a rare achievement which deserves notice and *has definite implications for the educators to prepare young girls of today for leadership of tomorrow.*

## Key National Policies Impacting All Women

### The National Policy on Education (NPE) 1986: *Education for Women's Equality*

The National Policy on Education (NPE) 1986, revised in 1992, is a major landmark in the evolution of the status of women in India. The NPE is, perhaps, the most radical statement of its times and addresses not only the issue of equality of educational opportunities for women but puts the issue of equality between sexes centre stage. The NPE goes substantially beyond the equal opportunity and social justice approach and expects education to become an instrument of women's equality and empowerment. The National Policy on Education (NPE) and the Programme of Action (POA), 1986, revised in 1992, give an overriding priority to removal of gender disparities and command the entire educational system to work for women's equality and empowerment. The total approach of the NPE and POA is to link education of girls and women to broader concerns of national development and to develop in them a culture of self reliance, a positive self image and the capacity to participate in decision making at all levels on an equal footing.

*“Education will be used as an agent of basic change in the status of women. In order to neutralise the accumulated distortions of the past, there will be a well-conceived edge in favour of women. The National Education System will play a positive, interventionist role in the empowerment of women. It will foster the development of new values through redesigned curricula, textbooks, the training and orientation of teachers, decision makers and administrators, and the active involvement of educational institutions. This will be an act of faith and social engineering. Women's studies will be promoted as a part of various courses and educational institutions will be encouraged to take up active programmes to further women's development.”*

### The National Nutrition Policy (1993)

The National Nutrition Policy (1993) advocates a comprehensive inter-sectoral strategy for alleviating all the multi-faceted problems of under/malnutrition and its related deficiencies and diseases so as to achieve an optimal state of nutrition for all sections of society but with a special priority for women, mothers and children who are vulnerable as well as 'at-risk'. The strategies adopted in the Ninth Plan include – screening of all pregnant women and lactating mothers for CED; identifying women with weight below 40 kg and providing adequate ante-natal, inpartum and neo-natal care under the RCH programme and ensuring they receive food supplementation through the Integrated Child Development Services (ICDS) Scheme. The ICDS, launched in 1975, provides supplementary feeding to bridge the nutritional gaps that exist in respect of children below 6 years and expectant and nursing mothers. Besides this, since 2000-01, the Government of India has been providing Additional Central Assistance to the states under the nutrition component of **Pradhan Mantri Gramodaya Yojana (PMGY)** in an effort to prevent the onset of under-nutrition in the age-group 6-24 months. **Supplementary nutrition is also provided to 105 million school-going children under the National Programme of Nutritional Support to Primary Education (also popularly known as Mid-Day Meals Programme).**

### The National Population Policy 2000

The National Population Policy adopted in 2000 seeks to address the issues related to population stabilization and to ensure universal access to quality contraceptive services as a step towards attaining the two-child norm. It calls for reduction in the Infant Mortality Rate (IMR) to 30 and Maternal Mortality Rate (MMR) to 100 by 2010, immunisation of children, promoting delayed marriage for girls and enhancing the number of institutional deliveries. **The NPP underscores the need to universalise primary education, especially focusing on the education of girls.**

### The National Agriculture Policy 2000

The first National Agriculture Policy, announced in July 2000, seeks to mainstream gender concerns in agriculture. It promises to initiate appropriate structural, functional and institutional measures to empower women, build their capabilities and improve their access to inputs, technology and other farming resources. Under both the Oilseeds Production Programme, which covers 408 districts, and the National Pulses Development Project, which covers 350 districts, preference is given to women farmers while extending the benefits under various components of these programmes. The State Departments of Agriculture, which are the implementing agencies, have been requested to make women farmer beneficiaries of delivery system in the form of Self-Help Groups (SHGs) addresses the problems and aspirations of the poor women. By March 2000, nearly 2 million rural poor families were accessing financial services from the formal banking system through SHGs formed under the support and linkage programme launched by the National Bank for Agriculture and Rural Development (NABARD). About 84 per cent of these groups are exclusive women's groups.

### The National Policy on Women's Empowerment (2001)

The goal of this policy is to bring about the advancement of women. Specifically, the objectives of this Policy include:

- i. Creating an environment through positive economic and special policies for full development of women to enable them to realize their full potential;

- ii. The *de-jure* and *de facto* enjoyment of all human rights and fundamental freedom by women on equal basis with men in all spheres-political, economic, social, cultural and civil;
- iii. Equal access to participation and decision making of women in social, political and economic life of nation;
- iv. Equal access to women to health care, quality education at all levels, career and vocational guidance, employment, equal remuneration, occupational health and safety, social security and public office etc.;
- v. Strengthening legal systems aimed at elimination of all forms of discrimination against women;
- vi. Changing societal attitudes and community practices by active participation and involvement of both men and women;
- vii. Mainstreaming of discrimination and all forms of violence against women and the girl child; and
- viii. Building and strengthening partnerships with civil society, particularly women's organizations.

### **The National Health Policy 2002**

The National Health Policy 2002 promises to ensure increased access to women to basic health care and commits highest priority to the funding of the identified programmes relating to women's health. During the Ninth Plan period, several new initiatives were taken as part of the Reproductive and Child Health (RCH) programmes (1997), in order to make it broad-based and client-friendly. All the interventions of the erstwhile programme of Child Survival and Safe Motherhood (CSSM) became part of RCH. During this period, the focus shifted from the individualized vertical interventions to a more holistic integrated life-cycle approach with more attention to reproductive health care. This includes access to essential obstetric care during the entire period of pregnancy, provision of emergency obstetric care as close to the community as possible, improving and expanding early and safe abortion services and provision for treatment of Reproductive Tract Infections/Sexually Transmitted Infections (RTI/STI) cases at the sub-district level. *The National Rural Health Mission 2005 has further zeroed on women's health concerns.*

### **Measures for Welfare of Minorities and Other Disadvantaged Sections**

Welfare and development of weaker sections, including the SCs, STs, OBCs, minorities and those below the poverty line (BPL), has been a priority on the developmental agenda. The share of these sections in the total population is quite substantial. Minorities number 189.44 million, constituting 18.42% of the population. SCs number 166.63 million accounting for 16.20%, and STs, at 84.33 million, represent 8.2% of the country's population (Census, 2001). Estimates for the number of OBCs can be as high as 52% of the country's population (Mandal Commission Report). These categories are overlapping, for instance there are minorities among STs, and also within the OBCs. Amongst Muslims 40.7% belong to the OBC category in 2004-05 (based on self reporting in the 61<sup>st</sup> Round of NSSO), up from 31.7 % in the 55<sup>th</sup> round of NSSO. Among the Hindus, the OBC as percentage of total Hindu population has risen from 38.3% to 43 % during 55<sup>th</sup> and 61<sup>st</sup> rounds. In early seventies the proportion of persons below the poverty or the Head Count Ratio (HCR) was around 55% at All India level and slightly lower in the urban areas. Most recent estimates place all India poverty head count at 22.7% or 252 million based on 365 days recall period in 2004-05 (NSSO 61<sup>st</sup> Round).

A large number of welfare measures have been taken specifically for the benefit of weaker sections, primarily targeting the scheduled castes (SCs), scheduled tribes (STs), other backward classes (OBCs), and the people who subsist below the poverty line (BPL). From time to time, a special thrust has

been provided for the minorities. It is important to appreciate that a very significant proportion of members of minority communities fall within the above mentioned categories. There are minorities within the BPL category, and within ST and OBC categories as well. The overall aim of these welfare measures is to bring about social justice and empowerment of the weaker sections, through ensuring equitable opportunities at every level. The minorities were expected to benefit equally from the large number of developmental programs and targeted schemes, enacted and implemented for weaker sections of society.

In analyzing the welfare measures that affect the status of minorities, efforts made by the central and state governments to reach education, health services, subsidized food, drinking water, shelter, and other basic needs to the people have to be included. Several schemes are being implemented for poverty alleviation, rural and urban employment, formation of self help groups (SHGs) aiming at income generation, and so on. All these schemes have had an impact on the well being of the citizens of India, *irrespective of religion*. Since socially and economically backward among the minorities are part of weaker sections, such schemes are expected to have a positive impact on their status and well being.

**Prominent among programmes, schemes and institutions available to all populations currently are: ICDS and Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE), Sarvshiksha Abhiyan with focus on SC, ST, BPL, OBC, Minorities and Girls; Swrnajayanti Gram Swarozgar Yojana (SGSY), Swrnajayanti Sahari Rozgar Yojana (SSRY), Sampoorna Grameen Rozgar Yojana (SGRY), National Rural Health Mission, Jawaharlal Nehru Urban Renewal Mission, National Slum Development Programme, The Bharat Nirman Programme (Irrigation, Rural Housing, Rural Water Supply, Rural Electrification, Rural telephony, Water Conservation Ground Water Management, Rain Water Harvesting, Micro Irrigation); National Rural Employment Guarantee Programmes/Act, The National Commission On Farmers, National Horticulture Mission, Joint Forest Management; Access To Credit & Risk Management, Focus On Priority Sector Lending, Micro Credit; Micro Small and Medium Development Act of 2006; State Financial Corporations; SIDBI, NABARD, National Highway Development Programme, among others.**

However, keeping in view the specific problems and requirements of some groups and areas, separate provisions are made through enactment and special programmes/ interventions, as

in the case of SC, ST, OBC/Minorities, Women, Children backward regions/districts, the unemployed and the poor among all.

## Programmes for Development of Minorities

It was only in late seventies that backwardness of education of Muslim minority started receiving attention and resulted in some action on the part of the State. The Minorities Commission was set up in 1978. It was a non-statutory body until 1992, when Parliament enacted the National Commission for Minorities Act, and set up the first statutory commission in 1993, called the **National Commission for Minorities (NCM)**. However, it is only after Census 2001 brought out its First Religion Report that statistics on several aspects of population by religion (literacy, educational attainment, sex ratio, work participation became available in the public domain that has led to public debate and action

*A High Power Panel appointed by the Ministry of Home Affairs and headed by Dr. Gopal Singh identified Muslims and Neo-Buddhists as two educationally backward minorities at the national level and proposed that special efforts have to be made to bring the educationally backward minorities on par with rest of the society. Forty four districts with concentration of Muslim Minority were identified for special attention based on 1981 Census.*

### The 15-Point Programme for Minorities 1983

In May 1983, former Prime Minister Indira Gandhi issued a 15-Point Directive on welfare of minorities. **The 15-Point Programme for Minorities was announced in 1983.** This focused on the following priority needs:

- ◆ tackling the situation arising out of communal riots and preventing further communal riots
- ◆ ensuring adequate representation of minority communities in employment under Central and State as well as Public Sector Undertakings
- ◆ other measures, such as ensuring flow of benefits to the minority communities under various development programmes, maintenance and development of religious places, Wakf properties and redressal of grievances of the minorities.
- ◆ In many areas recruitment is done through competitive examinations. Often minority groups are handicapped in taking advantage of the educational system to compete on equal terms in such examinations. To help them overcome these handicaps, steps should be taken to encourage the starting of coaching classes in minority educational institutions to train persons to compete successfully in these examinations.
- ◆ The acquisition of technical skills by those minorities who are today lagging behind would also help in national development. Arrangements should be made to set up ITI and Polytechnics by government or private agencies in predominantly minority areas to encourage admission in such institutions of adequate number of persons belonging to these areas.

The National Policy on Education, 1986 and Revised Programme of Action 1992

**Need to take special steps to advance education of Muslims was noted in the National Policy of Education 1986 its Programme of Action (Revised in 1992) and led to formulation of the Area Intensive Educational Development as a Central Government Scheme of the MHRD. The NPE, 1986 states the following with regard to minorities: “ some minority groups are educationally**

*backward or deprived. Greater attention will be paid to the education of these groups in the interest of equality and social justice. This will naturally include the constitutional guarantees given to them to establish and administer their own educational institutions, and protection to their languages and culture. Simultaneously, objectivity will be reflected in the preparation of textbooks and in all school activities, and all possible measures will be taken to promote an integration based on appreciation of common national goals and ideas, in conformity with the core curriculum” This has been reiterated in the Revised Policy Formulations, 1992.*

Programme of Action, 1992: **The Programme of Action (POA) 1992, first took note of the existing programmes for the Muslim Minorities and also suggested a large number of short term, medium term and long-term measures to promote education of minorities.**

### Short Term Measures

- i. Imparting of technical skills through the Community Polytechnics set up in the predominantly minority concentration.
- ii. Programme for evaluation of textbooks from standpoint of national integration by the NCERT to be taken up more systematically for speedy and effective implementation.
- iii. Orientation programmes for the Principals/Managers and training programmes for teachers from minority educational institutions to be intensified.
- iv. UGC Scheme of Coaching Centres for students belonging to educationally backward minorities to be revamped and expanded to cover more minority concentration areas.
- v. A crash programme for school improvement will be implemented on priority basis in minority concentration areas.
- vi. Scheme of resource centres will be extended.
- vii. Proper monitoring machinery for monitoring of various programmes for the minorities need to be set up.
- viii. Appointment of Regional language teachers for national integration and implementation of three language formula.
- ix. Women Community Polytechnics to be set up in minority concentrated areas on priority area.
- x. Special attention to be paid to locate schools in minority concentration areas so that minority children have access in matters of admission.
- xi. Facility of Urdu medium schools should be provided with in schools with required number of students belonging to backward minority.

### Medium Term measures

- i. Centrally sponsored scheme of Area Intensive Programme for Educationally backward minorities.
- ii. Centrally sponsored Scheme of Modernisation of Madarsa education by introduction of Science, Mathematics, English/Hindi in traditional Madarsas and Maktabs on voluntary basis.
- iii. A Centrally Sponsored scheme of appointment of Urdu teachers in the states where Urdu is spoken by substantial numbers.
- iv. A Centrally Sponsored Scheme of language teachers funded by the Government of India.
- v. A suitable incentive scheme should be devised to encourage States in achieving the targets in respect of minority education.

### Long Term Measures

The Programme of Action has suggested a number of long term measures at different levels of education. At the Upper Primary and Secondary level following programmes have been suggested:

- i. A scheme of in-service training for teachers from minority managed institutions in Science, Mathematics, Social Science, English and Career Guidance through SCERTs and other Resource Centres.
- ii. The Scheme of Orientation Courses for Managers of minority institutions in modern management techniques by the SCERT. There is need to increase its coverage.
- iii. Scheme of appointment of regional language teachers in minority institutions for national integration and implementation of three language formula.
- iv. A scheme of remedial coaching in minority institutions. The scheme should also provide for remedial classes.
- v. Minority managed institutions be given representation in the scheme of computer literacy.

*The scheme for Modernisation of Madrasa Education, 1992, aimed to provide mainstream education to children studying in madrasas, a traditional institution for educating children among the Muslim community. During the Tenth Plan period this scheme was merged with another scheme, namely, the Area Intensive Program for Educationally Backward Minorities. The revised scheme, known as the Area Intensive Madrasa Modernization Program (AIMMP), retains the major objectives of the previous schemes, i.e. modernising Madrasa education so that the children can be part of the national mainstream; and infrastructure development of identified institutions catering to educationally backward minorities*

*The implementation of 15-point programme and the commitments contained in National Policy Resolutions on education has been far from satisfactory.* During the last five decades, various steps taken for promotion of their education have not brought the desired result. Schemes like modernization of Madrasas have partially succeeded. The educational planners and administrators often pay a lip sympathy and are not committed to the task assigned as visualized in the national policies, plans and the constitution. Often the recommendations and suggestions contained in these documents remain on paper only. *The New 15 Point Programme has been reiterated by the present UPA government.*

## Prime Minister's High-level Committee on Social, Economic and Educational Status of Muslim Community in India 2005

The Prime Minister's High level Committee on Social, Economic and Educational Status of Muslim Community (Sachar Committee) in India was set up in 2005 under the Chairmanship of Justice Rajinder Sachar which submitted its report in 2006 (here to referred as Sachar Committee). This Committee noted with concern the low socio economic status of Muslim minority, higher poverty, lower literacy and educational attainments, higher unemployment rates, lower availability of infrastructure and lower participation in decision making, in civil services including police, judiciary and in elected bodies, and above, all a perceived sense of insecurity and discrimination. The findings pose valid questions to a secular democracy based on equality and justice.

### Perspectives and Recommendations of Sachar Committee

While there is considerable variation in the conditions of Muslims across states, the Community exhibits deficits and deprivation in practically all dimensions of development. Mechanism to ensure equity and equality of opportunity to bring about inclusion should such that diversity is achieved and at the same time the perception of discrimination is eliminated.

- ◆ Creation of a National Data Bank (NBD) where all relevant data for various SRCs are maintained is recommended. An autonomous Assessment and Monitoring Authority (AMA) is needed to evaluate the extent of development benefits, which accrue to different SRCs through various programmes.
- ◆ While equity in the implementation of programmes and better participation of Community in the development process would gradually eliminate the perception of discrimination, there is a need to strengthen the legal provisions to eliminate such cases. It is imperative that if the minorities have certain perceptions of being aggrieved, all efforts should be made by the State to find a mechanism by which these complaints could be attended to expeditiously. The Committee recommends that an Equal Opportunity Commission (EOC) should be constituted to look into the grievances of the deprived groups.
- ◆ Procedure should be worked out to increase inclusiveness in governance. The Committee recommends the elimination of the anomalies with respect to reserved constituencies under the delimitation schemes. The idea of providing certain incentives to a 'diversity index' should be explored. A wide variety of incentives can be linked to this index so as to ensure equal opportunity to all SRCs in the areas of education, government & private employment and housing.
- ◆ Relevant functionaries should be sensitive to the need to have diversity and the problems associated with social exclusion. The Committee recommends that a process of evaluating the content of the school textbooks needs to be initiated and institutionalized.
- ◆ The University Grants Commission (UGC) should be encouraged to evolve a system where part of the allocation to colleges and universities is linked to the diversity in the student population. To facilitate admissions to the 'most backward' amongst all the SRCs in the regular universities and autonomous colleges, alternate admission criteria need to be evolved.
- ◆ Providing hostel facilities at reasonable costs for students from, minorities must be taken up on a priority basis.

- ◆ Teacher training should compulsorily include in its curriculum components, which introduce the importance of diversity/plurality within the country and sensitize teachers towards the needs and aspirations of Muslims and other marginalized communities.
- ◆ Given the commitment to provide primary education in the child's mother tongue, the State is required to run Urdu medium schools. Work out mechanisms where by Madarsas can be linked with a higher secondary school board so that students wanting to shift to a regular/mainstream education can do so after having passed from a Madarsa. Recognition of the degrees from, Madarsas for eligibility in competitive examinations is desirable.
- ◆ The Committee recommends promoting and enhancing access to Muslims in Priority Sector Advances. The real need is of policy initiatives that improve the participation and share of the Minorities, particularly Muslims in the business of regular commercial Banks. It may be desirable to have experts drawn from the Community on relevant interview panels and Boards. The country is going through a high growth phase. This is the time to help the underprivileged to utilize new opportunities through skill development and education. Provide financial and other support to initiatives built around occupations where Muslims are concentrated and that have growth potential.
- ◆ The registration of trusts set up by the Community, such as Wakf institutions and mosque committees should be facilitated. Lack

### **New 15-Point Programme for the Welfare of Minorities**

A need was felt to review and recast the 15-point programme for Minorities, to sharply focus action on issues intimately linked to the social, educational and economic uplift of the minorities. While points relating to prevention of communal riots and provision of relief to riot victims continue to have an important place in the revised programme, there are additional points more closely linked with the development of backward minorities, relating specifically to employment, education and improved living conditions. The new 15-point programme was felt to be necessary because of the gaps in the previous programme with regard to amelioration of socio-economic conditions and enhancement of socio-economic status of the minority groups. With a view to removing this lacuna and having a more comprehensive programme for minorities, *the Prime Minister's new 15-point Programme for Welfare of Minorities was formulated, and approved by the Cabinet on 22 June 2006.* This included the following provisions:

- I. **Enhancing opportunities for education:** Education is seen as a necessary intervention to address problems of backwardness of any community. Opportunities will be enhanced through the following measures:
  - i. Equitable availability of ICDS services: The ICDS aims at holistic development of children and lactating/pregnant mothers from disadvantaged sections through nutritional and educational inputs. Blocks/villages with substantial population of minority communities will be covered through ensuring a certain percentage of ICDS projects/centers in such areas.
  - ii. Improving access to school education: Elementary schools are being opened in localities/villages across the country where substantial population of minority community lives, under the Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan, Kasturba Gandhi Balika Vidyalaya Scheme and other similar government schemes.
  - iii. Greater resources for teaching Urdu: Central assistance will be provided for recruitment of Urdu language teachers in primary and upper primary schools that serve a population in which at least one-fourth belong to that language group.
  - iv. Modernising Madrasa education: The Central Plan Scheme of Area Intensive and Madrasa Modernisation Programme will be substantially strengthened and effectively implemented.

- v. Scholarships for meritorious students from minority communities: A scheme for Pre-Matriculation and Post-Matriculation Scholarships for students from minority communities will be formulated and implemented, to ensure that poverty does not impede continuation of studies of meritorious students from minority communities.
- vi. Improving educational infrastructure through the Maulana Azad Education Foundation: Government shall provide all possible assistance to the MAEF, to enable it to expand its activities with the aim of promoting education amongst the educationally backward minorities.

**II. Equitable share in economic activities and employment: All communities and groups constituting a nation should have equal share in economic opportunities and employment.** Proactive measures are necessary if one or more communities lag behind and become increasingly marginalized. Government programs then need to focus towards these communities, with earmarking of targets.

**a. Self-employment and Wage employment for the poor**

- i. Swarnajayanti Gram Swarozgar Yojana (SGSY), primary self-employment programme for rural areas, will have a certain percentage of physical and financial targets earmarked for beneficiaries belonging to the minority communities living below the poverty line.
- ii. Swarnajayanti Shahari Rozgar Yojana (SSRY), the equivalent programme for the urban areas, will have a certain percentage under both its major components (Urban Self-Employment Programme and Urban Wage Employment Programme) earmarked to benefit people from the minority communities living below the poverty line.
- iii. Sampoorna Grameen Rozgar Yojana (SGRY), aimed at providing additional wage employment in rural areas, will have a certain percentage earmarked for beneficiaries from minority communities living below the poverty line. A certain percentage of allocation will also be earmarked for creation of infrastructure in villages that have a substantial minority population.

**b. Upgradation of skills through technical training:** Provision of technical training to the large population of minority communities engaged in low-level technical work or in handicrafts would upgrade their skills and earning capacities. A proportion of all new ITIs will therefore be located in areas predominantly inhabited by minorities, and a proportion of existing ITIs will be upgraded to 'Centres of Excellence' on the same basis.

**c. Enhanced credit support to economic activities:**

- i. The National Minorities Development and Finance Corporation (NMDFC) will be strengthened by government provision of greater equity support to enable it to fully achieve its objectives.
- ii. Bank credit, essential for creating and sustaining self-employment initiatives, will have a target of 40% (of net bank credit from domestic banks) fixed for priority sector lending. The priority sector includes agricultural loans, loans to small-scale industries and small businesses, loans to retail traders, professionals and self-employed persons, educational loans and micro-credit. A certain percentage of priority-sector lending in all categories will be targeted for the minority communities.

**d. Recruitment to State and Central services:** Recruitment of personnel for police personnel at State and Central levels will be advised to give special consideration to minorities. In the case of Railways, Nationalised banks and the Public sector enterprises, such special consideration will also be ensured. Also an exclusive scheme will be launched to provide pre-examination coaching for competitive examinations in government and private institutions for candidates from

minority communities. Government will also provide funds to pay the fees on behalf of meritorious candidates from minority communities.

**III. Improving the conditions of living of minorities:** A large number of people belonging to minority communities live in slums in urban areas; and are often amongst the poorest of the poor in the urban areas, without access to proper housing.

- i. Equitable share in rural housing scheme: The Indira Awas Yojana, which provides financial assistance for shelter to the rural poor living below the poverty line, will have a certain percentage of physical and financial targets earmarked for the minority community beneficiaries.
- ii. Improvement in conditions of slums inhabited by minority communities: A certain percentage of physical and financial targets under the National Slum Development Programme (NSDP) will be earmarked for slums predominantly inhabited by the minority communities. Under NSDP the Central government provides assistance to State governments for developing urban slums through provision of physical amenities, community infrastructure and social amenities.

**IV. Prevention and control of communal riots:** The welfare of minority communities is linked to the effectiveness of measures adopted to address the issue of prevention and control of communal riots.

- i) Prevention of communal incidents: In areas identified as communally sensitive and riot prone, police officers of known efficiency, impartiality and secular record must be posted. The prevention of communal tension should be one of the primary duties of the police and administrative officers.
- ii) Prosecution for communal offences: Special courts should be set up so that offenders who incite communal tensions or take part in communal violence are speedily tried and punishment meted out.
- iii) Rehabilitation of victims of communal riots: Victims of communal violence should be provided immediate relief and prompt and adequate financial assistance for rehabilitation.

The 15-point Programme further provides that care shall be taken to ensure that wherever applicable, there *is separate earmarking of the physical and financial targets for the minority communities under each programme/scheme*, preferably in the ratio of the all-India population of each minority community. Thereafter these targets shall be further split State-wise for each minority community in the ratio of the population of the minority community in that State. This will ensure that the benefits necessarily reach the target group in the proportion of the population of the group in each State.

### **Budgetary Support For Operationalisation of New 15 Point Programme**

The New 15 Point Programme for removal of Muslim Minority backwardness is adequately reflected in Budget 2007-08 as a 'principle of governance' with the FM announcing a number of policies for the education and social development of minorities.

The Budget sends a clear signal that the welfare of minorities as a targeted social group has been put on the same pedestal as SC/STs and OBCs, worthy of specially designed schemes and exclusive provisions. In a way, it marks the continuation of the approach, which saw the responsibility of "minority welfare" being carved out of the social justice ministry to be entrusted to the just-created ministry of minority affairs. An allocation of Rs.63 crore has been made for the National Minorities development and Finance Corporation over last year's Rs.16.47 crore. The Budget also makes a special allocation of Rs.108 crore for multi-sector development programmes for minority-dominated

districts. The number of districts with at least 25% minority population is estimated at 156. Three scholarships have been introduced for minority students. Rupees 72 crore has been earmarked for parametric scholarships, Rs.90 crore for post-matric scholarships and Rs.48.60 crore for merit-cum-means scholarships at undergraduate and PG levels.

## **Specialized Institutional Structures for Minorities**

**The Minorities Commission was set up in 1978. It was a non-statutory body until 1992, when Parliament enacted the National Commission for Minorities Act, and set up the first statutory commission in 1993, called the National Commission for Minorities (NCM). The main objective of NCM is to safeguard the interests of minorities. The state governments of Bihar, Karnataka, UP, MP, West Bengal, AP, Tamil Nadu, Maharashtra and Rajasthan have also set up State Minorities Commissions, and the governments of Assam and Gujarat have set up Minorities Boards. A full fledged Ministry for Minorities has been set up and a National Minority Commission is actively engaged in looking into the interests and welfare of the Minorities.**

The **National Minorities Development and Finance Corporation (NMDFC)** was set up in 1994, to provide special focus to the economic development of Minorities, namely, Muslims, Christians, Sikhs, Buddhists and Parsis, The main objective of the NMDFC is to promote economic and development activities for the benefit of the 'backward sections' among minorities, giving preference to women and occupational groups. The NMDFC provides self employment finance at concessional rates to minorities living close to poverty line (families with an annual income of less than Rs.40,000 in rural and Rs.55,000 in urban areas. By the end of the 10th Plan. The NMDFC is projected to distribute Rs 165 crores to cover 3.01 lakh beneficiaries, with an outreach of 2.19% of the eligible (Double Below Poverty Line, BPL families). The corresponding figures for the 11<sup>th</sup> Plan are Rs. 2658.29 crores, 6.30 lakhs and 5.63%. (Sachar Committee Report, p.184-86).

**The NMDFC** reaches the beneficiaries through State Channelising Agencies (SCAs) nominated by the States and through Non Governmental Organizations (NGOs). Presently, the NMDFC has 35 SCAs in 25 states and two union territories and a network of more than 150 NGOs throughout the country. Mainly Term Loans of up to Rs. 5 lakhs and Micro Finance of RS.25,000 per beneficiary are provided through the SCAs and the NGOs, benefiting 2.87 lakh beneficiaries so far. These two schemes cover about 96% and 3% of the loan funds disbursed by the NMDFC. The cumulative flow of funds and beneficiaries covered under the Term Loan scheme disbursed during 2002-03 and 2005-06 was to the tune of Rs. 400 crores, of which 73% has been disbursed to Muslims. The total number of persons assisted in this period are 1.15 lakh; Muslims constitute 77% of these beneficiaries. Under the Micro Finance scheme, only Rs. 10 crores has been disbursed to about 36 thousand beneficiaries. While Muslims have benefited from the activities of the NMFDC, the total flow of credit from the NMFDC (Ibid.).

The **Maulana Azad Education Foundation (MAEF)**, set up in 1989 and fully funded by MSJE, promotes education among educationally backward minorities. It provides financial assistance for establishment and expansion of schools, residential schools and colleges, provision of laboratory and infrastructure facilities, establishment of computer and vocational centres, construction of hostel buildings, and Maulana Azad National Scholarships for Meritorious Girl Students, as well as Maulana Azad Literacy Awards. The Foundation has a corpus fund of Rs.100 crore. Since inception, the Foundation has sanctioned grant-in-aid of Rs.82.62 crore to 639 NGOs all over the country. Muslims and Buddhists have been the main beneficiaries on account of being declared as educationally backward minorities. During 2005-06, the Foundation has released scholarships amounting to Rs 3.41 crore covering 3415 beneficiaries. The beneficiaries of scholarships include 159 girl students in the North-East region. The Foundation also awards literary awards for outstanding performance in the field of promoting education amongst educationally backward minorities and organizes in-service teacher training programmes in the states of Rajasthan, U.P., Maharashtra and Jharkhand. The Foundation is also running a vocational training centre at Ajmeri Gate, Delhi, imparting training to about 250 women in the trades of Cutting, Tailoring, Textile Designing, Arts & Crafts etc.

The **Central Wakf Council**, a statutory body, implements various charity and educational programmes for weaker sections of society. A wide variety of charitable activities, including establishment of public hospitals, asylums, libraries and caravanserais, children's education, care and rehabilitation of physically disabled people, and provision of regular stipends for the poor and destitute, have traditionally been carried out under the auspices of the Wakf (i.e. endowment of property for charitable purposes). **The Wakf Act, 1995**, provides for better administration and supervision of Wakfs through State Wakf Boards, which have been constituted in 23 States and 5 UTs so far. The Central Wakf Council looks after development of urban Wakf properties, and implements the educational and charity programmes for welfare of weaker sections. The Council also participates in development work by implementing certain schemes, with grant-in-aid from the Central Govt. It received grant-in-aid amounting to Rs.2677.11 lakh up to the year 2004-05. In turn, the Council extended loans of Rs 2704.58 lakh to 14 States up to March 2005. Through its Education Fund, the Council implements scholarship programmes for poor students pursuing technical/professional courses, grants to poor students, matching grants to State Wakf Boards for providing scholarships to school students and establishment of vocational training centres in Muslim concentrated areas. Up to December 2005, a total of 10802 scholarships were awarded by the Council to students of technical degree courses.

**The National Council for Promotion of Urdu Language**, a registered society under the Ministry of HRD, promotes the Urdu language and facilitates minority education. It helps link the Urdu-speaking population with technical and vocational education. It has established 184 Computer Application and Multi-lingual DTP Centres out of which four Centres are exclusively for girls at Ranchi, Bangalore, Lucknow and Hyderabad. This programme has produced 12,970 girl students as medium level professionals during the last five years. The Council has launched a Diploma in Calligraphy and Graphic Design in 15 Centres including three exclusively for girls. A national programme of Urdu learning through Hindi and English medium on distance mode has been launched in which 19,000 learners were registered during 2005-06. The Council has started a Diploma Course in Functional Arabic, for which 14,203 students registered in 2005-07 phase. The Council has received a grant of Rs.65.15 crore from the GoI since 1996.

The **National Commission for Minority Educational Institutions** was set up in 2004 by an ordinance on 11<sup>th</sup> November 2004 to advise the Centre and state governments on any matter regarding the education of minorities, to establish and administer educational institutions of their choice. The National Minority Education Commission Bill allows for direct affiliation of minority educational institutions to central universities. According to this, any minority educational institution

seeking affiliation to a central university will be granted such affiliation. The Commission can also look into specific complaints regarding violation of the constitutional protection guaranteed to minorities to establish and administer educational institutions of their choice, and also any dispute regarding affiliation to a scheduled central university. Within one year of establishment, the Commission received over 250 complaints, petitions and several suggestions. The Government proposes to give additional powers to the Commission to allow it to fulfil its purpose effectively.

The **National Monitoring Committee for Minorities Education:** This Committee was reconstituted in August 2004, and has been meeting periodically since then. A Standing Committee established within the NMCME has visited the States of Uttar Pradesh, Maharashtra, Andhra Pradesh, Karnataka and Kerala for discussions with representatives of minority communities, minority educational institutions, state governments and a cross-section of the people. Thereafter it has submitted its Report to the Government in November 2005. Its various recommendations have been sent to the concerned ministries, departments or state governments for further examination and action.

## C. Demographic Profile Of Women Among Minorities

Women form 48.26% of the total population of India. Thus, women are a minority in the total population of 1027 million, comprising 531.3 million males and 495.7 million females. In all religious communities, women are in minority with the exception of Parsis.

### Population Composition and Growth by Religion

#### Population Distribution

As per Census 2001, at the national level, 828 million (80.5%) Indians are Hindus followed by 138 million (13.4%) as Muslims while Christians constitute 24 million of the total population (2.3%). Nineteen million (1.9%) belong to the Sikh community; 8 million (0.8%) are Buddhists and 4.2 million (0.4%) are Jains. In addition, 6.6 million belong to 'Other Religions and Persuasions' including tribal religions which are not a part of the 6 main religions. About 7 lakh (or 0.7 million) persons have not stated their religion. According to the 2001 census, the total number of Parsis in the country would not exceed 70,000.

**Table 2.1: Selected Demographic Characteristics of Different Religious Communities, India –Census 2001**

Religious community	Population distribution	Growth rate % 1991-2001	Area		Sex Ratio		Population by Age groups			Dependency ratio	
			Rural	Urban	All ages	0-6 years	0-14 years	15-59	60 yrs & above	Young	Old
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
All religions	100.0	22.7	72.8 (100.0)	27.2 (100.0)	933	927	35.3	56.9	7.7	621	131
Hindus	80.5	20.3	82.3	75.6	931	925	34.7	57.4	7.9	604	133
Muslims	13.4	36.0	12.0	16.9	936	950	41.1	52.9	6.0	778	109
Christians	2.3	22.6	2.1	2.9	1009	964	30.4	41.0	8.6	499	137
Sikhs	1.9	18.2	1.9	1.8	893	786	31.0	58.9	10.1	526	166
Buddhists	0.8	24.5	0.7	1.1	953	942	33.4	57.9	8.6	577	146
Jains	0.4	26.0	0.1	1.1	940	870	25.2	64.6	10.2	390	154
Other religions	0.6	103.1	0.9	0.3	992	976	38.1	54.5	7.4	706	118

*Source :Census of India, 2001.*

- ◆ As regards the distribution of the population of these Religious Minorities in various States and Union Territories – while Muslims are mostly concentrated in the States/UTs of Lakshadweep (95 per cent), Uttar Pradesh, West Bengal, Bihar, Jharkhand, Maharashtra, Assam, Andhra Pradesh, Jammu and Kashmir and Karnataka; Christians are concentrated in Nagaland (90 per cent), Mizoram, Meghalaya, Goa, Manipur, Sikkim, Kerala, Tamil Nadu, Andaman and Nicobar Islands and Pondicherry. Sikhs are concentrated in Punjab (59.9 per cent), Chandigarh, Delhi, Haryana, Rajasthan, Uttar Pradesh, Chhattisgarh, Jharkhand, Maharashtra and Uttaranchal; and Buddhists in Sikkim (28.1 per cent), Arunachal Pradesh, Mizoram, Tripura, Jammu and Kashmir, Himachal Pradesh, Maharashtra, Karnataka, Uttar Pradesh, West Bengal, Madhya Pradesh and Chhattisgarh; and Jains in Rajasthan (1.2 per cent), Delhi, Gujarat, Maharashtra, Madhya Pradesh, Karnataka, Dadra and Nagar Haveli, Chandigarh and Haryana. On the whole these minority groups are distributed all over the country, with some areas of special concentrations.
- ◆ The proportion of Muslims among the states is concerned it was found varying between 97 percent for Jammu & Kashmir to 1.6 percent for Punjab. Some other states showing low

proportion of Muslims are Chhatisgarh, Himachal Pradesh and Orissa having around 2 percent each.

- ◆ In case of the Christians their proportion was found above 80% in Nagaland (90.0%), Mizoram (87.0%), and Meghalaya (70.3%) and above 19% in Goa (26.7%), Kerala (19.0%), Arunachal Pradesh (18.7%), Manipur (34%), the lowest being 0.1 percent each for Bihar, Haryana, Himachal Pradesh, Rajasthan and Uttar Pradesh.
- ◆ The highest proportion of the Sikh population was found residing in Punjab 60 percent, whereas, in the states of Andhra Pradesh, Bihar, Karnataka, Kerala, Orissa and Tamil Nadu the absolute number of the Sikhs was found too small amount to zero percent. Dehi has 4% Sikh population and Chandigarh has 16.1%.
- ◆ The Buddhists were found in majority in the state of Maharashtra (6 percent) followed by Himachal Pradesh and Jammu and Kashmir constituting 1.2 percent each.
- ◆ The proportions of the Jains were relatively higher in the state of Maharashtra (1.3 percent) and Rajasthan (1.2 percent).

### Distribution by Rural and Urban Areas

*The 1991 and 2001 data indicates that Muslims are more urbanized than Hindus and Sikhs.* The proportion of Hindus in rural areas declined from 84 per cent in 1991 to 82.3 percent in 2001 and by 0.5 per cent in urban areas to 75.9 per cent. In contrast, the Muslim population increased in both rural and urban areas during the decade. Muslims are more urban than Hindus when all India figures are taken in to consideration. Besides Muslims, a greater proportion of Christians, Buddhists and Jains are urban residents. Jains are the most urbanized as compared to any other religious minority group.

### Decadal growth rates

Decadal growth rates have come down from 23.8 to 21.5 for all religions during 1991-2001; for Hindus the corresponding decline is from 22.7 to 19.3; for Muslims from 32.9 to 29.6; for Sikhs from 25.5 to 17; for Buddhists from 36.1 to 22.8. For Christians, these figures have increased from 17.7 to 22.5 and from 24.1 to 25.9 for Jains during the same period.

### Population by Broad Age Groups

**Younger Age Group (0-14 years):** *Among all the religious communities the highest proportions of the younger age group (0-14), was observed for the Muslims (45.1) percent and lowest among the Jains (25.2 percent).* This age group of children require to be provided ECCE and Elementary schooling and adequate health and nutritional inputs and have also to be saved from ills like child labour, child marriage, child abuse, trafficking, among others. On the contrary while considering the age group 60 years and above the phenomenon has been found reverse, lowest proportion for the Muslims (6 percent) and highest for the Jains (10.2 percent).

**Population in age group 15-59 years:** With regard to the population in *the working age group* by religious communities is concerned the highest value has been found for the Jains (60.6 percent) followed by Christians (61 percent) *and lowest among the Muslims nearly (53 percent).* While in case of the Hindus, Sikhs and Buddhist the values were found varying between 57 to 59 percent.

**Population of 60 years` and above:** It is seen from Table 5 above that 7.45 percent of Indian population belongs to 60 years and above. Jains have maximum proportion of older persons (9.94 percent) followed by Sikhs (9.77 percent). The proportion of female elderly of Jains is also maximum (10.69 percent) followed by Sikhs (10.05 percent). As against this, the Sikhs have maximum male elderly proportion (9.53 percent) followed by Jains (9.23 percent). *It has been seen that proportion of Muslims elderly is lowest (5.75 percent) as against 7.45 percent of total population of the country.* The reasons for low population of older Muslims and modalities for raising their expectancy of life need to be found out and corrective measures taken in this regard.

### Dependency Ratio

*Religion wise Young dependency ratio is the highest among Muslims(778) followed by Christians (499) and the lowest among Jains( 390).* However, the situation is obverse in the case of old dependency ratio.

### Sex-Ratio

Sex-ratio is one of the most important indicators that reflect the status of women in their own community, society and in the country. Overall, in India the sex ratio (number of females per 1000 males) has declined from 946 in 1951, to 933 in 2001.

Data from the 2001 Census shows that Christians account for the highest sex ratio of 1009 (females to 1000 males) in `All Age` groups at `All India` level, while Sikhs have the lowest sex ratio of 893. *The other minorities i.e. Muslims, Buddhists and Jains maintain levels slightly above the national average of 933 -- that is, 936 for Muslims, 953 for Buddhists and 940 for Jains.* The category `Other Religions` exhibits a high sex ratio i.e. 992. But those belonging to the majority religion, i.e. Hindus, exhibit the lowest sex ratio i.e., 931. Amongst the States/UTs (Annexure - I), while Kerala claims the highest sex ratio of 1058 females for 1000 males. Daman and Diu have the lowest of 710 amongst the `All Religions` of `All Ages`.

Analyzing the sex ratios among the different minority groups in different parts of the country, we see that Pondicherry claims the highest sex ratio of 1097 for Muslims, while the national average is 936. Amongst Christians, Goa claims the highest sex ratio of 1107, while their national average is 1009. Amongst Sikhs, Delhi leads with the highest sex ratio of 925, while the national average stands at 893. Amongst the Buddhists, the highest sex ratio is 1012 in Chhattisgarh, against the national average of 953. Among Jains, Kerala has the highest sex ratio i.e. 996 against the national average of 940. Also among Hindus, Kerala has the highest sex ratio of 1058 against the national average of 931. Punjab, having the maximum Sikh population, has the lowest sex ratio among states and UTs, i.e. 897. In other states and UTs too, the sex ratio among Sikhs is below 900. For Buddhists too, most states and UTs have returned a sex ratio less than 900. (Table 3 at Appendix I)

**Child sex ratio :** In respect of **child sex ratio** (number of female to male children in the age group 0-6 years), the `All India` figure is 927. The 2001 Census reveals the alarming trend of declining child sex ratio. This trend is present in all the communities, though there are marked variations. The picture of the child sex ratio indicated community-wise is discussed here. (Annexure - II provides). Among the minorities, the **Christians** claim the highest child sex ratio of 964, while Sikhs reveal the lowest i.e. 786. *The 0-6 sex ratios among Muslims and Buddhists are higher than the national average of 927 – it is 950 among Muslims, and 942 among Buddhists.* For Jains however, the 0-6 sex ratio is 870, which is much lower than the national average. Hindus have reported a child sex ratio of 925, which is a little lower than the national average. The `Other

Religions', however, have a child sex ratio of 976, which is the highest among all the categories. This pattern is also evident at the level of most of the states and UTs. ( Table 4 at Appendix I)

In respect of 0-6 years, amongst **Muslims**, Jammu & Kashmir has the highest sex ratio of 980, while Punjab has the lowest of 879. Amongst Christians, Dadra & Nagar Haveli claim the highest child sex ratio of 1009; in all 20 states/UTs have reported a child sex ratio above 951 for the Christian community. Amongst Sikhs, in 27 states/UTs the child sex ratio is less than 900. In 9 states/UTs, the child sex ratio for Sikhs is less than 800: these include Punjab, Chandigarh, Delhi and Haryana. Amongst Buddhists, Pondicherry holds the highest child sex ratio of 1000, as opposed to which Punjab, Chandigarh, Delhi, Haryana and Rajasthan have low child sex ratios below 900. Amongst Jains, major states with substantial Jain population including Gujarat and Rajasthan have a child sex ratio as low as 832 and 878 respectively; the figure for Madhya Pradesh is slightly better at 906. Thus, it is observed that sex ratios for all the religious communities (overall as well as child sex ratio) are low in northern states/UTs (barring a few exceptions). Disregard, neglect and even outright elimination of the girl children in nearly all parts of the country is evident in all the religious communities, and is most noticed in the northern states/UTs including Punjab, Haryana, Chandigarh and Delhi.

## Life Expectancy at Birth

The Life Expectancy at Birth of females in India has been rising steadily. It has increased from 55.7 years in 1981 to 65.3 at 2001. In fact female life expectancy is now higher than male life expectancy. The rate of increase has significantly bypassed the rate of increase of male life expectancy. Female life expectancy recorded a remarkably high increase of 5.6 years between 1989-93 and 1996-2001. Average life expectancy at birth is higher than the average by about one year.

## Birth and Death Rates

The overall **birth rate** has declined from 33.9 in 1981 to 24.8 in 2003. The **death rate** has also declined from 12.5 in 1981 to 8.0 in 2003. (Data from 'Health Information of India 2005', GOI, Bureau of Health Intelligence.) The decline in death rates is more in the case of females than for males. Infant mortality rate As the NCAER study reports, while *the Crude Birth Rate (CBR) amongst Hindus was 32, it was 39 amongst Muslims and 20 amongst Christians*. Their relative TFRs stood at 4.2, 5.8 and 2.1 respectively. Regarding use of family planning methods by these religious communities, *contraception is practiced least among Muslims (CDR of 25 per cent)*. Contraception is practiced equally among Christians and Hindus (CDR of 50 per cent).

## Infant and Child Mortality Rate

The Census figures for IMR in 2001 are very high; *99 for Hindus; 95 for Muslims; 77 for Christians and 82 for Sikhs*. The NFHS II ( 1998-99) data gave much lower figures of 77 for Hindus; 59 for Muslims; 49 for Christians and 53 for Sikhs and the SRS data 2003 gives a national average of 60 only.

Reduction in infant and child mortality falls within the top priorities as far as public health in India is concerned. India has high levels of infant and under five mortality. Roughly 1.75 million Indian children die each year before reaching their first birthday. *Muslims have an infant mortality rate lower than that of the Hindus but higher than that of Christians or Sikhs*. The following table would help illustrate this better.

Table 2.2: Differentials Religious in Infant Mortality Rate

	All	Hindu	Muslim	Christian	Sikh
India	72	73	72	77	*
Rural	77	77	78	*	*
Urban	58	58	57	*	*

Source: A Report: *Social, Economic and Educational status of the Muslim Community of India*

- The IMR is obtained by graduation but for some communities, the series was too erratic and hence the IMR is not shown.

Table 2.3 : Infant and child mortality rate among different communities and castes

Community/Caste	Infant mortality rate	Child mortality rate
1	2	3
Hindu	77.1	32.4
Muslim	58.8	25.4
Christian	49.2	19.7
Sikh	53.3	12.3
Jain	*(46.7)	*(11.3)

Buddhist/Neo-Buddhist	53.6	14.1
No religion	*(77.6)	*(77.2)
Scheduled castes	83.0	39.5
Scheduled tribes	84.2	46.3
Other Backward Class	76.0	29.3

Source: NFHS-II 1998-99, Report

\*Based on 250-499 children surviving to the beginning of the age interval

Among religious communities, Jains have the lowest infant mortality rate (46.7 percent), followed by Christians (49.2 percent), Buddhist/Neo-Buddhist (53.6 percent) and Muslims (58.8 percent). Infant Mortality Rate is highest among Scheduled Castes (83.0 percent), Scheduled Tribes (84.2 percent), and Other Backward Classes (76.0 percent). Among Hindus, infant mortality rate is 77.1 percent. However, the Census figures for infant mortality rate in 2001 are very high, compared to NFHS-II (1988-89) data, i.e. 99 for Hindus, 95 for Muslims, 77 for Christians and 82 for Sikhs. The position in respect of child mortality rates among different communities/castes also reflect similar picture. Mortality rate differentials may be due to factors other than religion alone e.g. urban or rural residence or economic conditions of the family or availability of health amenities, etc.

#### Age at Marriage

Legal age at marriage is 18 years for girls and 21 years for boys. The effective mean age at marriage of currently married females in 2001 was 18.2 for all religions, 18.1 for Hindus; 18.2 for Muslims; 21.0 for Christians ;20.3 for Sikhs; 18.5 for Buddhists and 20.1 for Jains.

Table 2.4: Religion-wise data on age at marriage by sex

	Male age at marriage	Female age at marriage		
	>21 years	<10 years	10-17	>18 years
1	2	4	5	6
All religions	34.6	3.0	40.5	43.5
Hindu	51.3	2.6	34.4	37.0
Muslim	46.6	2.2	41.0	43.2
Christian	19.8	1.2	15.2	16.4
Sikh	12.9	1.1	15.9	17.0
Buddhist	39.1	2.8	38.2	41.0
Jain	25.6	1.6	23.1	24.7
Others	18.6	2.3	33.7	36.0

Source: Census 2001

In India as a whole, among men who married below the age of 21 years, 51% were Hindus, nearly 47% Muslims, 39% Buddhists, 26% Jains, 20% Christians and 13% Sikhs. In the case of females who married below the legal age of marriage, the percentage values were 37% Hindus, 43% Muslims, 16% for Sikhs, Buddhists, approximately 25% Jains and 36% 'Others'.

***In 2001, 40.5% females were married before the age of eighteen India; 34.4% among Hindus, 41% Muslims, 38.2% Buddhists, 23.1% Jains, 15.2% Christians, 15.9% Sikhs.*** The proportion of girl child marriages (less than 10 years of age) was 3 percent of the total marriages to total marriages. Further, among the different religious communities, the highest proportion of girl child marriages was found among Hindus (2.6%) and Muslims (2.2%) and the lowest among the Sikhs (1.1%).

Madhya Pradesh has the highest proportion of females married before eighteen at 53.8% followed by Bihar (53.7%); Rajasthan (51.7%); and in Andhra (50%). In Punjab only 15.6% females marry before eighteen, in Kerala 21.8% and 25% in Gujarat. Among Muslims girls marrying before eighteen is as high as 56.3% in West Bengal, 54.7% in Haryana and 53.7% in Jharkhand.

## Total Fertility Rate

The Total Fertility Rate (TFR), which stood at 3.2 in 1998, has come down to 2.8 in 2002. There has been a large decline in fertility in all-religious groups including the Muslims. The Total Fertility Rate (TFR), and the mean number of children ever born to women of age 40–49 by religious communities and castes are given in Table 2.4 below:

**Table 2.5 : Total Fertility Rate among different communities, Scheduled Castes, Scheduled Tribes**

Community/Caste	Total Fertility Rate	Mean number of children ever born to ever married women age 40–49 years
1	2	3
Hindu	2.78	4.34
Muslim	3.59	5.72
Christian	2.44	3.47
Sikh	2.26	3.59
Jain	1.9	3.32
Buddhist/Neo-Buddhist	2.13	4.05
No religion	3.91	*(5.62)
Scheduled Castes	3.15	4.85
Scheduled Tribes	3.06	4.74
Other Backward Classes	2.83	4.43

Source: NFHS-II 1998-99 Report

\*Based on 25-49 unweighted cases

As is evident from the data above, total fertility rate is very high, among 'No Religion' category (3.91 percent), Muslims (3.59 percent), Scheduled Castes (3.15 percent) and Scheduled Tribes (3.06 percent). Total fertility rate is lowest among Jains (1.9 percent). In other communities, total fertility rate ranges between 2.26 percent among Sikhs to 2.83 percent among Other Backward Classes. Similarly, average number of children ever born to married women of 40-49 years are highest among Muslims (5.72) followed by Scheduled Castes (4.85), Scheduled Tribes (4.74), Other Backward Classes (4.43), Hindus (4.34) and Buddhists (4.05) with lowest figure of 3.32 among Jains.

## Average Size of Indian household

The size of an average Indian household in 2001 was 5.3 for all religions; 5.2 for Hindus; 6.2 for Muslims; 4.8 for Christians ; 5.6 for Sikhs ; 4.9 for Buddhists and 5.2 for Jains.

**Table 2.6: Children ever born and average household size for religious communities**

	Children ever born	Average household size		
		Census 2001	NFHS-II	NSSO
1	2	3	4	5
All religions	3.9	5.3	5.6	4.9
Hindu	3.8	5.2	5.5	4.9
Muslim	4.9	6.2	6.6	5.7
Christian	3.3	4.8	5.1	4.6
Sikh	3.5	5.6	5.6	5.3
Buddhist	3.9	4.9	5.3	-
Jain	3.0	5.2	5.3	-
Others	3.8	5.2	5.7	4.9

Source: Census of India 2001, NFHS-II, NSSO

The number of children, a woman has ever borne is a cohort measure of fertility. Children ever born to ever-married women by their religion revealed that the proportion of ever married women having '0' parity for the 'Other' religious communities was nearly percent followed by Muslims 15.2%, Hindu 14.7%, Christian 14.5%, Buddhist 12.6% and for Sikhs 11.2%. The percentage of ever-married women with 4 and higher parity was found varying between 44.5 for Muslims to 25.1 percent for Jains.

## Maternal Mortality Rate (MMR)

According to World Health Organization, worldwide about 5 lakh women die every year from pregnancy and childbirth related causes and most of these deaths occur in developing countries. Females in India continue to die on account of pregnancy and related factors of malnutrition, stunted growth, anemia, early marriage, recurrent pregnancies and unsafe abortions. Presently, the average MMR is 407 deaths per one lakh live births, the *lowest being Gujarat (28) and the highest being Uttar Pradesh (707)*. The rural urban differences are minimal in Kerala but are extremely large in nearly all states. Rural urban differentials are wide; the Rural MMR is as high as 619 compared to 267 in urban areas according to NFHS-2 which speaks of the devastating neglect and inadequate structures and institutions for safe delivery in rural areas after sixty years of freedom. **NFHS-3 reports 301 maternal deaths per one lakh live births.** (*Times of India, March 8, 2007*)

Further, in both National Family Health Survey-I (NFHS-I) and National Family Health Survey-II (NFHS-II), the rural Maternal Mortality Ratio is much higher than urban Maternal Mortality Ratio (434 compared with 385 in National Family Health Survey-I and 619 compared with 267 in National Family Health Survey-II). This finding suggests the need for ensuring that all pregnant women receive adequate antenatal care during pregnancy and that deliveries take place under hygienic condition with assistance of trained medical practitioners.

## Nutritional Status of women

Nutritional status of women belonging to Christian, Sikh and Jain communities are generally better than others. Sikh women have the highest mean height of 155.0 cm followed by Jain (153.6 cm) and Christian (152.1 cm) women. Women below 145 cm in height are lowest among Sikhs (3.9 percent) followed by Jain (7.6 percent) and Christian (10.3 percent). Nutritional status of women belonging to Buddhists and no religion category is worse.

**Table 2.7 : Nutritional status of women 1998–99**

Religion (Caste /Tribe)	Height			Weight				
	Mean Height (cm)	%age below 145 cms	Number of Women for height	Mean body mass index (BMI)	%age with BMI below 18.5 Kg/,2	%age with BMI of 25.0 Kg/m2 or more	%age with BMI of 30.0 kg/m2 or more	Number of women for BMI
Scheduled Caste	150.3	17	15234	19.5	42.1	5.8	0.9	14,040
Scheduled Tribe	150.8	13.5	7175	19.1	46.3	3.3	0.5	6,590
Other Backward Castes	151	13.5	27295	20.2	35.8	9.4	1.7	25,474
Other	152	10.9	32334	21	30.5	15.4	3.7	30,345
Hindu	151.1	13.5	67,895	20.1	36.9	9.6	2	63,394
Muslim	151.5	12.3	10,108	20.5	34.1	12.4	2.8	9,207
Christian	152.1	10.3	2,100	21.4	24.6	17.6	3.4	1,981
Sikh	155	3.9	1,358	23	16.4	30.1	8	1,280
Jain	153.6	7.6	300	23.4	15.8	33.7	9.8	286
Buddhist/Neo-Buddhist	149.9	17.3	638	20.4	33.3	10.5	2.8	607
Other	149.5	24.6	270	19.2	49.4	7	0.4	261
No religion	149.8	24.1	42	20.6	34.5	13.8	3.4	37

Source: NHFS 1998-99 National report

## Anaemia

There are some differences in the prevalence of anaemia by background characteristics, but anaemia is substantial for women in every population group. About half of Hindu, Muslim, and Buddhist women are anaemic. Anaemia is slightly lower among Christians and substantially lower among Sikhs and Jains. The highest levels of anaemia are evident for women from “other” religions and women with no religious affiliation by caste/tribe, Scheduled tribe women have the highest levels of anaemia (65 %), followed by Scheduled caste women (56%) and women from other backward classes at 51 %. Women who are not in any of these three groups have the lowest levels of anaemia.

**Table 2.8: Anaemia among women**

		Percentage of women with:			
		Mild anaemia	Moderate anaemia	Severe anaemia	Number of women
Hindu	52.4	35.5	15	2	65,507
Muslim	49.6	34.2	14.2	1.3	9,545
Christian	47.1	30.7	14.4	2	2,007
Sikh	39.6	26.6	11.8	1.2	1,315
Jain	42.5	30.8	10.9	0.8	290
Buddhist/Neo-Buddhist	48.6	30.1	15.3	3.1	630
Other	75.7	47.3	24.6	3.8	265
No religion	59.5	34.2	24.9	0.4	40
<b>Caste/Tribe</b>					
Scheduled Castes	56	37.2	16.5	2.3	14,657
Scheduled Tribe	64.9	41.2	21.4	2.3	6,908
Other Backward Class	50.7	34.3	14.5	2	26,246
Other	47.6	33.3	12.9	1.5	31,112

Source: NFHS-II 1998-99, National Report

## Contraceptive Acceptance

Use of contraceptives is more among Sikhs, Jains, Buddhists and Christians. As against this, use of contraceptives is least among Muslims followed by no religion category, Scheduled Tribes, Scheduled Castes, Other Backward Classes and Hindus. Further, male sterilization is adopted by very few among all communities and castes. However, male as well as female sterilization is lowest among no religion category and Muslims as compared to highest female sterilisation among Buddhists. Women bear the brunt of careless male attitudes towards contraception and the only device they resort to is abortion, abortion, abortion and sterilization, finally. Male participation in contraception is poor to say the least. Data from SRS indicate that the major causes of maternal mortality continue to be unsafe abortions, ante-partum and post-partum haemorrhage, anaemia, obstructed labour, hypertensive disorders and post-partum sepsis. There has been no major change in the causes of maternal mortality over years

## Work Participation Rate

The 1991 and 2001 Census data attempt to capture the status of women as workers. The percentage of workers to total population for all religions is 39.1 percent and is 25.6 for females (2001). For religious minorities, Buddhists have the highest work participation rate (WPR) of 40.6 percent; Christians are next, with a WPR of 39.7 percent. The WPR for Sikhs is 37.7%; for

Parsis 32.9%; and

the lowest WPR -- 31.3% -- is recorded for the Muslim population. The WPR for Hindus is 40.4%, which is marginally higher than the WPR for 'all religions'.

**Table 2.9 : Work Participation Rate among different communities**

Communities/Castes	Male	Female
1	2	3
All Communities	51.7	25.6
Hindus	52.4	27.5
Muslims	47.5	14.1
Christians	50.7	28.7
Sikhs	53.3	20.2
Buddhists	49.2	31.7
Jains	55.2	9.2
Other religions	52.5	44.2

Source: Census 2001

**Female work participation rates are uniformly lower than males, but the proportion is not consistent.**

- ◆ Male WPR is highest among **Jains** at 55.2%, but their female WPR is lowest at 9.2%.
- ◆ Male WPR for **Sikhs** is 53.3%, but female WPR is much less at 20.2%.
- ◆ For **Christians** male WPR is 50.7%, female WPR 28.7%.
- ◆ For **Buddhists** male WPR is 49.2% and female 31.7%, thus displaying the lowest gender disparity.
- ◆ For **Muslims**, male WPR is 47.5%, but female WPR is only 14.1%.

Thus, among the minorities, female WPR is highest among Buddhists (31.7%) and Christians (28.7%), followed by Sikhs (20.2%), Muslims (14.1%) and Jains (9.2%). The gap between the female WPRs of different minority communities is very sharp, to the tune of 22.5 percent between the lowest and highest values. On the other hand, the gap between male WPRs of the different minority communities is only 7.7 percent.

## Category of workers

**Table 2.10: Distribution of Category of Women Workers among different Communities**

Communities	Nature of work				Total
	Cultivators in own land (CL)	Agricultural labourers (AL)	Household Industry (HHI)	Other Workers (OW)	
1	2	3	4	5	6
Hindu	33.1	27.6	3.8	35.5	100
Muslim	20.7	22.0	8.1	49.1	100
Christians	29.2	15.3	2.7	52.8	100
Sikhs	32.4	16.8	3.4	47.3	100
Buddhists	20.4	37.6	2.9	39.2	100
Jains	11.7	3.3	3.3	81.7	100
Other religions	49.9	32.6	3.2	14.3	100

Source: Census 2001

The proportionate share of different minority religions in each category of workers (four categories, that is Cultivators on own Land (CL), agricultural labourers (AL), Household Industry (HHI) workers and 'other workers' (OW)) reveals interesting facts.

At the aggregated level 31.7% are **Cultivators**. When we compare workers in the different communities (including Hindus), we find 33% of Hindus, 32.4% of Sikhs, 29.2% of Christians, 20.4% of Buddhists, 20% of Muslims, and 11.7% of Jains are Cultivators. At the aggregated level 26.5 percent of workers are **Agricultural labourers (AL)**. The pattern among the six religious communities reveals that Buddhists with 37.6% percent have maximum workers as AL, followed by Hindus with 27.6%. Among Muslims, AL accounts for 22.1% workers; 16.8% among Sikhs; 15.8 percent among Christians, and only 3.3 percent among Jains.

On the whole, Hindus (60.7%) and Buddhists (58%) have a higher proportion of workers in agricultural pursuits, while the rest have less than 50% in this sector. Sikhs have 49.2% workers; Muslims 42.7%, and Christians 44.5% in agricultural pursuits. **In other words, the majority of workers among these communities are engaged in non-agricultural pursuits.**

In the category of **Household Industry (HHI)** workers, the data reflects the artisan character of Muslim workers. Whereas 8.1% Muslim workers are engaged in HHI, the national average of workers in HHI is only 4.2%. Among Hindus 3.8% workers are in HHI, while around 3.4% Sikh and 3.3% Jain workers are in this category. Only 2.7% Christian and 2.9% Buddhist workers are in HHI.

- ◆ Among **Buddhists** there is a high proportion of agricultural labourers (37.6%), while only 20.4% are Cultivators on own Land. Proportion of HHI is small (2.9%), and 39.2% are in OW. Thus, the high female WPR correlates, in the case of Buddhists, with the high proportion of agricultural labourers (AL).
- ◆ Among **Christians**, a high proportion of workers are Cultivators on own land (29.2%), and only 15.3% are AL. Only 2.7% are in HHI, while the largest proportion are in 'Other Work' (52.8%). Quite high female WPR among Christians is likely to be due to a large number being in 'Other Work', which includes the services sector.
- ◆ For **Sikhs**, 32.4% workers are in CL, 47.3% in OW, and only 16.8% are in AL and 3.4% in HHI. Female WPR is quite low because of low female WPR both in CL and in OW categories, among the Sikhs.
- ◆ For **Muslims**, 49.1% are in 'OW' category, while CL and AL account for 20.7% and 22.0% respectively. Another 8.1% Muslim workers are occupied in HHI. **The low female WPR among Muslims stems from relatively low female WPR in all the categories.**
- ◆ The **Jain** community has a huge proportion in OW (81.7%). The rest are in CL (11.7%), AL (3.3%) and HHI (3.3%). Known as a business community, female the extremely low female WPR rate is due to the low female WPR in business among the Jains.

The Indian economic structure is showing a shift towards non-agricultural sector. The category of 'Others' (OW) includes all those workers, who do not fall under the three distinct categories above. This includes workers in tertiary sector, such as services, manufacturing, trade and commerce and allied activities. Jains with 81.7 percent workers are classified as OW, are followed by 52.8 percent among Christians, 49.1 percent among Muslims, and 39.2% among

Buddhists, and 35.5% among Hindus. The business character of the Jain workers and the service sector work of the Christians is evident in this data set.

A majority of women are found in the vast rural and urban unorganized sector. According to an estimate by the National Commission on Self Employed Women (1988), around 94 per cent of the total female workforce operates within this highly exploited sector. Primarily, women lack opportunity to acquire skills and training which could facilitate occupational shifts as also support services which are required in order to alleviate the burden of their household duties, thus releasing women for paid work.

Employment of women in the rural unorganized sector is principally traced to nine employment systems. viz, agriculture, dairying, small animal husbandry, fisheries, social and agro-forestry, khadi and village industries, handlooms, handicrafts and sericulture. The women of religious minorities, especially Muslim women, have a big share in these very occupations. Most of the jobs in these sectors are low paid and performed by women.

A large proportion of the SCs and STs, including a significant overlap with the weaker sections among the Hindus, Buddhists, and Muslims, are employed in agriculture, as agricultural labourer. Their depressed economic situation is reflected in the low economic figures for these communities, since these sections often subsist at Below Poverty Line, in abject poverty, with lack of basic requirements, even of adequate food, nutrition, clothing and shelter. The condition of women amongst these sections is worst off, since the women typically eat last and least, and also since they are responsible for running the household with whatever meager income there is.

The NSSO in their 61<sup>st</sup> Round of survey found that more than half of the workers in the rural areas were **self-employed**, the proportion being the highest among the Muslim workers both Males (60 %) and females (75%). In the urban areas also, the same pattern is observed. The proportion of regular wage/salaried workers was highest among Christians in both rural and urban areas among both males and females. The proportion of casual labourers was highest among Hindus for females in both rural (34 %) and urban (18 %) areas.

About 37 % of Hindu households were dependent on 'self-employment in agriculture'. The corresponding proportion was 35% for the Christians and 26 % for the Muslims. The proportions of households depending on 'self-employment in non-agriculture' were 14 percent for the Hindus, 28% for the Muslims and 15 % for the Christians. In the case of 'rural labour' households, the proportions varied from 32 %(Muslims) to 37 % (Hindus).

In urban areas the proportion of Hindu households depending on 'self-employment', 'regular wage/salary' and 'casual labour' were 36 %, 43% and 12 % respectively, whereas the corresponding shares for the Muslims were 49 %, 30 % and 14 % respectively and for the Christians %percent, 47 % and 11 % respectively.

***Summing up, more Muslim workers than any other religious community are involved in household industry work, which is indicative of their artisan nature. Jains have the lowest number of workers involved in agriculture, which is preceded by Muslims, Christians and Sikhs.***

## Poverty

The NSSO 55<sup>TH</sup> Round, July 1999 estimated levels of poverty among various religious communities and it was noted that poverty as a phenomenon was more acute in rural areas than urban areas for all religious communities except Muslims and Sikhs as shown in Table 17 below:

**Table 2.11 : Population of minority communities living below the poverty line**

	Percent below poverty line (Rural)	Percent below poverty line (Urban)
Hindus	27.80	21.66
Muslims	27.22	36.92
Christians	19.82	11.84
Sikhs	2.95	10.86
Others	33.05	18.51

Source: NSSO 55<sup>TH</sup> Round, July 1999- June 2000.

The Indian government is taking a very wide range of measures for the welfare and development of weaker sections of society. The focal areas have been empowerment through education, and economic empowerment. Separate data for the minorities was not available on the national scale until the 2001 Census. The Tenth Plan indicated, however, that as a result of developmental programmes and schemes, the ratio of SCs and of STs below poverty line has been decreasing. During 1993-94 to 1999-2000, the percentage of SC population below poverty line came down from 48.11% to 36.25% in rural areas. In urban areas, the ratio of SC population below poverty line came down from 49.48% to 38.47% during the same period. The percentage change in ST population below poverty line came down from 51.94% to 45.86% in rural areas and 41.14% to 37.75% in urban areas during the same period. As corresponding information on poverty levels for all religions is not available, the current estimates of poverty head count based on 61<sup>st</sup> NSSO do not give a very heartening picture of the Muslim Minority.

Most recent estimates place all India Poverty Head count at 22.7% based on 365 recall period 2004-05. (In absolute numbers, this amounts to over to 252 million people spread cross India). *SCs/STs together are the most poor with a Head Count Ratio (HCR) of 35% followed by the Muslims who record the second highest incidence of poverty with 31% people below the poverty line. Incidence of poverty among Muslims in urban areas is the highest with HCR of 38.4%. The Hindu (general) is the least poor category with an HCR of only 8.7% and the OBCs are at intermediary level HCR of 21% closed to the all India average. (Sachar Committee 2006).*

### **Income and Expenditure: Religious Community Wise**

In the first ever exercise in mapping the economic contours of different religious communities in India, the National Council of Applied Economic Research's (NCAER), National Survey of Household Income and Expenditure (2004-05) comes out with some very striking findings. The Sikhs are the most prosperous lot in India, with highest household income, expenditure and ownership of cars, two wheelers, television and refrigeration. Christians and other smaller communities don't lag too far behind either. *Hindus and Muslims are closer than one thought as far as average household income expenditure, savings and even ownership of select consumer goods go. In fact, the gap between the two communities narrows appreciably, even reverses in some cases in favour of Muslims, in rural India.*

The survey collected primary data from a sample of approximately 63,000 households out of preliminary listed sample of 4,40,000 households spread over 1,976 villages (250 districts) and 2,255 urban wards (342 towns) covering 64 national Sample Survey (NSS) regions in 24 states/UTs.

Hindus and Muslims, at a national level, run neck-and neck on average annual household income(AHI) of Rs. 61,423 and Rs. 58,420, respectively. To put it differently, an average Hindu

household has an income of Rs.168 per day, while an average Muslim, household earns Rs.160 a day. In rural India, an average Hindu AHI is Rs.49, 077 with Muslim close behind with AHI of Rs.47,805. An average Muslim household, at the national level, spends more than a Hindu one, with annual household routine expenditure (AHRE) at Rs. 40,327 compared to Rs.40, 009 for the latter. Sikh household AHRE is highest at Rs.60,475 with Christians at Rs.45,291. In rural India, Muslim AHRE (Rs.33,711) is higher than Hindu (Rs.32,555) and compares well with Christian (Rs.38,068).

*Interestingly, Muslims who are at the bottom, as far as income is concerned, top the list when AHRE is measured as a percentage of AHI. They spend over 69% of their income on routine household expenditure followed by Sikhs (66%) and Hindus (64%). While the average national AHI for all religious groups at 2004-05 prices, stood at Rs.62,066, the patterns across specific groups reflect stark differential. The smaller religious communities (excluding Christians and Sikhs) taken as the whole are an affluent lot with AHI of over Rs.1 lakh. Sikhs and Christians leave larger communities way behind with AHI of Rs.91,153 and 70,644 respectively. And this has a clear impact on their expenditure and ownership patterns for select consumer goods. The penetration of cars is highest among Sikhs (17.3% households), followed by Christians (10.95%).*

At the national level, Hindu and Muslim households virtually mirror each other on ownership of a host of products-cars (5.1% and 4.3%), two wheeler (35.3% and 31.3%), refrigerator (17.9% and 15.9%) and radio 49.5% and 51.3%). Turn to rural India and Muslim households have an edge on not just AHRE, but even car ownership (2.6% versus 2.4% of Hindu households). The only oddity in ownership between Hindus and Muslims is on television, with national penetration at 62.8% and 54%, respectively. Even rural Muslim, household lag here with penetration of just 39.1% compared to 52% for the majority community. (Economic Times, 05.04.2007).

## **Average Income**

According to a study conducted by Centre for Research, Planning & Action, New Delhi, in January 2006 in five states (Maharashtra, Punjab, Tamil Nadu, Uttar Pradesh and West Bengal), average income per family per month is estimated at Rs. 2,103. This is the highest at Rs. 3173 in Maharashtra followed by Rs. 2274 in UP, Rs. 2155 in Punjab, Rs. 1449 in Tamil Nadu, Rs. 1324 in West Bengal. By religion, the highest income was recorded among Parsis at Rs. 3484 per month followed by

Rs. 2478 among Buddhists, Rs. 2285 among Sikhs, Rs. 1906 among Christians and Rs. 1832 among Muslims as shown in the Table 24 below:

**Table 2.12: Average family income State-wise and community wise ( in rupees)**

State	Income	Religion	Income
1	2	3	4
Maharashtra	3173.34	Muslim	1832.20
Punjab	2155.39	Christian	1906.50
Uttar Pradesh	2274.60	Sikhs	2285.60
Tamil Nadu	1449.10	Buddhist	2477.90
West Bengal	1324.15	Parsis	3483.80
All	2103.24	All	2103.24

*Source: Socio-economic status of Minorities" conducted by the Centre for Research Planning & Action, New Delhi, 2006 in the States of Maharashtra, Punjab, Tamil Nadu, Uttar Pradesh, and West Bengal*

#### Women's Political Participation

Women's representation in political bodies and structures of governance is disproportionately low. The Lok Sabha has been no exception. Although the number of women in Parliament has increased from 59 in 1998 to 70 in 2001, their share continues to be very low representing only 8.5 per cent of the total Members in Parliament in 2001. Representation of women members from the first to the thirteenth Lok Sabha has ranged between 4.45% (22 women MPs) and 8.83% or 48 women MPs in house of 543 members. In the Rajya Sabha, Their participation has declined from 10.17% in 1960 (numbering 24 women MPs 6 members) to 8.51% or 20 members amongst 235 members of Rajya Sabha in 1999. **Women form only 9% of the members of the Fourteenth Lok Sabha** (2004).

Reservation of 33% seats for women has also been mooted for the Parliament and State Assemblies. The passage of the Bill is facing rough weather because of various factors.

Women's participation in state legislatures is woefully low ranging from nil in Karnataka (1999), Maharashtra (1999), Mizoram (1998), Manipur (1995), Nagaland (1996) and Sikkim to 12.9% in Delhi (1998). In 1996, Uttar Pradesh had only 20 women MLAs accounting for 4.7% of the state legislature.

A major break-through was achieved during the '90s. The 73<sup>rd</sup> and 74<sup>th</sup> Constitutional Amendments (1993-94) rendered the reservation of seats for women in local governance mandatory. The inclusion of at least 33% women in Panchayat Raj Institutions has made an impact at the local level. Several women's groups and NGOs are providing some basic training and information on governance issues to village women. Issues of corruption, village schools, wells, roads and so on have been taken forward by these women members of Panchayati Raj institutions. Similar provision has been made for the bodies of urban governance, but the impact has not been so visible as compared to P.R.Is.

The sheer number of women in PRIs is a pointer towards their political empowerment. As local leaders, many of these women have made substantial strides in their own personal development as well as the development of their village areas. The following figures are indicative of the

growing leadership roles being played by women at the grassroots levels in local self-government which are very encouraging: -

**Table 2.13: Leadership Position in Panchayats**

Panchayat Level	Number	Elected representatives	Women %	SC %	ST %
1	2	3	4	5	6
District Panchayats	537	11,825	41	18	11
Intermediate Panchayats	6,097	1,10,070	43	22	13
Village Panchayats	2,34,676	20,73,715	40	16	11

*Annual Report 2005-06, Ministry of Panchayati Raj, GoI*

The space created in local body governance structures for women by the 73<sup>rd</sup> and 74<sup>th</sup> Amendment has resulted in nearly a million women gaining entry at different levels. The variations across states in women's representation in the Gram Panchayat, Panchayat Samitis and Zilla Parishads range from 3 per cent to 45 per cent. The performance of 4 southern states, West Bengal, Himachal Pradesh, Haryana and Maharashtra are among the better states. Currently there are 768582 (31%) women at the Gram Panchayat level; 38582 (30%) in Panchayat Samities and 4030 (32%) at Zilla Parishad level. In 11 states the percentage share of women is above 33%; four states where 33% is not achieved; 14 states where women occupy more than 33% seats in Panchayat Samities and 16 states more than 33% seats in Panchayat Samities and 16 states more than 33% seats in Zilla Parishad (National Profile on Women, Health and Development, India, VHAI, 1999).

The 73<sup>rd</sup> and 74<sup>th</sup> Constitutional Amendments in 1993 have brought forth a definite impact on the participation of women, in terms of absolute numbers, in grass root democratic institutions viz., Panchayati Raj Institutions (PRIs) and Local Bodies. In fact, these amendments have helped women not only in their effective participation but also in decision-making in the grass root democracy. Of the 475 Zilla Parishads in the country, 158 are being chaired by women. At the Block Level, out of 51,000 members of Block Samitis, 17,000 are women. In addition, nearly one-third of the Mayors of the Municipalities are women. In the elections to PRIs held between 1993 and 1997, women have achieved participation even beyond the mandatory requirement of 33 1/3 per cent of the total seats in states like Karnataka (43.45 per cent), Kerala (36.4 per cent) and West Bengal (35.4 per cent). However, the all India figures for women show that their representation in 2001 is still low.

The representation of women in the decision-making levels through the Premier Services viz., the Indian Administrative Service (IAS) and Indian Police Service (IPS), which stood at only 5.4 per cent in 1987, increased marginally to 7.6 per cent in 2000. However, the figure is still very low, requiring not only affirmative action but also special interventions to help raise the number of women at various decision-making levels. By far women decision makers few as they are, come from urban elite middle class sections and interestingly a large mass of illiterate and semi literate rural women have made it to the Gram Panchayat and Panchayat Samities. But Zilla Parishads and Municipal committees are again filled up with urban middle class women.

Apart from women's representation in PRIs (structures of local governance), which is relatively high at 31.3%, in the Lok Sabha and Legislative Assemblies the representation is abysmally low (at 9.0% and 5.6% respectively). In administrative posts again the representation is extremely low, especially in the Indian Police Service (just 3.3%). The representation in the Indian Administrative Service is also quite low, at 10.4%.

The number of women in the Central Council of Ministers continues to remain extremely low, but with a marginal increase of 0.8 per cent between 1985 and 2001. Of these, 2 are of Cabinet rank and 6 are of the rank of Minister of State, and of these, 2 are holding Independent Charge. These trends point out very clearly to the need for affirmative action besides addressing these issues in a systematic and expeditious way so that women's concerns gain political prominence and a fairly representative number of women are in position not only at grass root level, but also at the state and national levels.

Surveys indicate that the most significant impact of elections on women has been in the areas of social and gender relations and increased confidence. The maximum number of women at decision making levels have been in the welfare and development oriented departments like human resource development which includes education, culture and women and child development. Women ministers are often given welfare oriented portfolios. Science and technology, finance, defence, foreign affairs, home affairs are never allotted to women. Studies show that women parliament

members participate more actively in women's issues health, welfare, atrocities against women, crimes like dowry and violation of human rights. Even this participation is confined to a few articulate women. In issues of defence, finance, foreign relations etc. their participation is limited.

Ministerial positions held by women as percentage to the total ministerial positions in the 12<sup>th</sup> Lok Sabha was 10% only. Equally important is the share of women among the jurists, the policy makers, the managers and professionals. Whereas women form 31% of female legislators, senior officials and managers in Norway, 25% in Australia, 35% in Canada, 29% in Sweden, India's showing is poor (HDR, 2001). Percentage of women Judges in Supreme Court (in 1996) was 4% only and only 3% in High Courts (NCW, 2001). Whereas the female professionals and technical workers form 58% in Norway; 47% in Australia, 53% in Canada, 49% in Sweden and 50% in Sri Lanka, India's showing is less than 25% even in this category.

Women are poorly represented in the public sector undertakings, especially at decision making levels. It is estimated that only about 1.2% of the executive cadre in the private sector are women. They belong mainly to a few selected segments like advertising and hotels.

The Global Gender Gap Report, 2006, a survey of 115 world economies, ranks India very low – at the 98<sup>th</sup> position in the global gender-gap index. The index is a composite of women's political empowerment, participation in the economy, educational attainments and health. It measures the gender gap, i.e. differences between the sexes, in all these sectors.

India, in comparison with other countries, fares poorly in terms of women's health, economic empowerment and education, but is high on the scale of political empowerment. It ranks 20<sup>th</sup> on the scale of political empowerment, although it has only 8% women in Parliament in 3% women in ministerial posts, because other countries do even worse on this front. The report clarifies that taken together, women in the 115 countries, representing over 5 billion of the world's population, enjoy only 15% of political empowerment.

In conclusion, it may be inferred that in the Indian context, our laws, development policies, plans, programmes and other international strategies have enabled the women towards advancement in different spheres. There has been perceptible shift in emphasis in approach to women's issues from welfare to development orientation and further to empowerment of women – economically, socially, politically and legally. Despite all these measures, there still exists a wide gap between the goals enshrined in the Constitution, legislation, policies, plans, programmes and related mechanisms on the one hand and the situational reality of the status of women in India on the other. The reality is that women still remain largely untouched by gender – just and gender – sensitive measures and resource allocation including WCP. This stagnation needs to be shaken up across the board.

Thus, the overall status of Indian women is still quite low although the status of women in most parts of the globe is disturbing. The difference between the situation in India and other countries of the world lies in degree, not in kind. Gender disparity manifests itself in various forms, the most obvious being the trend of continuously declining female ratio in the population in the last four decades. Social stereotyping and violence at the domestic and social levels are some other manifestation. Discrimination against girl children, adolescent girls and women persists in parts of the country. Though it requires in-depth analysis yet one can point out that the underlying causes of gender inequality are related to social and economic structure which is

based on informal and formal norms and practices. Gender discrimination and disparities are a matter of grave concern in India and elsewhere. The Indian polity is seized of this fact and has been devising a number of strategies and taking steps to deal with the situation so as to raise the status of Indian women. Women belonging to the weaker sections of society are the worst affected in terms of low indicators of health, education and economic empowerment. A sizeable proportion of women of the minority communities are included in the weaker sections of society and Government's strategies are directed primarily towards ameliorating their conditions and improving their quality of life and livelihood.

## Chapter III

# Development of Women's Education in India

### Early History

India has an early and rich tradition of education of women (nearly 5000 years old). The high point of female education and status in this Sub-Continent was the *Vedic Period*. Among the Vedic Aryans education was prescribed for all children first under the family elders and later in the house of the Guru on attaining the age of 8 years after a special ceremony known as '*Upanayana*'. Education lasted up to the age of 16 and sometimes till the age of 24. A period of 8 years education was universal among the Aryans. (Indian Yearbook of Education, 1964; Altekar, 1956; Mukerjee, 1958).

In *Rigvedic* times complete education facilities appear to have been available to women. Women attained high educational levels and distinguished themselves. There were sages as well as women who had gone through the discipline of *Brahmacharya*, as recorded in *Sarvamukramika*. There were 20 women 'seers' or authors of *Rigveda*. There were two classes of women students, the *Brahmavadinis*, who studied up to the age of 16 of 18 years and learnt Vedic hymns by heart. Specialists in theological work were termed "*Kasakritsni*". As a noted sociologist observes, if women scholars in such a technical branch of learning were so numerous as to necessitate coining of a special term to designate them' it would not be unreasonable to conclude that the numbers of women who received general education must have been very large, (Boulding, 1968).

Education was mainly centered in the family and girls studied along with the family males. Women were initiated into the 3 Rs. when writing came into vogue. Women participated in democratic assemblies. The marriage hymn expressed the hope that the bride would be able to speak with composure and success in public assemblies during old age. This importance of women's education and confidence about their ability is evidenced in early *Upanishads* recommending a certain ritual to the householders for ensuring the birth of a scholarly daughter. The *Upanishads* mention an Aryan lady obtaining the title of *Vak i.e. Saraswati* by her learning. Fine arts like music and singing and dancing were taught only to women. During this period women are said to have followed a variety of occupations to include farming, weaving and dyeing cloth and followed the teaching profession. Lower class women traded.

There was a distinct decline in the overall position and education of women during the *Brahmanic* period. The all pervasive Brahmanic Codes (that have formed the normative basis for social relation for millennia) took a constrictive view of the position and rights of women prescribing various forms of restrictions and generally limiting their sphere of activity to the domestic realm in service roles as nurturers and bearers of the family progeny. Women were forbidden to attend public assemblies and there registered a substantial deterioration in the status of women from an earlier era of full participation in the public life of villages in India. The *Brahmanic* society took the position that women were inferior to men, a stance that continued till recently. Child marriages were prescribed and all forms of education for women were eliminated. Altekar (op. cit., p.90), describes the period between 500 AD to 1800 as one of the progressive deterioration in the status of women.

*Kshatriyas* are known to have resisted this trend, as there is evidence of women scholars in this caste longer than in any other. All royal women received military and administrative training. At the close of one millennium B.C, there were still many highly educated women. The low caste women performed all types of maintenance, craft and trading work. Women of middle classes were confined to 'home workshops' (Boulding, op.cit, p286). However, the *Brahmanical* Code and prescriptions assigning a lower position to women vis-a-vis men and alleging inferiority of women on more than one score, including moral and ethical, has stayed. The dominant force regulating the lives of

clean/upper caste Hindu women as shadows to their men in the sub-continent has affected the lives of women in parallel groups of other religious persuasions. Mies (1978, p31) argues that even though in India, the Muslims, Christians and other religious minorities have developed their own sub-cultures but with regard to the position of women, these groups have taken over many of the values of the dominant Hindu Social Order. Regular celibate order of monks and nuns were organized by Mahavira, the founder of Jainism before Gautama began his teaching, (See N. Shanta: "The Doctrine and Life of Junia", *Cisterios Studies*), 9 : 2-3 1974, quoted from Elise Boulding, op.cit., p. 401).

Buddhism rose as an anti-thesis to the all pervasive *Brahmanical* influence. The Buddhist Order gave a definite place to women, namely that of *bhikkhunis* (nuns) and *Upasikas* (lay female devotees) in their four fold society as female counterparts of *bhikkhus* (priests) and *upasaks* (lay male devotees). However, it is to be noted that the Buddha consented to allow women to enter the order after great persuasion and due to the persistent efforts of Gautami and other women of Buddha's own family and at the intervention of Ananda. But once women entered the order it was a duty incumbent on them to study the *Tripitaka* and devote their attention to moral and religious training directed towards spiritual advancement. Once admitted into the Buddhist Order, women found opportunity to engage in educational, religious and social enterprises. Many prominent *Theris* mentioned the unequal position of women in the relatively egalitarian Buddhist social order may be noted. "A monk specially selected by the brotherhood was to impart instruction and admonition to the nuns twice every month in the presence of another monk". The discipline and duties of daily life were the same for nuns except that the solitary life was practically forbidden for them. "Buddhism produced numerous remarkable women within its own fold who played a prominent part as leaders of thought in that religious reformation. The order of Nuns was a training ground of these women. That some of the nuns qualified themselves in the knowledge of the sacred texts so far as to be accepted as the teachers of other junior nuns is evident from a passage in *Chullavagga* (X,8) which mentions that a *Bhikkuni* was the pupil of the *Bhikkuni* Uppalavanna. Regarding their studies, the same passage informs us that the *Bhikkuni* followed the Blessed one for seven years, learning the *Vinaya*, but she, being forgetful, lost it as fast as she received it. It was then ordered that *Bhikkus* should teach the *Vinaya* to *Bhikkunis*" (See U.D. Jayasekera, Early History of Education in Ceylon, Ceylon, Department of Cultural Affairs, 1969, p. 168; R.K. Mukerjee, Ancient Indian Education, London, 1951, pp. 464 Quoted by Jayasekera, Ibid).

Even after women's order was established, women of no matter what age and dignity had to bow before the rawest monks. These women lived together in *Viharas* (Convents) and could visit laity only for alms. There were no daily liturgies, no work of craft permitted to them and the nuns were discouraged from reading. Instead preference was given to oral teaching by the monk. Buddhism started as an elite religion unlike Christianity where nuns were given a rich liturgical life as an aid to prayer and linked them to community through social service unlike in Buddhism. About Buddha, Boulding states, "Evidently, he both believed and did not believe that women could have the same spirituality as men. We have seen this ambivalence about women in all the world religions. Nuns of both religions were placed under the authority of men and suffered the same kind of second class citizenship even while being pronounced "spiritual equals" (Boulding p402). While in the land of its birth, Buddhism was eclipsed by strong Hindu *Brahmanical* forces, the spread of Buddhism among the Sinhalese of Sri Lanka and resultant impact on the education and status of women needs to be taken note of.

The incidence of women turning in large numbers to Jain and Buddhist religious orders is interpreted to be an account of two factors among others, viz. (a) Both Buddhism and Jainism emphasized "becoming" rather than "being" and did not lead to passivity and withdrawal and (b) the detachment from the responsibilities of family life and the possibilities of individual fulfilment which the teachings offered were welcomed in a society where most options for a woman's personal development were being closed. (Elise Boulding, op. cit.)

## Women's Education and Islam

Islam was one of the most revolutionary faiths, which transformed the lives of women of Arabia who were earlier leading a life of degradation and were victims of female infanticide. Safia Iqbal (1997) notes that unparalleled change took place in the condition of women with the dawn of the 7<sup>th</sup> century when women regained their lost status and dignity under the banner of Islam in Arabia. The Arab women, healthy, talented and beautiful, immediately blossomed forth and exhibited their full potential when the Prophet cleared the way for their development and complete freedom. He became the first liberator of women, in fact. The Prophet's presence inspired women to play an important role in every field. The Prophet's wife Khadeja was an expert trader while Ayesha was a learned Mufti and commanded an army later in a battle after him. Fatima, the Prophet's daughter was an epitome of social work and piety.

***The Prophet termed woman as the 'Queen of the House' and a delicate crystal while the Qu'ran said, "And women shall have rights similar to rights against them, according to what is equitable" (2:118).*** The Prophet's own wife Hazrat Aisha was an authority on Islamic Jurisprudence. We find a long list of women scholars who played an active role in the society during the early period of Islamic history.

Dr. S. Saied Vasfi (1997) says the Prophet has exhorted that gaining the necessary religious knowledge is the duty of each and every Muslim man or woman. "That she should be properly educated is undisputed at least among the think tanks of Muslims of the country. What can be matter of opinion is what sort of education should be imparted. The question is true of male Muslims also." (pp.11-12). Education has always been important to Muslim community, not as a distributor of life chances but for propagation of Islamic values.

The great Hanafi scholar Al Kasani, nicknamed the 'King of Scholras' was married to Fatima, daughter of his teacher As-Samarquandi. Fatima was a great pupil of her father and used to sign Fatwas along with him. After marriage, Fatwas would be signed by three of them. When her husband was mistaken, Fatima would correct him, if he was called 'King of Scholars', she was as of right deserves to be their queen!

Dr. S.M. AD-DARSH (1997) also endorses that, "In the area of knowledge there is no discrimination between male and female. The well-established *hadith*, 'seeking knowledge is incumbent on every Muslim' includes the females too. From a juristic point of view, the male gender in such a sentence construction includes females because both are addressed by *Shariah* injunctions. From a theoretical point of view, in Islam, what is good for men is, generally, good for women. Men and women were the recipients of the guidance of Allah and His revelations at the hands of the Prophet. After establishment of the faith and the teaching of Islamic way of life with full strength, women were present in the mosque of the Prophet along with men.

During ancient times and middle ages, education in the Indian sub continent remained in general the monopoly of higher castes; women's education was usually not encouraged. In India, the Turkish Queen Razia Sultana, other Muslim Queens and princesses like Noor Jehan, Mumtaz Mahal and Jahanara wielded political and military power. However the colonial period and industrial revolution showed a marked downtrend in the status of Muslim women but their status dipped after the Wars. This is because the Muslim community, whose governments had fallen, felt endangered and threatened by the western culture and now wanted to hold on rigidly to their own identity. With break up of the Muslim empire after the two wars, Muslims wished to preserve their past glory somewhat as they saw at the centre of the Western culture, a misused, overworked and undressed

women as its symbol. *They reacted in a natural and protective way by restricting their own women from external influences and even curbing their legitimate rights including right to education at times. This trend gradually became a custom and a practise, resulting finally in illiterate, ignorant and custom bound timid Muslim women.*

Sehba Hussein (2007) observes that the common picture of a Muslim woman is the stereotype of a woman hidden behind a veil, a voiceless, silent figure, bereft of rights. It is a picture familiar to all of us, in large part because this is invariably how the media portrays women in Islam. However, Islam worked so much to protect human rights, especially women's, with such integrity, strength, strategic genius, beauty and divinity, or to honour humanity, by freeing it from the chains of prejudice, manipulations, personal and social injustice. The Prophet's teachings regarding education, social and political rights, property rights, and ultimately human rights, are among the most valuable chapter in the book of civilization.

Education: **"The pursuit of knowledge is a duty of every Muslim, man and woman"**, said the **Prophet (swa)**. With this instruction it became a religious duty of Muslims to educate themselves, their families, and their societies. Education and learning became a religious duty; no Muslim could prevent another human being from the pursuit of knowledge. Gender or race, culture or tradition could not become the cause for prohibiting a person from educating one's self. Pursuit of knowledge became a religious law, therefore necessary to attain. With such instruction, the Prophet (swa) not only created an equal right to education, but also opened the door to a better understanding.

**"My Lord! Enrich me with knowledge" - (Quran, 20:114)**

The rise of Muslims to the zenith of civilization in a period of four decades was based on Islam's emphasis on learning. This is obvious when one takes a look at the Qur'an and the traditions of Prophet Muhammad (s), which are filled with references to learning, education, observation, and the use of reason.

The very first verse of the Qur'an revealed to the Prophet of Islam on the night of 27th of Ramadan in 611 AD reads:

***"Read: In the name of thy Lord who created man from a clot. Read: and thy Lord is the Most Generous who taught by the pen taught man that which he knew not."***  
***(Quran, 96:1-5)***

***"And they shall say had we but listened or used reason, we would not be among the inmates of the burning fire."***  
***(Quran, 67:10)***

***"Are those who have knowledge and those who have no knowledge alike? Only the men of understanding are mindful. "***  
***(Quran, 39:9)***

***Every Muslim man's and every Muslim woman's prayer should be:***  
***"My Lord! Enrich me with knowledge."***  
***(Quran, 20:114)***

***The pursuit of knowledge and the use of reason, based on sense observation are made obligatory on every Muslim, man and woman.***

The following traditions of the Prophet (s) supplement the foregoing teachings of the Qur'an in the following way observes Sehba:

- "Seek knowledge "even though it is in China."
- "The acquisition of knowledge is compulsory for every Muslim, whether male or female."
- "The ink of the scholar is more sacred than the blood of the martyr."
- "Seek knowledge from the cradle to the grave."
- "God has revealed to me, 'whoever walks in the pursuit of knowledge I facilitate for him the way to heaven."
- "The best form of worship is the pursuit of knowledge."
- "Scholars should endeavour to spread knowledge and provide education to people who have been deprived of it. For, where knowledge is hidden it disappears."
- Some one asked the Prophet (SAS): "Who is the biggest scholar?" He replied: "He who is constantly trying to learn from others, for a scholar is ever hungry for more knowledge".
- "Seek for knowledge and. wisdom, or whatever the 'vessel from which it flows, you will never be the loser."
- "Thinking deep for one hour (with sincerity) is better than 70 years of (mechanical) worship."
- "Worship, without knowledge, has no goodness in it and knowledge without understanding has no goodness in it. And the recitation of the Qur'an, without being thoughtful, has no goodness in it."
- "To listen to the words of the learned and to instil unto others the lessons of science is better than religious exercises."
- "Acquire knowledge: it enables its possessor to distinguish right from the wrong, it lights the way to heaven; it is Our friend in the desert, our society in solitude, our companion when friendless- it guides us to happiness; it sustains us in misery; it is an Ornament among friends and an armour against enemies."

For this purpose, Islam holds parents, teachers, rulers and the government equally liable to take the responsibility to provide useful and better education to the children. In Islam, for imparting education, the role of parents and teachers has been defined, with a belief that a child learns his first lesson from his mother only.

### Intellectual Equality of Women

The Holy Prophet (*Sallallaahu Alayhi Wasallam*) said, "The searching of knowledge is incumbent for every Muslim (male and female)."

Every boy or girl, man or woman should pursue his/her education as far as it is possible. In the history of Islam you will find that there were women who were narrators of Hadith, mystics, scholars, writers, poets and teachers, in their own right. They utilised their knowledge within certain precepts of Islam.

Hazrat Aisha with her intellect and outstanding memory was one of the most important scholars of her time. More than two thousand Haadith are reported by her and she is regarded as one of the best teachers of Hadith. Shaykha Nafisa who was such a great authority on Hadith that Imaam Shaaf'ee sat in her circle. The famous mystic, Rabia al-Adawiyya (Basria) was also a woman with great wisdom and knowledge. There are numerous other women who are held in the highest respect by the Muslim world in the history of Islam, notes Sehba.

So Islam confers on women all the political and social rights, which man enjoys. She is entitled to all the privileges bestowed upon man. Beside worldly matters, women are also equal to men in the spiritual sense. As it says that they are from the same origin as are men, and due to this fact they should not be dealt with harshly and roughly, rather men should deal with them in a very mild and soft manner. The Holy Prophet (Peace be upon Him) has been reported to have said "*Alaikum bil Qawareer*". **The women should be taken care of as someone takes care of glass products.** Glass is liable to break very easily if it is not care of, so is the delicacy in woman, and men must be careful not to injure her delicacy, because in her delicacy lies her beauty.

The 20<sup>th</sup> century saw the westernisation of Muslim women in some middle east countries like Lebanon and Egypt. Conditions of Muslim women swung to the other extreme of conservatism in the name of Islam in Saudi Arabia and Kuwait. However, Islamic awareness is rising in Pakistan and Sudan while illiteracy is disturbing women in Afghanistan. As the 20<sup>th</sup> century draws to a close frustration is increasing among Muslim women towards Ulem who in general have failed to present Islam in the modern context to the newly educated Muslim women.

A noted scholar Abida Samiuddin (1997) observes that the history of Muslim women's education in India is a history of restriction and superstition. Social inequalities have prevented them from fulfilling their needs individually, and playing roles adequately in the family, at work, in the community and in the society in general.

***Education had always been important to the Muslim community, not as a distributor of life chances but for the propagation of Islamic values.*** Therefore we come across such events which substantiate the significance and importance received by the women's education during the Muslim period. It was not neglected during the Sultanate period too; women at the higher echelons of society were educated while common boys and girls received education at Maktabas. Ibn Batuta reported about the existence of thirteen Madrasas, exclusively for girls in the Muslim state of Hannur of the West Coast of India in as early as 1333 A.D.(Saimuddin 1997).

The Lodhi era, she notes was remarkable. Sikandar Lodhi was noted for the general patronage of education and knowledge. The ruler of Malwa, Ghiasuddin had appointed school mistresses for the royal women. But education as an institution did not percolate to the common women though indoor education of Muslim girls through lady tutor or aged Imams remained in vogue for the women of upper strata of society. Just after the uprising of 1857, the general Muslim desperation caused a serious setback to Muslim women's education, and women's isolation in education became complete.

The introduction of new political and economic institutions under the British rule in India made traditional education and learning redundant. Muslim education got a further set back due to loss of political power in 1857 and later the partition of the country affected Muslim education as whole very adversely due to exodus educated middle class Muslims to the new state of Pakistan causing a vacuum of leadership. Bulk of those who stayed on belonged to occupational groups of artisans who did not see much use of English/western modern education for their children who were inducted early in the family occupations and household industries.

## **Women and Education – the Pre Independence Period**

At the beginning of the 19<sup>th</sup> century educational facilities for women in the indigenous system of learning (in *Tols, Pathshalas, Maktabas and Madrassahs*) were virtually non-existent according to official surveys. The social status of women was low and women of the middle and upper classes led a life of seclusion under the dominance of family males and interaction with non-family males was

prohibited. Among certain Hindu communities, there existed a superstition that a girl if taught to read and write would soon after marriage become a widow.

Modern education began for men with the passing of the East India Company Act of 1813. But the conservative officials of the Company refused to take any direct action in the case of women's education on account of the strict policy of social and religions neutrality and for not wanting to create any commotion by flaunting the existing norms of strict privacy and segregation of women. The company officials restricted their activities only to education of men and even refused financial assistance to special private girls schools. The void created by absence of a state effort in female education was filled by private effort of the Western missionaries and progress during the 19<sup>th</sup> century.

The earliest modern schools for girls were opened by the Christian Missions for the children of the Christian converts but later this opportunity was extended to non-Christians who hesitatingly accepted this offer. However, conversions of some Hindu girls caused a great furore and many parents began withdrawing their female wards from these schools. It was soon evident that missionary education by its very nature would not be an effective agency for the spread of education among Indian Women. Education of women picked up on account of the 'splendid lead' given by some liberal English men like J.A.D. Bethune and Professor Elphinstone. Bethune opened mission schools for girls in which religious instruction was excluded. His schools could be termed as the first secular schools for girls in India. The lead given by these English men was followed by some Indians who could not remain untouched by this gesture. Raja Ram Mohan Roy and Ishwar Chandra Vidya Sagar were the earliest to take concrete steps for improving the educational (and social) status of women. Till 1854, education of girls expanded only on account of non-official effort. (Report of the National Committee on Women's Education – NCWE, Ministry of Education, New Delhi, 1959, p. 14)

Even after the 1854, Dispatch had enjoined on the officials to pay special attention to the education of girls, the progress was rather slow till 1870. In the meanwhile, Department of Public Instruction had been established in all provinces in 1868 to develop an integrated system of education for primary and secondary education in the country. The establishment of municipalities, local fund cess in mofussil areas and local funds committees for rural areas led to a large expansion of female education between 1871 and 1882. The insistent recommendation of Mary Carpenter, an English social reformer, for setting up training colleges for women was put into practice in 1870 onward. All conventions were set aside and admissions were open to all adult women "who had no qualifications except the desire to teach" (NCWE 1959). This gave the necessary impetus to girls education and also opened "a very useful career to several women who were in need of some remunerative vocation to give a meaning and purpose to their lives: (Ibid.).

According to the 1881 Census Returns, however, for every 1000 boys in schools, the number of girls under instruction was 46, and while one adult male out of 16 could read and write, only one adult women in 434 could do so. Education of girls as we have noted earlier was spreading largely on account of private effort and only 616 out of 2,697 girls institutions were conducted by the Department in 1882. Also till then, the progress was limited to primary education of girls. The Indian Education Commission (1882) suggested adoption of pupil teacher system, payment of liberal grants-in-aid to private institutions for girls, offering of liberal inducements to the wives of school masters, training of widows as teachers, liberal prizes to girls willing to train as teachers and special assistance to residential girls, schools. This bore some fruit. The number of girls institutions rose from 2,697 in 1881-81 to 5,801 in 1901. Collegiate education was only availed by European, Anglo-Indian, Indian Christians and Paris women till then. ***Among Hindus and Muslims, education of women was confined to primary stage only and 10 Hindus and 4 Muslims women were literate in English for every 1 million of population.*** At the turn of the century, 3,982 girls schools out of total of

5,305 at the primary stage, 356 of 422 secondary schools and 32 of 45 training schools and 1 out of 12 colleges for women, were conducted by private effort NCWE, 1959).

The lead given by the Christian missionaries for setting up the first institutions for female education was followed by a large scale effort on the part of the Social reformers who gave overriding priority to female education as the drive arm of social regeneration and freedom from alien rule and obscurantism. Raja Ram Mohan Roy (1772-1833) attacked the caste system campaigned for the abolition of *Sati* (burning the widow on the funeral pyre of the husband). He championed modern education, equal rights for women, advocated the right of widows to remarry and the right of women to property. Ishwar Chander Vidya Sagar (1820-91) dedicated himself to the emancipation of women and worked hard to promote education of girls and to remove legal obstacles to widow remarriage through a law in 1856. The reform movement spread next to the western region with founding of the Prarthana Samaj, which drew many great national leaders. Ranade (1842-1901) worked tirelessly as the secretary of an All India organization, the Indian Social Conference which worked as a secular organization and campaigned for abolition of caste, inter caste marriages, raising the age at marriage, discouragement of polygamy, widow remarriage, women's education, child marriage. The first schools in Maharashtra for girls from lower castes were opened in 1873 by Jyotiba and Savitri Bai Phule who questioned the supremacy of Brahmins and the authority of scriptures. Kandukuri Veerasalingam (1848- 1991) pioneered the movement in support of widow remarriage and girls' education in Andhra. Shri Naryan Guru ( 1854-1928) led the movement against caste oppression in Kerala.

Dayanand Saraswati , born in a Brahmin family in Kathiawar founded Arya Samaj in 1875. He rebelled against idol worship and attacked child marriage as being contrary to Vedas and made Arya samaj a vehicle of social reform especially through education of women and men. Vivekananda (1861-1902) was a reformist with a vision and considered neglect of masses a sin. He took keen interest the improvement of all aspects of national life and gave pride of place to education, especially the education of women. Annie Besant came to India in 1893 and became the leader of the theosophical movement and made singular contribution in the field of education. She set up the Central Hindu College at Banaras, which was later handed over to Banaras Hindu University, became the president of Indian National Congress in 1917- social reform and politics. The names of Dadbhai Naoroji and Nauroji Fudonji among Parsis, the Singh Sabhas among the Sikhs, the Khalsa Dewan worked for education of women and the disadvantaged.

As a result of these movements, advances were made in the field of emancipation of women. Some legal measures were introduced to elevate their status. The practice of Sati and female infanticide was made illegal. In 1856, a law was passed permitting widow remarriage. Another law passed in 1860, raised the age at marriage of girls to ten. Education was seen as a necessary condition for raising the status of women in society and for improving the quality of family life as also for strengthening the bonds of tradition and the family as the chief unit of social organization. It was felt that "... Denial of education and early marriage prevented the development of the personality and rationality of women. Stunted and crippled personality affected the harmony of the family atmosphere weakening the bonds of the family (Towards Equality, Report of the National Committee on Status of Women in India (CSWI), Delhi, 1974, p. 234). Education of women was meant to improve the functioning of women in their traditional roles within the family or for raising their status within the family and no other roles in the wider social context were envisaged or catered for. The absence of any economic or broader social motive than family's well being is recognized as the main cause for the slow development of women's education in India. The social reform movement in India besides waging a war against social evils like Sati, child marriage, ban on widow remarriage, dowry and the like, give an impetus to women's education. A large number of secular and non-Christian denominational institutions for girls came up due to individual and group efforts. The Arya Samaj, Dev Samaj, Sanathan Dharam Sabha, the Khalsa Diwan, Ram Krishna Mission and a host of other religious

organizations funded female education and created an atmosphere favourable to education of girls and the major hurdle of the fear of conversion receded (CSWI, Ibid.).

The introduction of new political and economic institutions under the British rule in India made traditional education and learning redundant. At the same time **Muslim education** itself was raised to the level of an issue by the publication of W.S. Hunter's report "The Indian Mussalmans", in 1871. In the words of Education Commission 1880, there is no demand in case of girls/women for education as a means of livelihood and thus the most effective stimulus to the spread of education is removed. The system of child marriage necessitates the seclusion of girls at an age when their education has scarcely begun. The supply of teachers for girls' school is both insufficient in quantity and inferior in quality. The school system of instruction needs modification to meet the needs of girls.

Concerned with the plight of child widows and child brides, Hindu reformers began to advocate strongly education of girls, to raise the age of marriage and to enable young widows to earn a living. But unfortunately, no socio-religious Muslim movement considered the issue of women's education worth contemplating, notes Abida Saimuddin (1997). Sir Syed Ahmad Khan, the pioneer of Muslim education in the north, she says, was satisfied with the contemporary style of Muslim women's education at least for the Muslim nobility and gentry. In his evidence before the Education Commission 1882, he went on to say, "In fact, no satisfactory education can be provided to Muhammadan females until a large number of Muhammadan males received a sound education. The present state of education in my opinion is enough for domestic happiness considering the present social and economic conditions of life of Muhammadans in India. *"The other leaders of Muslim educational movement including Amir Ali and Hali emphasised the role of women's education for the progress of Indian Muslims but they also stressed the need to continue and develop the traditional pattern of family education as against the British style of education for women"*.

The ceaseless efforts of Shaikh Abdullah and his wife Begum Wahed Jahan were supported wholeheartedly by the Begum of Bhopal, Sultan Jahan Begum. The activities of Anjuman-e-Himayat-e-Islam, Lahore opened a new chapter in Muslim women's education in the north in the first quarter of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. The name of Maulvi S. Karamat Husain, the founder of Karamt Husain girls' College, Lucknow also cannot be overlooked in this regard. There were reform movements that worked for the emancipation of women, fighting the system of pardah, polygamy and child marriage amongst Muslims in western and southern India. Badruddin Tyabji ( 1844-1906) was the most outstanding leader of these movements- one of the founders of the Indian National Congress and its third president.

Now the Muslims had generally overcome the setback caused due to loss of power in 1857. The issue of women's education was taken up by the emergent women's movement. Further the appeal of education, less universal in [the 19<sup>th</sup> century was related to occupation and tradition and could therefore appeal to a small section of the community. Since the turn of the century Muslims had improved their socio-economic status going through the process of urbanisation. Consequently by the fourth decade the state of Muslim women's education was generally at par with that of other communities at the elementary level. At the secondary and higher levels of education they were lagging behind other religious communities.

Acute shortage of women teachers adversely affected the growth of schooling of girls. Married women were occupied with their domestic duties and unmarried women hardly existed. During 1920-21, education of women developed at a faster pace due to the great public awakening created by the struggle for independence. The extent of direct effort by the State increased but the bulk of girls institutions were still private and government aided. In 1921, the various State Educational Reports indicated that Indian public opinion was slowly changing from its former attitude of positive dislike to education of girls and was gradually progressing though apathy to cordial cooperation. In Bengal, a system of peripatetic teachers to educate girls was introduced as all schools were manned by men teachers and which discouraged parents of girls from sending their wards to schools. In Punjab, a number of denominational schools were opened for girls. During 1921-47, the number of girls receiving education increased from 12,24,128 in 1921-22 to 42,785 in 1946-47 and number of girls

per 100 boys in schools was 30. An important event to be noted was that in 1921-22, **35% of the total number of girls were in mixed institutions, and by 1946-47 more than half of the girls in primary and 50% of those in higher education were in co-educational institutions.** At the secondary level, the number of girls in all girls institution was substantially larger, though in 1946-47, 28,196 of 2,10,165 educational institutions in the country were special girls institutions with 34.75 lakh girls on rolls. Female literacy was 6 % in 1946-47 as compared to 0.7 percent in 1881-82. Though the female enrolment had made sufficient progress, shortage of women teachers continued to be felt constantly. Earlier, the Hartog Commission (1917) had made a case that more women teachers were needed and not only for girls schools. It was considered that women would make better teachers. (Mathur, 1973, pp 62-67)

**The Calcutta University Commission (1917-19):** This commission felt that *Purdah* Schools should be organized for Hindu and Muslim girls where parents were willing to extend their education up to 15-16 years and among others “Special attention was to be paid to women’s education”. **Simon Commission (1930)** reiterated the earlier view about the importance of education of girls and women in any scheme of national organization. ....The whole texture and strength of the national life are largely dependent on the contribution which women make to it --- Alike for the training and instruction of the young and for the readjustment of the Indian social system, the Indian woman is pivotal. It is manifest that the best teacher for girls and small children in a village school is a woman -- but the difficulties of establishing a service of such teachers in country places are very great, and the supply is very small.”

**The Post War Education Development Plan 1944** stated that India would need forty years to universalise primary education and that what was good for boys was equally so for girls and hence no separate provisions were necessary.

## Post Independence Period

With Independence, time came to review the whole educational process. The Constitution accordingly included a provision making education compulsory for all children up to the age of 14. The Muslim community was unable to take the maximum advantage of the opportunity provided by the state, because of an unsympathetic official attitude, communally surcharged national climate and its own confusion in fixing up priorities. Therefore, the Muslim community was left with the only choice of extensive voluntary efforts for elevating their educational status. Southern States realised the hard reality first. Besides societies and associations which promoted education among Muslims, there were the same philanthropists that were responsible for giving a fillip to education. Donors to the cause of education like Kaka Omar (Sr.), Nawab C. Abdul Hamim, Jamal Mohammad, Karutha Rawther Kadar Mahideen, Anaikar Abdul Shukoor and the doyen of women’s education Justice Basheer Ahmed Sayeed set up or caused to be set up institutions which are standing monuments to their glory. ( Samuddin,1997).

As we have noted earlier, girls education developed largely through private initiative in the pre independence period and the State started taking interest only in the 1880s. Several education commissions and committees set up by the British rulers took cognisance of the need to educate girls and women in the larger interest of the society. After independence several committees and commissions have been set up from time to time on education, some exclusively for women’s education, which as we shall notice later, has changed substantially over the last five decades.

**The University Education Commission (1948-49):** The University Education Commission set up by the Government of India declared, “there cannot be an educated people without educated

women. If general education had to be limited to men or to women, that opportunity should be given to women, for then, it would most surely be passed on to the next generation". However, the observations of the Commission given below reveal that an effort was made to emphasize the need for educating women for their roles as they obtained at that time. "The greatest profession of women is, and probably will continue to be, that of home maker. Yet her world should not be limited to that one relationship. There are varied conditions, which may properly lead a woman to seek for fulfilment of her life in other fields. Among the great contributions to human welfare have been some men who determined to forego home and family in order to commit themselves wholly to the chosen work of their lives. Women should have the same opportunity. The place of wife and mother offers opportunity for exercise of the highest qualities and skills, yet for a woman to decide that she can best fulfil her aims by living a single life should not put her under a social disability. Sometimes also, there is a period before marriage during which a young woman can do useful work, such as teaching or nursing. Sometimes, the loss of a husband makes her the bread winner for the family. When children are grown, there often remain ten to twenty five years of vigorous life in which a woman may wish to have a useful career. Sometimes, husband and wife wish to share a common occupation through the years. Sometimes with women, as with men, the needs of home and family leave time for useful and interesting occupations. For all such circumstances educational opportunities should be available."

The recommendations of the University Education Commission were in consonance with its view of what education for women should mean and aim at. These recommendations were:

- i. There should be no curtailment in education opportunities for women;
- ii. There should be intelligent educational guidance, by qualified men and women, to help women to get a clearer view of their real educational interest, to the end that they shall not try to imitate men, but shall desire as good education as men get. Women's and men's education should have many elements in common, but should not in general be identical in all respects, as is usually the case today.
- iii. Women students in general should be helped to see their normal places in normal society. Both as citizens as well as women and to prepare for it. The college programme should be so designed according to the needs of the women.
- iv. Through educational counsel and by example the prevailing prejudices against study of home economics and home management should be overcome.
- v. The college education may be co-educational. The women's college commonly have poorer buildings, poorer equipment, and less able teachers.

**The Commission for Secondary Education (1952-53):** The Commission for Secondary Education also enunciated the view that women's education had the major task to prepare them for home. It said (Chapter IV) "It will be noticed that in this Report no particular chapter has been devoted to the education of women. The Commission feels that, at the present stage of our social evolution there is no special justification to deal with women's education separately. There was general agreement, however, that for girls – as well as for boys – education needs to be more closely connected with the home and the community. It should be less bookish in the narrow sense of the word and more practical and should explore the possibility of training the mind through the hands. It should do much more to prepare them for the part they will have to play later as parents and as citizens, i.e. the claims of family life should be considered as important as those of public life. For this reason, it was urged that the teaching of Home Science in Girls' School (and wherever possible, for girls attending boys' schools), should be radically improved. Not necessarily with the idea that women's place is restricted to the home, but because it is essential that she should be educated to fulfil her two-fold duty of family and society. If greater attention is given to Home science, with special emphasis on practical work of every day needs and problems, it will help to bridge the gulf between the school and the life

of the home and the community, and be a better preparation for a girl's life after school, in which home making will necessarily play an important part.”.

**The National Committee on Women's Education (1958-59):** The question of women's education was considered with a totally new and refreshing approach by the National Committee on Women's Education (1958-59) more popularly known as The Durga Bai Deshmukh Committee. This Committee analyzed the problem in detail and developed deep in its various ramifications. It made recommendations of far reaching consequences, which if implemented, would have changed the picture of women's education totally. The recommendations which according to the Women's Commission, needed top priority were:

1. The education of women should be regarded as a major and a special problem in Education for a good many years to come and a bold and determined effort should be made to face its difficulties and magnitude and close the existing gap between the education of men and women in as short a time as possible.
2. The highest priority should be given to schemes prepared from this point of view and the funds required for the purpose should be considered to be the first change on the sums set aside for the development of education.
3. Necessary steps should be taken, without delay, to create special machinery to deal with the problem of the education of girls and women and to assign adequate funds for the purpose.
4. Steps should be taken to constitute as early as possible, National Council for the Education of Girls and Women.
5. The problem of the education of women is so vital and of such great national significance that it is absolutely necessary for the Centre to assume more responsibility for its rapid development. This responsibility will be three-fold:
  - i. It should be a responsibility of the Centre to see that parity between the education of boys and girls is reached as early as possible, and also to see that the education of girls and women is developed evenly in all parts of the country;
  - ii. The Centre should prescribe targets to be attained as well as guide the States in preparing comprehensive development plans for the education of girls and women in their areas;
  - iii. The Centre should assist the States financially in implementing the approved plans.
6. There should be a senior officer of the rank of Joint Educational Adviser at the Centre to look after the education of girls and women.
7. It would be necessary to create a separate unit in the Ministry of Education to deal with the problems of the education of girls and women. This unit would naturally be under the control of the Joint Educational Adviser, who should also be the *ex-officio* Member Secretary of the proposed National Council for the Education of Girls and Women.
8. The State Governments should establish State Councils for the education of girls and women.
9. In each State, a woman should be appointed as Joint Director and Placed in charge of the education of girls and women. She should be responsible for the planning, organizing and execution of all the programmes pertaining to their education.
10. The magnitude of the problem of the education of girls and women is so great that it can be solved only if all the resources of Government and of non-official organizations are combined and fully geared to the task.
11. It is also necessary to enlist the co-operation of all semi-official organizations, local bodies voluntary organizations, teachers' organizations and members of the public to assist in the promotion of the education of girls and women.
12. To the extent that private effort is not forthcoming, direct action should be taken by the State to develop the education of girls and women and to establish special institution for the purpose under its immediate control.

13. A sum of not less than Rupees 10 crores in addition to provisions that already exist should be earmarked for the education of girls and women during the remaining period of the Second Five Year Plan, and an adequate special provision made for their education in the Third Plan.
14. The amount will thus be set aside for the development of the education of girls and women during all remaining period of the Second Five Year Plan should be utilized for the following purposes:
  - i. Development of middle schools for girls;
  - ii. Development of secondary schools for girls;
  - iii. Development of training institutions for women;
15. Construction of hostels for – girls and staff quarters for girls’ institutions at all levels, and organizing special educational facilities for adult women.
16. Preference should be given to institutions in rural areas and liberal grants should be given to private efforts.
17. Every State should be required to prepare comprehensive development plans for the education of girls and women in its area. For this purpose, two plans, one for the remaining period of the Second Five Year Plan and another for the period of the Third Five Year Plan are necessary.
18. The system of matching grants should be done away with, in so far as the development of the education of girls and women is concerned and the entire financial responsibility for this programme should be that of the Government of India.
19. During the Third Five Year Plan, there should be a special programme for the development of the education of girls and women, which is not covered by any of the general programmes and a sum of not less than Rs. 100 crores should be allocated for it.
20. The University Grants Commission which is a statutory body empowered to deal with colleges and universities, should set apart a special fund of not less than Rs. 1 crore for the remaining period of the Second Five Year Plan, for giving necessary grants to colleges, including training colleges and for the construction of hostels for girls. While sanctioning these grants, preference should be given to colleges in rural areas and to semi-urban institutions. The funds should be utilized either for purposes of grant-in-aid or for loans. When grants are given, they should cover 75 % of the total expenditure and, in the case of rural colleges, grants on a 100 per cent basis may be given. The loans should cover the entire cost of the projects and should preferably be interest-free. Their repayment should be spread over a fairly long term.
21. The Planning Commission should set up a permanent machinery to estimate, as accurately as possible, the women-power requirements of the Plans from time to time and make the results of its studies available to Government and the public.
22. Governments should set up, as early as possible, a high-power Committee to examine the so-called wastage in the medical and professional education of women.

**The Hansa Mehta Committee (1962-64)**, appointed by the National Council of Women’s Education (NCWE) suggested co-education be adopted as the general pattern at the elementary stage and vigorous propaganda was made in its favour. As a traditional measure separate primary and middle schools could be provided where necessary. At the secondary level, it was left to the choice of the management and parents to evolve separate institutions for girls. Women teachers, it was recommended, should be inducted in boys’ schools to encourage girls to join these institutions. The Committee recommended common curricula for boys and girls at the elementary stage, with home science as a common core subject for boys and girls at the middle stage. This Committee made several recommendations concerning provision of educational facilities for girls and for curriculum at different levels for education.

The NCWE appointed another Committee under the chairmanship of *M. Bhaktavatsalam in 1963* to investigate the cause for lack of public supports for education of girls particularly in rural areas and to suggest suitable measures to secure public cooperation. The Committee stated, “in our opinion the strategy for development of education of girls and women will have to take two forms, the first is to emphasize the special programmes recommended by the National Committee on Women’s Education. The second is to give attention to the education of girls at all stages and in all sectors as an integral part of the general programmes for the expansion and improvement of education”.

**The Education Commission 1964-66:** The first comprehensive Indian Education Commission (1964-66) under the chairmanship of Dr, D.S. Kothari, reviewed Indian education in its totality. Linking Education with development, through developing productive skills, modernizing India and developing a scientific temper, and promoting national integration were seen as the major goals of education in India. The Commission gave special attention to women’s education and fully endorsed the recommendations of the earlier commission and committees on women’s education. The commission reiterated the need to make education of women a major programme of educational development in order to close the large male female gap as early as possible by starting special schemes for this purpose. Funds were to be made available for women’s education on priority basis and both the Centre and the States should set up a special machinery to look after girls education. Both official and non-official efforts need to be pooled in planning and implementing programmes of women’s education. The Education Commission stressed that where co-education was not acceptable, separate schools for girls should be provided. In addition, hostels, for girls should be encouraged, wherever possible. Subsidized transport should be arranged and girls given special preference in scholarships programmes. The Commission emphasized the need to give adequate attention to training and employment of women. Part time and vocational education should be developed for girls. A vast majority of girls, who left school at the age of 14 years, would benefit from short vocational courses. Likewise, higher education should be linked to employment. The Commission found the state of female literacy as particularly distressing and observed that the effort being made in the direction of making women literate, left much to be desired. There was need to have a common school system with common curricula for both boys and girls.

**The National Policy on Education 1968:** The National Policy on Education 1968 stated that the education of girls should receive emphasis, not only on ground of social justice but also because it accelerates social transformation. Equality of educational opportunities for all sections of population was emphasized. Pre-school education was seen as a necessary complement to primary education.

**The National Council for Women’s Education** which was set up by the Ministry of Education, following one of the main recommendations of the National Committee on Women’s Education, at its thirteenth meeting held **in 1974** made important recommendations for the education of women, through formal and non-formal channels. Some of which are as follows:

- i. allocation of funds by the Centre for grants to voluntary organizations and institutions for special projects for the improvements of the education of girls and women;
- ii. provision of facilities and incentives to increase the enrolment of girls;
- iii. condensed courses for teacher training;
- iv. encouraging local girls and women to work as teachers in the rural areas, if not trained, after going through the condensed course for teacher training;
- v. provision of part-time and non-formal education as well continuing education, specially for girls dropping out of schools, and preparing a suitable, curriculum for it, those in need of such education;
- vi. establishing women’s polytechnics and ITI in rural areas by offering educational programmes related to trades and needs of that region;

- vii. provision of teachers' quarters for women, with suitable security, not isolated from the heart of the village or township or provision of twin quarters for women teachers and other women functionaries of that area;
- viii. requisition of Nehru Yuvak Kendras to cater to the needs of girls and women through their network all over the country in addition to catering to the needs of boys and men.

**The Report of the Committee on Status of Women in India (CSWI), *Towards Equality*** was placed before the Parliament in 1975. The Committee examined the constitutional, legal and administrative provisions which had a bearing on the status of women and noted with concern poor female literacy, the declining sex ratio, and declining work participation rates, concentration of women in low paid occupations and that women were deprived of basic needs of health, nutrition, education and employment and were in a situation of total powerlessness with no share in decision making processes. The CSWI report had tremendous influence on social policies and legislation concerning women, coinciding with the International Women's Year and the start of the Women's Decade. The Committee recommended co-education as a long term policy in view of the economic constraints and equality of opportunity. It was noticed that by and large, besides being insufficient in number, the quality of provision in girls schools was inferior, both in terms of physical infrastructure and teachers. Separate institutions for girls were however recommended in areas where there was continued sex segregation. Mixed staffing was recommended for co-educational schools to draw more girls. For universalisation of elementary education, the Committee recommended, inter alia:

- i. provision of primary schools within walking distance from the home of every child;
- ii. sustained mobilization of public opinion and community support for creating a favourable climate for girls education. All officials and non officials, social and political leaders to motivate parents and community to send girls to school, especially in backward areas;
- iii. special incentives to be given to girls in areas of low female enrolment of girls;
- iv. at least 50% of the teachers at the elementary stage would be women;
- v. a system of part time education for girls who are unable to attend school on a full time basis.

The CWSI recommended a common course of education for both boys and girls till the end of Class X, all courses being open to both sexes after that. At the primary stage the committee suggested that simple needle-work, music and dancing should be taught to both boys and girls. This was in line with the earlier recommendations of the National committee on Women's Education 1959, the Hansa Mehta Committee 1964 that had recommended common curricula for boys and girls at all levels, and inclusion of home science in the core curriculum for both boys and girls in Classes V-VIII.

## **Education of Girls and Women in the Five -Year Plans**

**The First Five Year Plan (1951-55):** The neglect of women's education was noted with concern as girls constituted only 28% and 18% of the total number of children enrolled in primary and middle stage in 1949-50. The Constitution adopted in 1950, directed the State to provide free and compulsory education to all children up to the age of fourteen by 1960. All boys institutions were now open to girls. Co-education was on the increase and 70.7% girls were studying in boys' institutions. Steps were advocated to increase girl's enrolment by motivating parents to send them to co-educational schools. Emphasis was expansion of educational facilities for girls and diversification of secondary education to give it a vocational basis. Rural women were subsumed under the community development programmed. Poor women were neglected and remained untouched as no economic or class related criteria were adopted. Women were considered a welfare category.

**The Second Five -Year Plan (1956-61):** The Second Five -Year Plan emphasized the need to provide greater education opportunities to girls. It was observed that special efforts were needed to educate parents on the importance of girls' education and to relate the same to the needs of the girls. Shortage of women teachers was seen as an impediment. The Plan recommended besides co-

education, separate schools for girls and multiple shifts as an interim measure. Women teachers were to be provided housing facilities in villages. The main features of the educational plan were to give more emphasis on basic education (Gandhian model), expand elementary education and diversify secondary education and above all reduce male female disparities in literacy. Special schemes for girls to take up different occupations such as nursing, health visitors, teachers and so on were recommended. In addition to the national extension and community development programmes, establishment of fundamental education centres for training social education organizers were recommended. In 1957-58, a Centrally Sponsored scheme was introduced to accelerate the enrolment of girls in primary schools. States were given assistance for one or more of the following schemes:

- i. free accommodation for women teachers in rural areas
- ii. appointment of school mothers
- iii. condensed courses for adult women
- iv. stipends for women for teachers training
- v. refresher courses
- vi. stipends for high school students to take up teaching
- vii. attendance scholarships
- viii. exemption from tuition fees
- ix. construction of hostels for secondary schools for girls

**The Second Five Year Plan (1956-60)** continued the welfare approach but recognized the need to organize women as workers. Social prejudices against women and their disabilities were noted. Women were to be protected against injurious work and provided with maternity benefits and crèches and laws passed to this effect. The principle of equal pay equal work was recognized and women it was felt should be given training to compete for higher jobs. The Report of the Committee on Women's Education made a substantial impact.

**The Third Five -Year Plan (1961-66):** The Third Five -Year Plan pinpointed women's education and training as a major welfare strategy. In social welfare, the largest share was provided for expanding rural welfare services and starting of condensed courses of education for out of school women and girls. The health programmes concentrated on provision of maternal and child welfare services, health education and family planning. School enrolments continued to show wide male female disparities as also the gaps in male female literacy rates. The male literacy rate was found to be 34% nearly three times higher than the female literacy of 12.8%. The additional enrolment of boy in schools was to the tune of 13.2% million, the corresponding increase for girls was only 6.8 million. Hence the most important objectives in the Third Plan were to expand facilities for girls at various stages. Provision was also made to fund some special schemes to support the general programmes of girl's education. Keeping in view, the needs of the out of school girls and large number of women who had missed schooling, the Central Social Welfare Board (CSWB) implemented the Scheme of Condensed courses for Adult Women. More than 600 courses were sanctioned for adult women during the Third Plan.

**The Fourth Five -Year Plan (1969-74):** The Fourth Five Year Plan continued emphasis on women's education and followed the basic policy to improve women's welfare within the unit of family. The mother role received heightened attention. Immunization of children and supplementary feeding for children and expectant and nursing mother was started. During the Fourth Five Year Plan (69-74) sustained efforts were made to extend education of girls and improve their enrolments at all stages. By the end of the Fourth Plan, there were 64.10 million children enrolled at the primary stage of whom 24.50 million were girls. At the upper primary level, girls accounted for 4.6 million of the total 15.30 million students on rolls. Girls enrolment ration of the relevant age group was 66 in Classes I-V and only 22 in Classes VI-VIII.

**The Fifth Five -Year Plan (1969-74):** In the Fifth Five Year Plan very high priority was given to free and compulsory education for all children up to the age of 14 year in pursuance of the Constitutional Directive. To that effect every state introduced free education for children in the age group 6-11 years. The progress was not uniform in all States. It was realized that the target of UPE cannot be achieved without bringing back the drop-out especially in the case of girls. The problem of inadequate availability of women teachers was to be tackled by giving scholarships to local girls to complete their education and training for a teaching career and organization of condensed courses and correspondence courses for the less educated women and girls. The outlay for special programmes for education of girls was to be stepped up. Along with expansion, it was viewed that the curriculum should also meet the special needs of girls as housewives and as career women. Emphasis was laid on increasing girls enrolment in schools by providing various incentives. Simultaneously National Adult Education Programme and Integrated Child Development Services received attention and programme of pre-school education were given special emphasis. It was estimated in 1978-79 that two-thirds of the non-enrolled children in the 6-14 age group were girls and three-fourths of the enrolled children were in nine states.

The Fifth Five -Year Plan emphasized the need to train women in need of income and protection. Functional literacy was to equip women with skills and knowledge to perform the function of a housewife to include child care, nutrition health care, home economics etc. A major landmark of the Fifth Plan period was the adoption of the National Policy resolution on the Child in India in 1974. This drew the attention of the nation to the value of children and to develop further this valuable resource, by adequate provision of education, health and nutrition for all children.

**The Sixth Five -Year Plan (1980-85):** The Sixth Five Year Plan stressed upon women's role in development for the first time and started seeing women as special target groups for removal of poverty and unemployment. Special incentives were given to the States to promote female literacy and enrolments. The role of women in agriculture and development and village level organizations received attention. The marginality of attention and services received by women in rural and agricultural development programmes, the special constraints that obstruct their access to available assistance and services, the low productivity and narrow range of occupations available to them, low level of participation in decision making, lack of finance and guidance, inadequate monitoring of women's participation, wage discrimination, low health and nutritional status, and ineffective application of science and technology for removing their drudgery, were seen as major barriers to rural women's development as a whole. The major thrust of the Sixth Plan was on economic upliftment of women. Through greater opportunities for salaried, self and wage employment. Appropriate technologies, services and public policies were to be introduced for the same as also technological services included imparting new skills and upgrading existing skills. The services package paid attention to training, credit needs and to marketing. The public policy package concentrated on measures in the area of ownership rights, enforcement of wage law and employment impact assessment with reference to women's employment in development projects. Assistance was given to women's organizations. Measures to improve the health and nutritional status, were to be made more effective, as it was felt that programmes relating to education, health, nutrition and employment would go a long way in removing social disabilities facing women and the female child.

Nearly 73 % of the total non-enrolled children in the 6-11 years age group were girls. In the age group 11-14 years only 38 % of girls had enrolled for formal education. The drop-out rate for girls continued to be high at both elementary and secondary levels. To boost enrolment in primary classes, early childhood education centers (ECCE) for children in 3-6 years age group were set up as adjuncts to primary schools for the first time in this plan for the rural and backward areas. These centers also provided crèche facilities for younger siblings of girls attending primary schools. Besides this, previous incentives continued to be given to girls.

As in the previous plan, removal of poverty was the foremost objective besides stepping up the growth of the economy, strengthening the impulses of modernization, achieving economic and technological self-reliance, improving the quality of life, reducing regional inequalities, promoting the active protection and improvement of ecological and environmental assets and promoting the active involvement of all sections of people in the process of development through appropriate education.

*The emphasis in educational planning shifted from provision of inputs and expansion of facilities in general terms, to results to be achieved and tasks to be performed with specific reference to target groups of population, particularly the socially disadvantaged.* Based on the Fourth Educational survey, the Plan emphasized that achieving elementary education was a major problem not due to non-availability of schools but socio-economic reasons particularly in the rural areas, concerted efforts were called for to reach out to the women, SC/ST and other weaker segments of society. It was felt that there was need to transform the system of education qualitatively, in terms of its value content, standards and relevance to life. Elementary education in the backward states needed to be given a serious consideration. For the first time there was a chapter on Women and Development as there was a steady decline in the sex ratio and women lagged behind in almost all sectors. The plan viewed the family as a unit of development, wherein awareness generation on women's issues and problem was stressed. It was pointed out that the status of women was related to their economic independence. To raise this, voluntary agencies and Mahila Mandals were identified as crucial agencies. Special cells were to be created for increasing women's participation through wage and self-employment for boosting the education of women. Girls hostels were to be increased, higher rates of scholarships given, and co-education polytechnics encouraged.

The Sixth Five -Year Plan stated that the programme of UEE would be specially directed toward higher enrolment and retention of girls in schools. This would require the following:

- i. balwadies / crèches attached to schools to free girls from sibling care and attend school,
- ii. income generating work for girls outside the schools hours, for supplementing the family income.
- iii. expansion of incentive schemes such as free uniforms, textbooks mid-day meals etc.
- iv. appointment of women teachers where necessary in rural areas to encourage girls education.
- v. Strengthening of science teaching in girls schools and colleges for enabling them to achieve greater participation in science.

Seen as a related area of concern, expansion of functional literacy programme especially in low female literacy areas was envisaged. Special non formal education programmes for girls were started. Vigorous efforts were made to improve girls enrolment in the nine educationally backward states, through centrally sponsored schemes, such as 90% subsidy for non-formal education centers exclusively for girls, appointment of women teacher in primary schools and awards to states for excellent performance in primary education of girls and female literacy.

By the end of the Sixth Plan, there were a total of 84 million children enrolled in Classes I-V, of these 33 million were girls. The percentage of children in the age group who were enrolled at the primary stage was 94.1%, the enrolment ratio for girls being 76.7% at this level. At the upper primary stage (Classes VI-VIII), there were a total of 26 million children enrolled, of whom 9 million were girls, the enrolment ratio of girls being 36% as compared to 51% for total children.

During the Sixth Plan, a large number of measures were undertaken to alleviate the conditions of the poverty groups especially those residing in rural areas. Women were recognized as a special target group for removal of poverty and unemployment. Women's role in agriculture and the need for their participation in village level organization was focused upon. This was the time when the major national rural development programme was launched. The Integrated Rural Development Programme, which was started in 1978-79, soon saw the need to treat women with special consideration as often the benefits of the various IRDP schemes were cornered by males. In 1981, Development of Women and Child in rural Areas (DWCRA) were launched as a sub scheme of the IRDP. DWCRA organizes women's groups called Mahila Mandals for collective action to know and demand their rights and dues from the society.

**The Seventh Five -Year Plan (1985-90):** The Seventh Five -Year Plan operationalised the concern for equity and empowerment articulated by the International Decade for Women. For the first time the emphasis was qualitative focusing on inculcating confidence among women, generation of awareness and training them for economic activity and employment. The plan stressed the need for mainstreaming and integrating women into society and thus into national development viewing them as a crucial human resource.

The plan envisaged an integrated multi-disciplinary approach to women's development comprising education, health nutrition, child services, employment, legal awareness etc. It was in 1985 that the Government of India Constituted a separate Department in the Ministry of Human Resource Development which funds the CSWB that the developmental and welfare programmes for women. A number of these programmes were put on the ground in the Sixth and Seventh Five Year Plan periods – viz., Women's Development Corporations, Support to Training and Employment Programme (STEP) Training-cum-Production Centres for Women, Camps for Rural and Poor Women, Short Stay, Homes, Family counseling Centres, Working Women's Hostels and many others.

Women specific programmes implemented by Department of Women and Child Development are geared towards –

- i. strengthening and improving women's work and employment in agriculture, animal husbandry, dairy farming, fisheries, handlooms, handicrafts, sericulture and Khadi and Village industries,
- ii. economic rehabilitation of women from the weaker sections of society through training and employment.
- iii. better employment avenues for women to bring them into the mainstream of national development,
- iv. provision of short stay homes for women in difficulties, together with support services of counseling medical care, guidance and treatment and development of skills,
- v. provision of preventive and rehabilitative services to women and children who are victims of atrocities and exploitation.

The thrust of all these programmes is two pronged. Firstly, it is specific in the sense that certain programmes cater to women only as beneficiaries, while secondly there are other programmes that help in mainstreaming and integrating them into society.

Currently, in addition to the formal system of education there are 45 schemes of non-formal education and skill training for out of school children. These are run by eight central ministries, viz.,

education, health, labour, agriculture, textiles, food & civil supplies, science and technology and industries. All 45 schemes are open to women, sixteen are exclusively for women. Of the ten schemes initiated during the Sixth and Seventh Plan Period, seven are meant for women only. There are seven schemes for preparation of women development functionaries in the areas of health, education and child development and social welfare. There is a unique scheme for creating awareness among rural poor women regarding their rights and needs and for helping them to work towards the same.

The Mahila Samakhya project of the Department of Education of Ministry of Human Resource Development is another programme which sees concretization and mobilization of women for group action as a major educational programme in itself and as a precursor to the development of girls education and adult female literacy. There are at least two schemes that are aimed at the development of entrepreneurship among women. Several schemes have the elements of credit and marketing know how in addition to skill development and production management. Application of science and technology is being encouraged to reduce the drudgery of rural women.

In certain programmes like the Training of Rural Youth in Self Employment (TRYSEM) of the IRDP, a minimum of 33% seats were to be filled up by women trainees. During the Seventh Plan Period, women exceeded this quota which has now been revised upwards to 40% w.e.f. 1<sup>st</sup> April, 1991. The Khadi village Industries Commission (KVIC) which was running over 90 vocational courses aimed at production of Khadi and 26 village industries had a special mandate to protect women's employment. Nearly half of the KVIC workers are women but very few women are employed in industries, mostly they are piece wage workers. The gender stereotyping of courses of non-formal education and training schemes continues, as a rule with only a few attempts at breaking new grounds in non-traditional occupations by women in some programmes.

***The Seventh Plan views women, themselves and not the family as the basic unit of development.*** Considering the highly inequitable intra household distribution of resources and power even in basics like food and health this appears to be a better approach. Also, the right of women to be beneficiaries of all governmental schemes as individuals is recognized. There is a significant beginning towards making rural women's work visible through researches. The emphasis is not only on provision of credit and marketing and technology, but, on generating awareness among women about their rights and privileges and building their self-confidence. The state has sponsored the movement to organize rural women for action leading to better control of their lives and as agents of change. DWCRA started in 1981, has received further fillip in the Seventh Plan, for improving of access of women to resources and decision making within the family, joint pattas (deeds of ownership) of land and property have been advocated. (Only Assam, Andhra Pradesh, Gujarat, Maharashtra, Goa, Daman and Diu have so far ratified this policy).

Specifically in education, the Seventh Plan laid stress on enrolment and retention of girls at the elementary stage, especially those belonging to rural areas, the Scheduled Castes, the Scheduled Tribes and other weaker sections. Voluntary agencies were encouraged to run early childhood education centers as adjuncts of primary and middle schools. There was further expansion of the ICDS programmes to cover all indigent groups of population especially those living in rural areas. The ICDS is seen as providing school readiness among pre-schools and early stimulation, nutrition and health care to children in the age group 0-3 years. Besides, ICDS centers and Anganwadies, also provide the necessary support structure to relieve school age girls from sibling care. Further, promotion of vocational and technical education for girls was boosted by setting up more women's

polytechnics and by opening all technical institutions to women. Finally, the Seventh Plan gave high importance to District Level Planning and decentralized implementation through community involvement for delivering basic education programmes of UEE and Adult Education.

**The Eighth Five -Year Plan (1990-95):** the Eighth Five -Year Plan emphasized the need for human development, of which human resource development is a necessary pre-requisite. Education is the catalytic factor, which leads to human resource development. Universalisation of elementary education (UEE), eradication of illiteracy in the age group 15-35 years and strengthening of vocational education as to relate it to the emerging needs in the urban and rural settings were the major thrust areas of the Eighth Plan. The need for according the highest priority to UEE is, therefore well – established. Within the overall school – age population, the focus would be on girls, who account for two-thirds of the target, and among adults the focus would be on women’s literacy which has a beneficial impact on children’s literacy as well as other national objectives like population control and family welfare. However, special attention would be paid to increase retention, improvement of quality, specification of minimum levels of learning (MLL) and their attainment by the learners. With regard to literacy, the emphasis would be on sustainability of literacy skills gained and on the achievement of goals of remediation, continuation and application of skills to actual living and working conditions.

**The main strategy for achieving the targets were to be:**

- i. Adoption of the decentralized approach to educational planning and management at all levels through Panchayat Raj Institutions;
- ii. Combining this approach with a convergence model of rural development involving integrated utilization of all possible resources available at Panchayat, Block and District level for activities relating to elementary education / literacy, child care / development, women’s socio – economic empowerment and rural health programmes;
- iii. Large scale participation of voluntary agencies; and
- iv. Development of innovative and cost-effective complementary programmes including open learning system (OLS) supported by district education techniques.

The formal school system was expanded and improved. Elementary education is considered a joint responsibility of State and local bodies. However, need was felt to providing part time non-formalized education to a large number of learners who are not able to avail of the facility of formal full-time school or non-formal education centers. A well-defined open learning system was developed with a network educational opportunities relevant to the needs and circumstances of learners, especially girls, women, SCs / STs and the poor, the unemployed and the un-trained. The major thrust of open learning system has to be on the acquisition of life skills, vocational skill, directly contributing to productivity and inculcation of habits of self-learning. Special effort was to be made to increase enrolment rates and improve participation rates at the upper primary stage especially with respect to girls. Besides expansion of school facilities, need was felt to improve the quality of education by providing existing schools with sufficient facilities. In order to expedite universalisation of elementary education and increase the enrolment of girls, the ratio between primary and upper primary schools would be brought down from the existing 1:4 to at least 1:3 with the ultimate aim of 1:2.

Apart from expanding Tribal Sub – Plan (TSP) and Special Component Plan (SCP), special measures are required for promotion of education of SCs / STs. Certain sub – castes, tribes and communities need particular attention because literacy rates among them are extremely low. The existing scheme

of residential ashram schools was to be expanded to cover classes from I to X and scholarship schemes for talented children at the secondary level would be expanded. This would supplement by the scheme of voluntary schools wherever possible. Suitable incentives are to be provided to all educationally backward sections of the society, particularly in rural areas. Hill and desert districts, remote and inaccessible areas and islands need to be provided adequate institutional infrastructure. ***Greater attention will be paid to the educationally backward minorities keeping in view the recommendations of the Empowered Committee on Minority Education (1991).***

A system of incentives to overcome social, economic and educational handicaps, which lead to high incidence of dropout has been an integral part of educational planning for universalisation since long. An evaluation of these schemes made a positive assessment but stressed the need for paying adequate attention to management aspects of the system so that they yield the desired results. A comprehensive package of incentives and support services for girls, SCs, STs and children of the economically weaker sections of society was envisaged. The emphasis of facilities that have special relevance for retention of girls such as establishment of Day Care centers for pre school children and infants, provision of free uniforms, textbooks and stationery, attendance allowance and co-ordination of support services such as drinking water, fodder and fuel, to release children, especially girls as well as women from related domestic work.

**The Ninth Five -Year Plan:** The Ninth Five -Year Plan saw education as the most crucial investment in human development by raising the quality of life by influencing improvement health, hygiene, demographic profile and productivity. Education of girls and women's empowerment are seen as the drive arm of national development and an important yardstick of human development within the framework of human rights and human dignity. Special strategies have been listed under various heads in the Plan document such as in the sections on Education, Empowerment of Women and Development of Children.

## Education (3.3)

### Elementary Education Thrust Areas

- Providing primary education is a universal basic service, declaring it be a fundamental right for children up to the age of fourteen years.
- Legal embargo on child labour.
- Panchayati Raj Institutions (PRIs) are seen as major strategies for UEE.
- Social mobilisation.
- Heightened awareness of human rights, violations in respect of women and persons from disadvantaged sections of society.
- Implementation of the provisions of Persons with Disabilities Action of 1995.
- Revised Alternative Education for the large chunk of out of school children who are neither in school nor in identifiable child labour.
- The National and State Open Schools will try to meet the educational needs of for those who are unable to enrol in the formal system.
- The Plan continues emphasis on reduction of regional, inter group and gender disparities.

### Secondary Education - Thrust Areas

- Regulate expansion by creating new facilities for girls, other deprived sections and children in rural areas at the secondary levels in order to reduce wide rural urban and gender disparities in educational access.
- Revision of curricula to relate the same to work opportunities, through pre-vocational training at the secondary stage and vocationalisation of general higher secondary education.
- Provision of scholarships, hostels and other incentives for facilitating the participation of girls.
- Vocationalisation after ten years of schooling and improvement in the quality of education particularly in Science, Mathematics and Computer Literacy though with support. The potential of open learning system would be exploited for offering a variety of courses.
- In remote and tribal areas more hostel facilities would be created for girls in Secondary Schools. Additional hostel facilities will be provided to girls particularly in Tribal and remote areas so that the attendance rate of girls improves. MHRD will co-ordinate this programme with those of the Ministry of Welfare.

### University and Higher Education - Thrust Areas

- The priority for the Ninth plan is to be on the expansion in education largely in the unreserved areas with the focus on improving the coverage of women and disadvantaged groups by using financial assistance as a leverage.

### Women's Empowerment - Thrust Areas

- The National Agenda for Governance also states "We will institute plans for providing free education for girls up to college level i.e. under-graduate level including professional courses would be made free."
- During the Ninth Plan period, an adequate provision will be made for this purpose. On a long-term basis the financial implications of making education free for girls up to the graduation level will be worked out in close collaboration with State and local governments in so far as these relate to the Department of Education.
- The concept of free education is to be defined explicitly in terms of its coverage. The components could be tuition fees, basic textbooks, maintenance expenditure in hostels and library books.

### Empowerment of Women and Development of Children (3.8) Thrust Areas

***Empowerment of women was one of the nine primary objectives of the Ninth Plan.*** "Every effort will be made to create an enabling environment where women can freely exercise their rights both within and outside home, as equal partners along with men. Major objectives will be empowering women as the agents of social change. Education being the most powerful instrument for empowering women assumes special priority in the Ninth Plan. Efforts in the Ninth Plan will,

therefore, be target – oriented in fulfilling the goal of “Education for Women’s Equality” as laid down in the National Policy on Education (NPE), 1986 and revised in 1992. “Towards this:

- Special attention will be paid to the already identified low female literacy pockets and to the women and the girl children belonging to the socially disadvantaged group viz. SC, STs, OBCs, Minorities, Disabled etc. as they still lag behind the rest of the population with the lowest literacy rates ranging between 5 and 10 per cent, while the national average of female literacy stands at 39.3% in 1991.
- While Universal Primary Education continues to be a priority area in the Ninth Plan, all our efforts will be made to ensure both easy and equal access to education for women and girls through the commitments of the Special Action Plan (1988) to achieve total eradication of illiteracy;
- besides, steps will be initiated to eliminate gender discrimination in the admissions; remove gender bias and stereo – types in the curricula, textbooks and learning material;
- create a gender – sensitive educational system; promote gender sensitization of teachers on a regular basis; appoint more women teachers as primary level (at least 50%);
- reduce drop – out rates and increase enrolment and retention rates of girls children through special incentives like free supply of uniforms and textbooks, mid day meals, scholarships, flexible school timings and attached hostels and crèches;
- improve the quality of education, facilitating life – long learning through the correspondence courses, distance learning and self – study programmes for women and girls who fall out of the formal system of schooling.
- The special package announced for the Girl Child on 15 August, 1997 also revolves around the very same theme of educating and empowering the girl child living below the poverty line, with adequate financial support till she completes higher secondary education or gets equipped with the necessary skills to earn her livelihood.
- Vocationalisation of secondary education and vocational training for women will receive high priority, as one of the ultimate goals of empowering women is to make them economically independent and self-reliant. In this context, the existing network of National Vocational Training Centre (NVTC), Regional Vocational Training Centres (RVTCs), Pre – Vocational Training Centres (PVTCs), Industrial Training Institutes (ITI) and Crafty Training Centres (CTCs) will be further strengthened with necessary improvements in the infra-structural facilities for introduction of up-coming trades, hostels etc. Efforts will also be made to encourage eligible women / girls with suitable incentives to join vocational education / training so that the facilities available at these exclusive Training Institutions will be utilized optimally. Introduction of part-time and short-time courses will also be considered to meet the special needs and timings of working women / girls. Efforts will be made to encourage women and girls with necessary incentives to opt for the emerging areas of technical education such as electronics, computer systems and applications, bio – engineering, bio-technology, food processing, fabric designing, beauty culture, communications, media etc. which have high employment.
- Further, to encourage more and more girls to enter into the mainstream of higher education and thus ensure fulfillment of the commitment of ‘Education for Women’s Equality’, the Ninth Plan envisages to institute plans for providing free education for girls up to college levels, including professional courses, so as to better empower women.
- To universalise the on-going supplementary feeding programmes – Special Nutrition Programme (SNP) and Mid Day Meals (MDM)
- The Ninth Plan accords high priority to research and Development (R & D) for exploitation of alternative sources of energy for use in women related household activities. To undertake R & D activities, more and more girls will be encouraged to take up the science stream with attractive incentives, ensuring easy and equal access to education for women and girls through the commitments of the Special Action Plan of 1998.

## Children

As in the past, the young child will continue to be placed first on the country's development agenda with a special focus on the girl child. To this effect, the Ninth Plan reaffirms its priority for the development of early childhood as an investment in the country's human resource development. While the first six years are acknowledged as critical for the development of children, greater stress will be laid on reaching the younger children below 2 years.

The two National Plans of Action – one for Children and other exclusively for the Girl Child adopted in 1992, also fall very much within the guiding principles underlining the importance of 'Survival, Protection and Development.' Efforts in the Ninth Plan will, therefore, be made to expedite effective implementation and achievement of the goals set in the two Plans of Action besides instituting a National Charter for Children to ensure that no child remains illiterate, hungry or lacks medical care. The UN Convention on the Rights of the Child, ratified by our country in 1992, also provides a strong base for initiating necessary – legal and other developmental measures for protection of the rights of the child. Major objectives will be to place the Young Child at the top of the Country's Developmental Agenda with a Special Focus on the Girl Child, and to re-affirm its priority for the development of early childhood services as an investment in the Country's Human Resource Development. Towards this:

- To view girl's education as a major intervention for breaking the vicious inter-generational cycle of gender and socio-economic disadvantages.
- To expand the support services of crèche / day care services and to develop linkages between the primary schools and of the child care services to promote educational opportunities for the Girl Child.
- To widen the scope and the spectrum of child development services with necessary interventions related to empowerment of women and children, families and communities through effective convergence and coordination of various sectoral efforts and services.
- To universalise ICDS as the mainstay of the Ninth Plan for promoting the over-all development of young children especially the Girl Child and mothers all over the country.
- To expand the scheme of Adolescent Girls in preparation for their productive and re-productive roles as confident individuals not only in family building but also in nation building.
- To promote the nutritional status of the mother and the child by improving the dietary intake through a change in the feeding practices and intra family food distribution.
- To strengthen the early joyful period of play and learning in the young child's life and to ensure a harmonious transition from the family environment to the primary school.

### ***Empowerment of women has become a key issue in national development.***

*The National Policy for the Empowerment of Women was approved on 20 March, 2001. The goal of the policy is to bring about advancement, development and empowerment of women through a process of change in societal attitudes towards women, elimination of all forms of discrimination against women and their active participation in all spheres of life which will empower women, socially, economically and politically. The Policy prescribes strategies and action points to bridge the gap between the de jure equality and the unequal de facto position of women in the country. Further, the Policy prescribes affirmative action in areas such as legal system, decision making structure and mainstreaming of gender perspective in development process and economic and political empowerment. Implementation of the National Policy for the empowerment of women will be an inter sectoral exercise that would aim at the convergence of resources of all Ministries/departments. The Ninth Five Year Plan has already initiated the process of formulation of women's component Plan whereby 30 percent of funds/benefits in all women related sectors shall flow to women. The Policy envisages setting up of a Council at the national level to oversee the implementation of the Policy.*

## The National policy on Women's Empowerment (2001)

The goal of this policy is to bring about the advancement of women. Specifically, the objectives of this Policy include:

- ix. Creating an environment through positive economic and special policies for full
- x. The *de-jure* and *de facto* enjoyment of all human rights and fundamental freedom by women on equal basis with men in all spheres-political, economic, social, cultural and civil;
- xi. Equal access to participation and decision making of women in social, political and economic life of nation;
- xii. Equal access to women to health care, quality education at all levels, career and vocational guidance, employment, equal remuneration, occupational health and safety, social security and public office etc.;
- xiii. Strengthening legal systems aimed at elimination of all forms of discrimination against women;
- xiv. Changing societal attitudes and community practices by active participation and involvement of both men and women;
- xv. Mainstreaming of discrimination and all forms of violence against women and the girl child; and
- xvi. Building and strengthening partnerships with civil society, particularly women's organizations.

## Commitments of the Tenth Plan to Empower Women

### The Approach

To continue with the major strategy of 'Empowering Women' as Agents of Social Change and Development.

#### Strategies

To adopt a Sector-specific 3-Fold Strategy for empowering women, based on the prescriptions of the National Policy for Empowerment of Women. They include:

- Social Empowerment – to create an enabling environment through various affirmative developmental policies and programmes for development of women besides providing them easy and equal access to the entire basic minimum services so as to enable them to realise their full potentials.
- Economic empowerment – to ensure provision of training, employment and income-generation activities with both 'forward' and 'backward' linkages with the ultimate objective of making all potential women economically independent and self-reliant; and
- Gender justice – to eliminate all forms of gender discrimination and thus, allow women to enjoy not only the de-jure but also the de-facto rights and fundamental freedom on par with men in all spheres, viz. political, economic, social, civil, cultural etc.

In the context of having a laid down National Policy, approach to the Tenth Plan for empowering women will be very distinct from that of the earlier Plans, as it now stands on a strong Platform for Action with definite goals, targets and a time-frame. Further, as the process of empowering women initiated during the Ninth Plan in expected to continue through and beyond the Tenth Plan, there can be no better approach than translating the recently adopted National Policy for Empowerment of Women (2001) into action through –

- i. Creating an environment, through positive economic and social policies, for the development of women to enable them to realise their full potential;

- ii. Allowing the de-jure and de-facto enjoyment of all human rights and fundamental freedoms by women on par with men in all spheres – political, economic, social, cultural and civil;
- iii. Providing equal access to participation and decision-making for women in social, political and economic life of the nation;
- iv. Ensuring equal access to women to health care, quality education at all levels, career and vocational guidance, employment, equal remuneration, occupational health and safety, social security and public office etc.;
- v. Strengthening legal systems aimed at the elimination of all forms of discrimination against women;
- vi. Changing societal attitudes and community practices by active participation and involvement of both men and women;
- vii. Mainstreaming a gender perspective into the development process;
- viii. Eliminating discrimination and all forms of violence against women and the girl child; and
- ix. Building and strengthening partnerships with civil society, particularly women's organisations, corporate and private sector agencies.

## Current Initiatives

The Government of India has taken a number of steps to strengthen the educational base of persons belonging to weaker sections of society. While most of the relevant educational programs are designed and implemented by the Ministry of Human Resource Development, some are within the purview of the Ministry for Social Justice and Empowerment, and yet others in the Ministry of Tribal Affairs. Pursuant to the National Policy on Education, 1986 and the Programme of Action, 1992, the following special provisions were incorporated for SCs, STs and other disadvantaged sections to include educationally backward minorities within the existing schemes of the Departments of Elementary Education and Literacy and Secondary and Higher Education:

### Schemes at School Stage

- ◆ Abolition of tuition fees in all government schools at least up to the upper primary level. Most States have abolished tuition fees for SC/ST students and Girls up to the senior secondary level.
- ◆ Incentives like free textbooks, uniforms, stationary, school bags etc for these students.
- ◆ **The 86<sup>th</sup> Constitutional Amendment published in Gazette on 13 December 2002 provides for free and compulsory elementary education as a Fundamental Right, for all children aged 6-14 years.**
- ◆ The ***Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan (SSA)***, which aims to achieve the goal of universal elementary education for all children in the 6-14 age group by 2010, through a time-bound integrated approach, has an intensified focus to draw in the children belonging to SC/ST and minority groups, especially girls from these sections. SSA includes back-to-school camps for out-of-school girls; free textbooks for girls, SC/ST students; special coaching and remedial classes for girls, SC/ST children, and a congenial learning environment; teachers' sensitization programmes to promote equitable learning opportunities; recruitment of 50% female teachers; and special focus for innovative projects related to girls' education, SC/ST children.
- ◆ ***The EGS & AIE (Education Guarantee Scheme and Alternative and Innovative Education)*** provides a special thrust to education of children in school-less habitations and out-of-school children, through flexible strategies including bridge courses, residential camps, remedial coaching, drop-in centres etc. During 2005-06, this component helped provide elementary education to 62.26 lakh children.
- ◆ Under the ***Mid-day Meal scheme*** (National Program of Nutritional Support to Primary Education), launched in 1995, today covers nearly 12 crore children in over 8 lakh primary schools. This scheme is serving a dual purpose – raising the nutritional level of children, and enhancing school admission and retention levels. Each child is provided cooked mid-day meal with minimum 300 calories and 8-12 gm of protein content. The Mid-day Meal is a successful incentive programme. It covers all students, including ***SCs/STs ,minorities*** of primary classes in all schools in the country.
- ◆ ***NPEGEL (National Program for Education of Girls at the Elementary Level)*** is an important component of SSA, providing additional support for girls' education in educationally backward blocks through girl-friendly schools, uniforms, stationery etc, for elementary education of disadvantaged girls. The scheme is being implemented in educationally backward blocks where the level of female literacy is less than the national average and the gender gap is above the national average, as well as in blocks of districts that have at least 5% SC/ST population and where SC/ST female literacy is below 10%. An amount of Rs 1064.80 crore was earmarked for this program during the Tenth Plan, of which Rs 676 crore has been approved for implementation during 2005-06.
- ◆ The ***Kasturba Gandhi Balika Vidyalaya (KGBV)*** scheme, launched in 2004, aims to set up 750 residential schools at elementary level for girls belonging predominantly to SC, ST, OBC and

minorities, in educationally backward blocks. All KGBVs have been sanctioned by GOI, *out of which 117 (15.6 %) have been allocated to blocks with substantial minority population.*

*SSA has identified nearly 100 districts in 16 states for focused attention to education of minority children. During 2005-06, 2643 primary schools, 1978 upper primary schools and 2900 EGS centres have been sanctioned in minority concentrated districts.*

- ◆ **Mahila Samakhya:** addresses traditional gender imbalances in educational access and achievement. Women, especially those from socially and economically disadvantaged and marginalized sections, are enabled to address and deal with problems of low self-confidence, oppressive social customs and the struggle for survival, all of which inhibit their empowerment.
- ◆ **District Primary Education Program:** The thrust of this scheme is on disadvantaged groups like girls, SC/ST, working children, urban deprived children, disabled children etc. There are specific strategies for girls and SCs/STs. Physical targets are fixed in an integrated manner including coverage of other groups as well. According to a NIEPA study, schools in DPEP districts had over 60% students belonging to SC/ST communities.
- ◆ **Shiksha Karmi Project:** Under this the focus is on universalisation and qualitative improvement of primary education in remote, arid and socio-economically backward villages of Rajasthan with primary attention to girls. In SKP schools, most of the children are SCs, STs and OBCs.
- ◆ **Jan Shikshan Sansthan:** This is a multifaceted adult education programme aimed at educational, vocational and occupational development of the socio-economically backward and educationally disadvantaged groups, particularly neo-literates, SCs, STs, women and girls, slum dwellers, migrant workers etc.
- ◆ **The National Literacy Mission (NLM),** set up in 1988, aims to attain a high and sustainable literacy level for the Indian population, by means of an integrated approach. Total Literacy Campaigns, which are time-bound, participative, and outcome-oriented, is the main strategy for imparting literacy, while the Post Literacy Programs and Continuing Education Scheme consolidates the initial learning. About 60 % of the beneficiaries are women And 597 out of the total 600 districts in the country have been covered by NLM literacy programs.
- ◆ **Kendriya Vidyalayas** reserve 15 % seats for SCs and 7.5 % for STs, while *Navodaya Vidyalayas* reserve seats for SC and ST children in proportion to their population in the concerned district. The National Institute of Open Schooling gives concession in admission fees to SC/ST students for bridge courses and for senior secondary courses.
- ◆ **Navodaya Vidyalayas:** reserve seats in favour of children belonging to SCs and STs, in proportion to their population in the concerned district, provided the reservation is not less than the national average of 22.5% and a maximum of 50% for both categories taken together.
- ◆ **National Institute of Open Schooling (NIOS):** NIOS is the largest open schooling system in the world. During 2005-06, it had more than 13 lakh students on its rolls at the secondary and senior secondary stages. NIOS has been pursuing its mission to reach the unreached by providing opportunities for schooling to those who missed opportunities to complete schooling. It is the apex level organization for providing school education resources through distance and open learning mode. Keeping in view the needs of its students, NIOS has been providing flexibility in selecting academic, pre-vocational and vocational courses as well as in examinations, so that a candidate can learn and proceed according to her/his own pace. The SC/ST students are given concession in admission fees to the extent of Rs 200/- for bridge courses, Rs 250/- for secondary courses, and Rs 300/- for senior secondary courses.

- ◆ **Vocational Education:** Vocational education is a distinct stream at the higher secondary stage in the national education system. It intends to prepare students for identified occupations spanning several areas of activities. NIOS offers about 107 distinct Vocational Education (VE) courses, their length varying from 6 months to 2 years. These include courses in various Crafts, Health and Paramedical vocational courses; courses in Technology, Horticulture, Agriculture, Fisheries, Insurance sector and Office related activities, Computer science, Computer hardware repair and maintenance, Rural marketing, International marketing, Home science, etc. The NCERT (National Council of Educational Research and Training) from time to time evaluates these courses and their relevance in the context of different states.

During 2006-07, seven new courses are likely to be introduced. The areas covered are: Bee keeping, Mushroom production, Life skills, Homeopathy, Rural health for women (in Hindi), Two Wheeler mechanics, and Radiography. In all the new vocational courses, the concept of entrepreneurship has been incorporated. The pass outs are encouraged to establish their own production/service units. Emphasis is being laid on collaborative ventures in VE with industries, through the CII (Confederation of Indian Industries) and others. For instance, in November 2005 NIOS and CII held a meeting to explore possibilities of partnership with CISCO and Microsoft for conduct of Information Technology (IT) courses. A meeting of NIOS and the Rehabilitation Council of India in December 2005 discussed possibilities of developing VE courses for differently abled children. In order to cater to the needs of rural youth, short-term (6-month) courses are being identified and developed.

During 2006-07 curriculum and self-learning materials will be developed for several need based courses including Certificate courses in Floriculture, Vermicomposting, Web page designing, Store keeping and purchasing, Management of children with learning difficulties, Batik, etc. The NIOS is working of streamlining and strengthening its courses, in order to provide opportunities for human resource development aimed at youth employment and entrepreneurship. It seeks to equip learners with appropriate skills for sustainable livelihoods and create a pool of technologically qualified human resources.

The *National Talent Search Scheme*, for financial support to meritorious students pursuing courses in science and social science up to doctoral level and in professional courses like medicine and engineering, has a reservation of 150 scholarships for SC students and 75 for ST students, out of a total of 1000 scholarships.

### ***Higher Education and Technical Education***

The **UGC (University Grants Commission)** has earmarked 15 % and 7.5 % respectively for SCs and STs in appointments, in teaching and non-teaching posts, admissions, hostel accommodation etc, in universities/colleges administered by the Central government. The State universities follow reservation policies as prescribes by the respective state governments. UGC provides financial assistance for Remedial Coaching to SC/ST students for undergraduate and postgraduate students, and for preparation for the NET (National Eligibility Test).

**The UGC's scheme for Remedial Coaching Classes for Disadvantaged Minority Groups:** This scheme is set up with the objective of imparting remedial education to students belonging to disadvantaged minority groups so as to enable them to compete in various competitive examinations, to secure admissions in professional courses, and to become self-reliant. Orientation programmes are organized for Directors of the Coaching Centres so that a professional approach can be introduced to coaching of students. As on 31<sup>st</sup> March 2005, as many as 131 Coaching Centres for disadvantaged minority groups were functioning in various universities and colleges. During 2004-05, an amount of Rs 1.05 crore was released to universities and colleges for running these Centres.

**Development of Central and State Universities and Colleges:** UGC provides grants for development of central and State universities, with a special emphasis in the Tenth Plan on the development of those universities that are located in backward areas and underdeveloped regions, and also on increasing the access and equity for marginalized groups and weaker sections of society. Eligible colleges at undergraduate and post-graduate levels are being supported for strengthening

basic infrastructure; special assistance to colleges catering to SC and ST students predominantly; and for those colleges situated in backward, hilly, rural areas with a view to reducing disparities.

***Adult and Continuing Education:*** Assistance is provided to centres or departments of adult, continuing and extension education, which work for eradication of illiteracy; short-term courses for skills or knowledge upgradation for various groups of students; and community outreach programmes for specific disadvantaged groups. The aim is to enhance equity and access.

Similarly various programmes that enhance access and equity include the following: 'Special Studies on Social Thinkers and Leaders'; 'Promotion of Women and Family Studies'; 'Promotion of Yoga and Positive Health in Universities'; 'Human Rights and Duties' courses. Apart from these, SC and ST Cells are established and functioning in various universities, with the aim of ensuring effective implementation and monitoring of the reservation policy for SCs and STs and other relevant schemes. During 2004-05, a grant of Rs 14.19 lakh was given to these cells – 120 of which are functioning in different universities across the country.

***Indira Gandhi National Open University:*** Set up in 1985, IGNOU provides opportunities to study socially relevant, innovative and need based programmes to all school pass-outs, including those belonging to disadvantaged groups (physically challenged, homemakers, minority groups, geographically remote etc). IGNOU provides a flexible and open system of education with regard to methods and pace of learning, combination of courses and eligibility for enrolment etc, thus enhancing access and equity in education.

Among the ***Central Universities***, some are especially situated to promote academic education and research by the minorities, such as Aligarh Muslim University, Jamia Millia Islamia (Delhi), Babasaheb Bhimrao Ambedkar University (Lucknow), and Maulana Azad National Urdu University (Hyderabad).

The ***All India Council for Technical Education*** is the statutory body at the Central level for planning and coordinated development of technical education in India, which covers course and programmes in Engineering, Technology, Management, Architecture, Town Planning, Pharmacy, and Applied Arts and Crafts.

Higher educational institutions administered by the Central government, including IITs, IIMs, Regional Engineering Colleges etc, provide reservation to the extent of 15% and 7.5% respectively for SC and ST students. There is also relaxation in minimum qualifying marks for SC/ST students, and seats are reserved in hostels.

***Community Polytechnics:*** The scheme of Community Polytechnics, in operation since 1978-79, undertakes rural community development activities through application of science and technology. Target groups for training under this scheme are unemployed rural youth, minorities, SCs, STs, women, school dropouts and other disadvantaged sections of society. They are provided need based skills to help them become self-employed or to obtain gainful employment, so as to enhance their social and economic status. The Community Polytechnics contribute substantially by transferring appropriate and advanced technologies to the rural masses. At present, there are 660 Community Polytechnics in the country.

### Special Schemes for Scheduled Castes, Scheduled Tribes and OBC

- i. Post-Matric Scholarships to Students belonging to SCs.
- ii. Pre-Matric Scholarships to the Children of those engaged in Unclean occupations.
- iii. National Overseas Scholarships Scheme for SC etc students for Higher studies Abroad: Twenty scholarships are allocated annually for meritorious students to pursue higher education overseas – 17 to SCs, 2 to De-notified nomadic and semi nomadic tribes, and 1 to landless agricultural labourers and traditional artisans.
- iv. Upgradation of Merit for SC Students: Financial assistance is provided to students in Class IX to XII for remedial and special coaching, boarding and lodging, books and stationery, and pocket expenses.
- v. *Scheme of Hostels for SC Boys and Girls*: Hostel facilities are provided for students at middle and higher secondary school levels, and colleges/Universities.
- vi. ***Coaching and Allied Assistance for Weaker sections including SCs, OBCs and Minorities***: Special pre-examination coaching is provided for admission into technical, vocational and service related courses as well as prospective job seekers, in government and private sector.
- vii. *Scheme of Pre-Matric Scholarships for OBC students*: Scholarships are awarded to OBC students whose parents' income does not exceed Rs.44,500/- p.a.
- viii. *Post-Matric Scholarships to the OBC students*: is intended to promote higher education among OBCs by providing financial support to OBC students from financially weak family backgrounds.
- ix. Hostels for OBC Boys and Girls Hostels are constructed for OBC students at middle, secondary, college and university levels. At least one third are for girls.
- x. *Scheme for Construction of Hostels for ST Girls and Boys*.
- xi. *Scheme for establishment of Ashram schools in Tribal Sub-Plan (TSP) areas*: was launched in 1990-91, to promote education through creation of residential facilities for STs, especially girls and children of PTGs (primitive tribal groups), migrant and nomadic STs.
- xii. *Scheme of Post-Matric Scholarships for ST students, Book banks and Upgradation of Merit*: The allocation for this scheme has been fixed at Rs 383.09 under the Tenth Plan, of which 47% (Rs 182.67 crore) was utilised by 2004. Details of release of funds and number of beneficiaries under the Post-Matric scholarships component of the scheme are given below.

**SCP and STP:** From the allotted budgets of the Departments of Elementary Education and Literacy and Secondary and Higher Education, 16.20% and 8.0% are allocated under SCP and STP for Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes respectively.

### Specific Interventions for Educational Advancement of Minority groups

Whereas the measures and schemes outlined above have undoubtedly provided benefits to the weaker sections among minorities, including those minorities who are STs, OBCs and/or living below the poverty line, there are some further additional schemes that exclusively address the educational needs of minority communities.

Two major schemes relating to minorities, i.e. Scheme of Area Intensive programme for Educationally Backward Minorities and the Scheme of Financial Assistance for Modernisation of Madrasa Education have been merged into a single scheme in the Tenth Five Year Plan, called the ***Area Intensive Madrasa Modernisation Programme (AIMM)***. Under AIMM, the components

of the old scheme are being carried forward: a) infrastructural development and b) Madrasa Modernisation. Under this revised scheme, 5000 Madrasas are to be covered during the Tenth Five Year Plan. During the Plan period about 2.5 lakh students from Madrasas will study at secondary level through National Institute of Open Schooling and State Open Schools, and about 5 lakh students will study at primary and middle school levels. Textbooks will be provided by the National Council for Promotion of Urdu Language and links established with the regular schooling system.

A major objective of the scheme is to provide basic educational infrastructure in primary/upper primary and secondary schools, where needed. Viability is established on the basis of a school mapping exercise. The target identified during the Tenth Plan is 325 blocks and 4 districts of Assam. During the Tenth Plan period, the component of infrastructure development is being implemented in this region only. Since the beginning of the scheme, the following physical targets have been achieved:

- 3010 school buildings have been opened/constructed, for 3010 primary, upper primary and secondary schools;
- 7 residential higher secondary schools have been opened for girls;
- 3972 additional classrooms have been constructed;
- 31 hostel buildings have been made for girls in higher secondary schools;
- 79 primary schools have been upgraded to upper primary schools, and high schools to higher secondary schools;
- toilets constructed in 2540 schools;
- teaching-learning material provided in 1303 primary/upper primary schools and library books, almirahs and furniture in 849 primary/upper primary or secondary schools;
- drinking water provided in 113 primary/upper primary schools;
- 1230 primary/upper primary schools have been electrified;
- 102 primary/upper primary schools have been provided science rooms or laboratories;
- 214 computers have been provided.

The second major component of the AIMM scheme is Madrasa Modernisation. This component aims at inclusion of modern subjects in the Madrasa system, so that students can be linked to the mainstream education system in the country. To some extent, this has been successful but more effort is required so more students from Madrasas are able to join the mainstream educational system. The Madrasa Modernisation scheme includes payment of salary for teachers, and grants for purchase of science kits and setting up of book banks. It provides for the salary of two teachers per Madrasa @ Rs 3000 per month per teacher, for teaching modern subjects like science, mathematics, English and social sciences. A grant of Rs 7000 is given for purchase of science/maths kits and another grant of Rs 7000 for book banks and strengthening of libraries. The assistance is available to Madrasas all across the country.

The Tenth Plan allocation for the AIMMP scheme (covering components of infrastructure development as well as **Madrasa** modernisation) was Rs 83.92 crore. The expenditure during 2002-03, 2003-04 and 2004-05 was Rs 28.45 crore, Rs 29.00 crore and Rs 22 crore respectively. In 2004-05 the expenditure of Rs 22 crore was incurred for construction of 11 hostels for girls, 11 senior secondary school buildings, and payment of salaries for teachers teaching modern subjects in 575 Madrasas. A budget provision of Rs 29 crore was made for 2005-06. Within SSA, support was provided to **Madrasas**: during 2005-06, 7500 recognised Madrasas were provided school grant, repair and maintenance grant and TLM (teaching-learning material) grant. Another 3500 unrecognised Madrasas received support under the EGS & AIE scheme for introducing teaching of general subjects.

## Chapter IV

# Literacy and Education

India has the second largest educational system in the world after China with a total enrolment of 222.03 million out of which 45 % are girls. Further, girls form 47% of the 128.27 million children enrolled in the primary grades Classes I-V; 44.4% of the 48.73 million at the middle stage (Classes VI-VIII); 41.12 % of the 35 million at the higher / higher secondary stage (Classes IX-XII) and 39.68% of the 10 million students enrolled in institutions of higher learning (MHRD, 2005-06).

Due to the strong gender focus of the EFA initiatives during the 1990s as also the pro Girl Child, pro women policies and programmes during this decade, girls' education has progressed and the gender gaps are narrowing. ***Gender gap has reduced substantially and is closing in urban areas.*** However, the regional, rural urban and inter group disparities remain. *The Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan* is aiming at universalization of quality elementary education by 2010. Most states are nearing the quantitative targets of access and enrolments. Retention and quality still remain areas of concern and the system is gearing itself to improve teacher quality and classroom processes focusing on learners. Expansion and universalization of secondary education are now a major challenge to meet the demands of the 21<sup>st</sup> century Knowledge Society. India cannot afford to miss this opportunity to create a large body of educated and skilled youth power balancing equity and efficiency.

### A. Female Literacy

As is evident from Table 4.1, female literacy had a very poor start at the turn of the century and in a hundred years we have reached a little above the half a mark and even now females are way behind males. Female literacy has increased from 8.86% in 1951 to 54.16% in 2001. Among rural females the literacy rate has gone up from 4.87% in 1951 to 46.70% in 2001; the corresponding increase for urban females is from 22.33% to 73.20%.

**Table 4.1: Literacy Rates in India by sex during 1901-2001**

Year	Literacy Rates			% points increase for each decade			Male female differentials in percentage points
	Persons	Males	Females	Persons	Males	Females	
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
1901	5.35	9.83	0.69	-	-	-	9.14
1911	5.92	10.56	1.95	0.57	0.73	0.36	9.15
1921	7.16	12.21	1.81	1.24	1.65	0.76	10.4
1931	9.5	15.59	2.94	2.34	3.38	1.12	13.66
1941	16.1	24.9	7.3	6.6	9.31	4.37	17.6
1951	18.33	27.16	8.86	2.3	2.26	1.56	18.3
1961	28.31	40.4	15.34	9.98	13.24	6.48	25.06
1971	34.45	45.95	21.97	6.14	5.55	6.63	23.98
1981	43.56	56.37	29.75	9.11	10.42	7.78	26.62
1991	52.21	64.13	39.29	8.65	7.76	10.54	24.84
2001	65.38	75.85	54.16	13.17	11.72	14.87	21.69

*Source: Census of India, 2001, Provisional Totals. NSSO 53<sup>rd</sup> Round, 1998.*

**Note: Literacy rates from 1901 to 1941 relate to total population. Figures for 1951 to 1971 relate to population aged five years and above. For the years 1981, 1991, 1997, and 2001 pertain to population aged seven years and above and more**

- (1) *Literacy rates for 1951, 1961 and 1971 Censuses relates to population aged five years and above. The rates for the 1981, 1991 and 2001 Census relates to population aged seven years and above.*
- (2) *The 1981 Literacy rates exclude Assam where census could not be conducted and the 1991 literacy rates exclude Jammu & Kashmir where Census could not be conducted due to disturbed conditions.*
- (3) *The 2001 Census, literacy rates exclude entire Kachchh distrit, Morvi, Maliya-Miyana and Wankaner talukas of Rajkot district, Jodiya taluka of Jammagar district of Gujarat State and entire Kinnaur district of Himachal Pradesh where population enumeration of Census of India, 2001, could not be conducted due to natural calamities.*

According to the Census of India 2001, the literacy rate for the population aged seven years and more works out to be 65.38; this rate being 75.85 for males and 54.16 for females. Thus, three fourths of the males and more than half of the females (Age 7+) are literate in a population of over a billion. The progress during 1991-2001 is a record jump of 13.17 percentage points from 52.21 in 1991 to 65.38 in 2001. The increase in female literacy rate is higher being 14.87 percentage points compared to 11.72 percentage points for males. Thus, the increase in literacy rates observed during 1991-2001 in respect of persons, males as well as females have been the highest recorded in comparison to earlier decades since 1951 except in case of males during 1951-61.

Kerala continues its lead on the literacy rate with 90.92 followed by Mizoram 88.49. Bihar has recorded the lowest literacy rate of 47.63 percent in the country. Kerala continues to retain the top spot in the country with 94.20% literacy rate for males and 87.86% for the females. Bihar has recorded the lowest literacy rate both in case of males (60.32%) and females (33.57%).

Literacy campaigns under National Literacy Mission and EFA initiatives like DPEP, **Lok Jumbish**, **Shiksha Karmi**, EGS/AIE have had an enormous impact on increasing literacy levels of the population during 1991-2001. It is noteworthy that among economically and socially weaker groups, the literacy rates of SCs increased by 17.28 percentage points from 37.41 % to 54.69%; for STs, from 29.6 % in 1991 to 47.1 % in 2001, a 17.5 percentage points increase in ten years.

Seven states / union territories have less than 50% female literacy, namely, Rajasthan (44.34%); Arunachal Pradesh (44.24%); Dadra and Nagar Haveli (42.99%); Uttar Pradesh (42.98%); Jammu & Kashmir (41.82%); Jharkhand (39.38%); and Bihar (33.57%). The states and union territories with literacy rates below the national average are Jammu & Kashmir in north, Rajasthan and Dadra and Nagar Haveli in the West, Andhra Pradesh in the South, Madhya Pradesh, Chhatisgarh and Uttar Pradesh in the Central parts, and, Arunachal Pradesh, Assam and Meghalaya in the north eastern part of the country. The state and union territories with literacy rates below the national average in respect of all three categories, i.e., persons, males and females, are Arunachal Pradesh, Andhra Pradesh, Bihar, Dadra and Nagar Haveli, Jammu & Kashmir, Jharkhand and Uttar Pradesh.

The gap in male female literacy rates of 18.30 percentage points in 1951 increased to 26.62 in 1981 but is seen as decreasing and in 2001 it has further narrowed to 21.70 percentage points. Mizoram has recorded the minimum gap in male female literacy rates of 4.56 percentage points. In Kerala this gap is 6.34 percentage points and in Meghalaya it is 5.73 percentage points in 2001. It is important to note in case of Meghalaya although the combined literacy rates in the state is below the national average, male female literacy gaps are very small. This can perhaps be attributed to the relatively more advantageous position of women in this matrilineal society. Male female differentials are as high as 32.50 percentage points in Gujarat, these figures being 32.12 for Rajasthan; 30.33 percentage points for Dadra & Nagar Haveli; and more than 20 percentage points in Uttranchal (23.75); Haryana (23.24); Chhatisgarh (25.46); Orissa (25.02); Madhya Pradesh (26.55); Uttar Pradesh (27.30); Jammu & Kashmir (23.83); Jharkhand (29.56); and Bihar (26.80).

It is heartening to note that for the first time since independence, the absolute number of illiterates have shown a decline. The decline is as large as 31.96 million, the same being 21.45 million among males and 10.51 million among females. However, the numbers of illiterates are still huge, 296 million in all out of whom 190 million (64 %) are female.

***Rural urban and inter group disparities are the sharpest amongst the females themselves.***

Urban female literacy rate is way ahead of their rural counterparts. Scheduled Caste (SC) and Scheduled Tribe (ST) females are at the bottom of the heap. (Urban male- 86%; Urban female- 73 %; Rural male- 70%; Rural female 46%; SC male-67%; SC female- 42%; ST male- 59% and ST female- 35%).

## Literacy Rates of Religious Minorities and Other Groups

Conducted every decade since 1871, the Census provides perhaps the longest time-series on social and economic change in India. Census 2001 has put out information on the population of each religion with information on children in the age group 0-6 years (as an indicator of fertility), literacy levels and work participation. For the first time, the Census of India made a religion-based cross classification of various socio-economic characteristics of the religious groups.

**Table 4.2: Literacy Rate among Religious Communities, Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes in India 2001.**

Community/ Caste	Total			Rural			Urban		
	Person	Male	Female	Person	Male	Female	Person	Male	Female
India	64.8	75.3	53.7	58.7	70.7	46.1	79.9	86.3	72.9
Hindu	65.1	76.2	53.2	59.1	71.7	45.7	81.3	87.9	73.9
Muslim	59.1	67.6	50.1	52.7	62.3	42.7	70.1	76.3	63.2
Christian	80.3	84.4	76.2	74.5	79.5	69.7	90.9	93.6	88.3
Sikh	69.4	75.2	63.1	64.2	70.6	57.2	63.6	87.5	79.2
Buddhist	72.7	83.1	61.7	66.9	78.8	54.6	81.6	89.8	72.9
Jain	94.1	97.4	90.6	87.5	94.2	80.3	96.1	98.4	93.6
Others	47.0	60.8	33.2	43.9	58.2	29.5	75.3	83.8	66.5
Scheduled Castes	54.7	66.64	41.9	51.18	63.66	37.84	88.12	77.93	57.49
Scheduled Tribes	47.1	59.17	34.76	45.02	57.39	32.44	69.09	77.77	59.87

*Source: Census 2001, Final Totals*

### All India Picture

- ◆ Literacy rate for the population age 7 years and above for the country as a whole stands at 64.8%.
- ◆ Literacy rate among the Jains is the highest at 94.1 per cent followed by Christians 80.3 per cent and Buddhists 72.7 %.
- ◆ Hindus and Sikhs have returned a marginally higher literacy rate than the national average.
- ◆ The lowest literacy has been recorded for 'Other Religions & Persuasions' at 47.0 %.
- ◆ ***Muslims are the other religious community returning lower than the national average literacy rate at 59.1%.***
- ◆ The relative position of various religious communities with regard to educational level is similar in rural areas.
- ◆ In 2001, literacy rate of ***Muslim women*** was 50.1% compared to 53.7% for all communities; 53.2% for Hindu females and 39.5% for SC/ST. For ***Muslim male***, the literacy rate was 67.6%, much lower in comparison to 75.3% for all communities, 76.2% for Hindu males and 64.2% for SC/ST. It is to be noted that the literacy rates are much higher amongst other minorities, Jains lead, followed by Christians, Sikhs and even Buddhists.
- ◆ ***Literacy rate is higher (by 21.18 percentage points) among the urban residents in comparison to the rural residents in all the religious communities.*** The degree of difference, however, varies for different religious groups. The difference in literacy rates in the urban and rural population of the Jains is the lowest (8.66 percentage points) followed by Buddhists (14.67 percentage points). Next comes the religious category Christians (16.36 percentage points) followed by, 'Religion not stated' (16.45 percentage points), Muslims (17.33 percentage points), Sikhs (19.36 percentage points), and Hindus (22.26 percentage points). The category of 'Other Religions' has a high urban-rural differential of 31.44 percentage points.
- ◆ Low rural literacy rates are a matter of concern for almost all the communities, especially 'Other Religions', Muslims, Hindus, and 'Religion not stated'. The rural female literacy rate is just 29.52% for the 'Other Religions' category; 42.66% for Muslims; 44.32% for 'Religion not Stated'; and 45.75% for Hindus. For urban females, literacy rates are better than rural rates for all

the communities, but among the minorities, it is lowest for the Muslim females (63.17%). Similarly, Muslim males constitute lowest literate urban population (76.28%) among the minority groups.

## State wise Picture

Literacy rates for each state for each religious community are given in Appendix Tables 6,7 & 8.

- ◆ Kerala, Lakshadweep and Pondicherry have very high literacy rate for all the religious communities (above 80%) while in Andaman & Nicobar Islands and Tamil Nadu also literacy is above 70 % cent for all the religious communities.
- ◆ In Bihar, Jharkhand and Uttar Pradesh the literacy rates are rather depressed and below 60 % for Hindus, Muslims and 'Others'.
- ◆ In Jammu & Kashmir where Muslims are in a majority they have recorded one of their lowest literacy rates of 47.3 %.
- ◆ In Punjab, where Sikhs are in majority, the literacy rate at 67.3 percent is lower than their national average of 69.4 %. This trend is also observed in Haryana and Rajasthan where there is considerable Sikh population.
- ◆ For Hindus, despite being in majority Bihar has recorded the lowest literacy of 47.9%. In other words more than half of the Hindu population in Bihar is illiterate.

### Hindus

The Hindus have an average national literacy rate of 65.1 %. There are seven state/union territories, which have returned a literacy rate of over 80 % cent among the Hindus. Lakshadweep stands out with the highest Hindu literacy at 96.4 %. Among the major states, Kerala continues to lead the literacy race among the Hindus with 90.2 % cent followed by Delhi. Among the major states Karnataka and Gujarat have a Hindu literacy rate just above the national average. There are 10 states/ union territories, including Bihar, which have recorded Hindu literacy rate below the national average. Fifteen states and union territories have recorded more than three-fourths of the Hindu population as literate.

### Muslims

At the state level the highest literacy rates among Muslims has been recorded in Andaman & Nicobar Islands at 89.8 % closely followed by Kerala at 89.4 per cent. ***Although the national average Muslim literacy rate is low at 59.1 %, yet as many as 15 states and union territories recorded more than 70 per cent literacy among Muslims, including the major states of Tamil Nadu, Maharashtra, Chhattisgarh, Gujarat, Orissa, Madhya Pradesh and Karnataka.*** As many as 16 states and union territories have returned a lower figure than this. Haryana has recorded the lowest literacy rate of 40 % cent among Muslim population. This is closely preceded by the states of Bihar, Meghalaya, Jammu and Kashmir, Uttar Pradesh, Nagaland and Assam, all below 50 %.

### Christians

Literacy scenario among the Christian population is quite bright as twenty-one states and union territories have more than three-fourths of their population as literate in the 2001 Census. Lakshadweep, Kerala, Delhi, Mizoram and Maharashtra have recorded a Christian literacy rate of over 90 %. The national average of Christian literacy rate is high at 80.3 per cent and as many as 19 states/union territories are placed above this mark. And yet, Arunachal Pradesh recorded literacy below 50 per cent among Christians.

### Sikhs

As regards Sikhs, it is seen that literacy rate in 32 states and union territories is above 70 percent. Of these, Sikh literacy rate in 14 states is above 90 %. Surprisingly in Punjab, the state with the maximum number of Sikhs (over 70 %) the literacy rate of this community is only 67.3%, which is lower than Sikh national average of 69.4%. As a matter of fact in the two other states of Haryana and

Rajasthan with high Sikh population, Sikh literacy is very close to Punjab. However, Delhi another important state has a high Sikh literacy rate of 92.1 %.

### **Buddhists**

The Buddhists have recorded a national literacy rate of 72.3 % and as many as 16 states and union territories are above this mark while Punjab is exactly at the national level. Five states and union territories have recorded Buddhist literacy rate of above 90 % while another five are between 80 and 90 %. Maharashtra, which has the highest Buddhist population in the country, has a literacy rate of 76.2 %. The lowest Buddhist literacy rate was recorded at 44.9 % cent in Arunachal Pradesh, the state with almost one fourth of its population returning as Buddhist.

### **Jain**

The Jain population has also returned very high national literacy rate of 94.1 % and in 29 states and union territories, their literacy rate is above 90 %. It is one of the most literate religious communities in India and likely to reach the goal of universal literacy for its total population anytime now. It is also important to remember here that most of the Jain population lives in urban areas and its main economic activities are in the field of business, industry, commerce and professionals.

### **‘Other Religions and Persuasions’**

The group of ‘Other Religions and Persuasions’ has a national literacy rate of only 43.5 %. It follows inconsistent patterns among states and union territories. Bihar has substantial proportion of population returned as ‘Other Religions and Persuasions’ and has recorded the lowest literacy of 28.7% while Mizoram recorded the highest, 95.5 %.

#### **Female Literacy among Minorities and Other Groups**

Literacy and education attainment levels of education among women belonging to different communities vary and are the highest among Jains followed by Christians, Sikhs, Buddhists and lowest among the Muslims. Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes are also lower than Muslims. Further, the literacy rate among women of different communities is higher in urban areas and lower in rural areas. This may be due to better educational facilities and infrastructure available in urban areas.

- ◆ The highest literacy rate exists in the **Jain** religious group (94.08%). Similarly, male and female literacy rates for Jains are the highest, at 97.41% and 90.58% respectively.
- ◆ With a literacy rate of 80.25%, the **Christian** community stands at the second position. For the male and female literacy rates, again the Christian community stands at second position, with 84.37% and 76.19% respectively.
- ◆ With a literate percentage of 72.66%, **Buddhists** stand next to Christians. The male and female literacy rates are 83.13% and 61.69% respectively among the Buddhists. Sikhs show a literate population of about 69.45%, with male literacy rate 75.23% and female literacy rate 63.09%.
- ◆ The literacy rate of **Hindus** is 65.09%, which is slightly more than the average literacy rate for “all religion” All India population i.e. 64.84%. However, the female literacy rate in case of Hindus, at 53.21%, is slightly less than the ‘all religion’ female literacy rate i.e. 53.67%.

- ◆ With a literacy rate of just 59.13%, the overall literacy rate of **Muslims** gives them a standing lower than that of 'All Religions'. The Muslim literacy rate is significantly lower than 'all religion' population literacy rate (by 5.71 percentage points. A similar trend is observed in the case of male and female population of the Muslim community. The literacy rate for Muslim males is lower than 'all religion' literacy rate by 7.7 percentage points, while for females the difference is about 3.58 percentage points.
- ◆ The lowest literacy rate is reported for the category of '**Other Religions**' (47.02%) with male and female literate population constituting 60.8% and 33.19% respectively.

#### Gender Gaps in Literacy Rates

**Male female disparities in literacy rates** is 22 percentage points for India as a whole; it is 23 percentage points amongst Hindus; **17.5 percentage points amongst Muslims** which is lower than 24.7 percentage points amongst the SC/ST.

Table 4.3: Gender Gap in the Literacy Rate by Area of Residence

Religion	Total Population	Rural	Urban
All Religion	21.59	24.57	13.41
Hindu	22.95	25.90	14.04
Muslim	17.47	19.67	13.11
Christian	8.18	9.83	5.38
Sikh	12.14	13.49	8.32
Buddhist	21.44	24.25	16.91
Jain	6.82	13.89	4.64
Others	27.61	28.65	17.33
Religion Not State	20.92	23.63	13.37

Source: Census of India, 2001: Religion data table 1 (Total Population, 0-6 Population, Literates, Total Workers by Category of Work and Non-workers by Residence, Religious Communities and Sex)

There is conspicuous gender disparity in the literacy rates of male and female population in almost all religious communities especially in the rural areas. Even for the highest-literacy group of the Jains, the gap between the male and female literacy rates is around 6.82 percentage points, which increases to as much as 13.89 percentage points in the rural areas in comparison to 4.64 percentage points in the urban areas. In the Christian community, the gap is of 8.18 percentage points, which is 9.83 percentage points in rural areas in comparison to 5.38 percentage points in urban areas.

- ◆ The gender disparity in literacy rates is 21.59 percentage points for '**All Religions**'. For rural 'All Religions' population, the gender disparity is 24.57 percentage points. For urban 'All Religions' population, it is 13.41 percentage points.
- ◆ For **Buddhists** the gender gap is about 21.44 percentage points, which for rural population is 24.25 percentage points, while for urban it is 16.91 percentage points. In every respect it is more than 'All Religion' literate population. The majority **Hindu** community shows a very high gender disparity of about 22.95 percentage points, which for rural population rises to about 25.90 percentage points while for urban population it is 14.04 percentage points.

- ◆ The gender disparity in the literacy rate is highest for those who fall in the category of '**Other Religions**' (27.61 percentage points); of which the gender gap in rural areas is as high as 28.65 percentage points, and 17.33 percentage points in urban areas.
- ◆ For the '**Religion not stated**' category also, gender disparity in literacy is high, at 20.92 percentage points. Of this 23.63 percentage points is the urban gender-gap, while 13.37 percentage points is the rural gender gap.
- ◆ It is interesting to see that **Sikhs** show relatively less gender disparity in terms of literacy (12.14 percentage points). Of this, 13.49 percentage points is accounted for by the urban literacy rates gap, and 8.32 percentage points is the rural literacy rates gap.
- ◆ *Similarly, the Muslims show a relatively low gender disparity in literacy rates, as compared to 'All Religions', Buddhists, Hindus, 'Other Religions', and 'Religion not stated'. The gender disparity in literacy rates among the total Muslim population is about 17.47 percentage points; it is 19.67 percentage points in rural and 13.11 percentage points in urban areas.*

Thus, we find a mixed picture in terms of literacy among females and gender gaps in literacy across different religious communities. Female literacy rates are highest for Jain then (in descending order) come the Christian, Sikh, Buddhist, Hindu, 'Religion not stated', Muslim and finally the category 'Other religions'. Exactly the same order is exhibited in the overall literacy rates (for entire population of each religion including the males and females). ***Of course for each of the communities, the overall literacy rate is substantially higher than the female literacy rate, indicating a gender bias existing in all the communities with regard to access to literacy.*** Gender gaps in literacy show a slightly different picture in terms of the placement of the various religious communities. For overall gender gap (that is urban and rural populations together), the following is the community-wise ranking (in ascending order, that is the least gender gap is at the first place): Jain, Christian, Sikh, Muslim, 'Religion not stated', Buddhist, Hindu, and finally 'Other religions'.

The community-wise gender gaps reveal another aspect of the situation. These figures indicate gender disparity ***within*** the religious communities. The gender gaps are lowest amongst the Jains, Christians and Sikhs, which is in line with their higher levels of literacy attainment. But then the picture is more complicated, because the Muslim community is found to be next in line with regard to gender gap, followed by 'Religion not stated', and then by Buddhists. ***The highest gender gaps are found in Hindus and finally 'Other religions' categories. This shows that the Muslim community, although exhibiting lower female and male literacy rates than the Hindu community, yet has significantly more gender parity in terms of this indicator.***

## Regional Variations

The literacy rate of Muslims females in India is 50.1%, which is only marginally lower than the average female literacy rate of the country that is 53.7%. The Muslim female literacy rate in several Indian states/union territories is significantly lower than the female literacy rates for all religious communities. For instance, in Haryana the Muslim female literacy rate is 21.5% while the state average female literacy rate is much higher, that is 55.7%. The corresponding figures for

Himachal Pradesh are 46.6% (Muslims) and 67.4% (all religions); Punjab – 43.4% (Muslims) and 63.4% (all religions); Assam – 40.2% (Muslims) and 54.6% (all religions); Delhi – 59.1% (Muslims) and 74.7% (all religions). The trend of lower rates for Muslim female literacy is continued in Tripura, West Bengal, Uttaranchal, Chandigarh, Punjab, Jammu & Kashmir, Bihar, Uttar Pradesh, Rajasthan and Kerala, although in the last-named four states, the difference is not very large (0.6% for Bihar; 4.8% for Uttar Pradesh; 3.1% for Rajasthan; and 2.2% for Kerala).

***In ten states, Muslim female literacy rates are higher than the state average***, i.e. in Orissa, Jharkhand, Chattisgarh, Madhya Pradesh, Gujarat, Maharashtra, Andhra Pradesh, Karnataka, Tamil Nadu and Arunachal Pradesh. The difference is not much in Jharkhand (3.8%), Gujarat (5.7%) and Arunachal Pradesh (1.4%).

The data indicates that in a State like Kerala where female education is high (87.7%), Muslim females too have been positively impacted (85.5%). Similarly, in States like Rajasthan, Bihar, J&K and U.P. that are affected by female educational backwardness, the Muslim community also reveals low female literacy rates (e.g. in Bihar the state female literacy rate is 33.1% and the Muslim female literacy rate is 31.5%). Similarly, Jharkhand and Arunachal Pradesh's low female literacy rates are reflected in the low Muslim female literacy rates; and Gujarat's relatively high female literacy rate is reflected in the Muslim case as well. ***Thus, in a number of states, the Muslim female literacy rate reflects the overall female literacy rate of the state/union territory in question.***

However, this phenomenon of progress or backwardness of female literacy in a State impacting on Muslim female literacy of the same State is not discernable in quite a few States and U.Ts, notably Punjab, Haryana, Delhi, Chandigarh. These are economically prosperous, but the economic prosperity does not seem to have positively impacted the Muslim female literacy rate. In fact, Haryana has registered the lowest Muslim female literacy rate among all the States and U.Ts of the country. In Haryana, most of the Muslims are Meo-Muslims, who as a group are backward within the Muslim community of the country are concentrated in six blocks of the newly formed District Mewat and a few Block of District Panipat and District Yamuna Nagar. The abysmally low female literacy of the Meo-Muslims has brought down the Muslim female literacy rate of Haryana.

Educational backwardness among the Muslim population is chronic in the northern, and north-eastern states, while southern states of India fare better. Rapid inclusive growth for all minorities especially the educationally backward minorities in all spheres could be achieved by bringing about equity in access to various forms of educational opportunities taking into account wide disparities that exist in our society across social and religious groups and also regions of India.

**Regional Variations are tremendous making development a crucial variable.** Rural urban literacy differentials are marked for all groups; the gap is the widest amongst Hindus and lowest among the Muslims. Intra female disparities as between rural and urban areas are the sharpest. Regional disparities are maximum with the same community showing higher literacy, for example Muslims in the four states and both Hindus and Muslims have poor literacy performance in the northern states, which have poor social and economic development indicators.

### Time Trends in Literacy

Time trends in Literacy levels indicate improvement in literacy levels of all Communities but not uniformly so. Literacy gaps between Muslims, SC, ST, OBC and General have reduced but are still substantial. SC/ST literacy increased at a faster pace compared to other socio religious communities (SRCs) enabling them to overtake Muslims at the All India level both in rural and urban areas. SC and ST have benefited from protective discrimination/Affirmative Action but Muslim gap with 'All Others' has increased further especially since 1980s.

Table 4.4 : Literates as Proportion of Population by Age groups in 2004-05

SRCs	6-13 yrs.	14-15 yrs.	16-17 yrs.	18-22 yrs.	23 yrs. & above	Total
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
<b>General</b>	<b>90.2</b>	<b>95.7</b>	<b>95.0</b>	<b>91.4</b>	<b>74.0</b>	<b>80.5</b>
<b>OBC</b>	<b>80.8</b>	<b>87.5</b>	<b>85.2</b>	<b>76.9</b>	<b>50.6</b>	<b>63.4</b>
<b>SC/ST</b>	<b>74.7</b>	<b>80.0</b>	<b>78.6</b>	<b>65.0</b>	<b>36.5</b>	<b>52.7</b>
Muslims	74.68	79.5	75.5	70.5	46.1	59.9
<b>Other Minorities</b>	<b>88.5</b>	<b>91.9</b>	<b>91.3</b>	<b>85.8</b>	<b>67.0</b>	<b>75.2</b>

*Source: NSSO 61<sup>st</sup> Round (2004-05, Schedule 10) p.54 Prime Minister's High level Committee, Report, 2006.*

### Literacy by Districts

To obtain a clearer picture of the educational status of minorities, district literacy data and district population breakups were obtained and analyzed. It was again found that majority status did not logically endow a better educational status to Hindus. For that matter, even minority status did not mean poor educational status. (Gupta, 2005-06)

Table 4 .5: Population by Districts by Religion

Predominant community	No. of Districts	% of Total Districts
1	2	3

Hindu predominant	483	81%
Muslim Predominant	014	2.4%
Christian Predominant	027	4.6%
Sikh Predominant	008	1.3%
Buddhist Predominant	002	0.3 %
Jain Predominant	000	0.0%
Others	057	9.6%

**Table 4.6 Districts with Total % Literacy > 60 for Different Religions**

Districts with Total % Literacy > 60	190
Districts with Hindu % Literacy > 60	230
Districts with Muslim % Literacy > 60	226
Districts with Christian % Literacy > 60	399
Districts with Sikh % Literacy > 60	458
Districts with Buddhist % Literacy > 60	311
Districts with Jain % Literacy > 60	528

*Source: Census of India ,2001*

Some key points that support these observations (Table 4.5; Table 4.6)) are as follows:

- Jains are not predominant in any district and yet their literacy percentage is greater than 60% in as many as 528 districts.
- The number of districts where Hindu literacy is greater than 60 % is 230 as against 226 Muslim Predominant districts. This is despite the fact that Hindus are predominant in 81 percent of the districts. (Ibid)

#### Case of 150 lowest Literacy Districts

Apart from, the Census 2001 data, it was felt necessary to have another point of analysis. For that purpose, data for 150 low literacy districts as identified by the National Literacy Mission (NLM) was obtained. Most of these districts fall within the states of Bihar, Uttar Pradesh, Jharkhand, Rajasthan and Orissa. The 150 Districts were sorted by literacy levels for the different religions and then correlated with population data. This enabled us to determine whether low literacy districts were reflective of the minority-majority issue.

**Table 4.7 : 150 Districts with Lowest Literacy State wise**

Bihar	32
Uttar Pradesh	31
Jharkhand	13
Rajasthan	12
Orissa	09
Madhya Pradesh	09
Arunachal	08
Jammu & Kashmir	07
Andhra Pradesh	06
Chhattisgarh	04

Karnataka	04
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*Source: Census of India ,2001*

As Table 4.7 shows, the most number of low literacy districts across religions also fall in the states of Bihar, Uttar Pradesh, Madhya Pradesh Jharkhand, Rajasthan and Orissa. These six states constitute the most backward states in the country in terms of socio-economic indices. Therefore, educational levels of different religious groups in these states are correspondingly low and is not a definite reflection of either religion or its minority status. This is further corroborated by the fact that the majority community of Hindus too has the maximum number of low literacy districts in these very states.

In addition, we note that in Jammu & Kashmir, there are 10 Muslim low literacy districts. In Tamil Nadu, there are 11 Jain low literacy districts. There are 11 and 10 Sikh low literacy districts in Andhra Pradesh and Maharashtra, respectively. (See Table 4.8)

Table 4.8: Districts with Lowest Literacy Levels, by Religion, by State (n-150)

Sr.No.	States/UT	Hindu	Muslim	Christian	Sikh	Buddhist	Jain	Total Literacy
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
1	Jammu & Kashmir	1	10	2	0	6	8	7
2	Himachal Pradesh	0	1	1	0	0	0	0
3	Punjab	0	9	6	8	1	1	1
4	Chandigarh	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
5	Uttaranchal	0	2	0	3	0	3	0
6	Haryana	0	13	2	5	1	1	0
7	Delhi	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
8	Rajasthan	19	10	1	13	4	1	12
9	Uttar Pradesh	39	40	39	43	40	30	31
10	Bihar	33	24	11	14	23	12	32
11	Sikkim	0	0	1	1	1	3	0
12	Arunachal Pradesh	2	4	10	0	12	8	8
13	Nagaland	0	1	2	3	2	6	2
14	Manipur	0	2	3	0	2	5	0
15	Mizoram	1	2	0	1	3	4	0
16	Tripura	0	2	2	0	2	3	0
17	Meghalaya	2	13	6	1	4	6	3
18	Assam	1	6	19	0	6	1	4
19	West Bengal	1	8	6	0	1	4	3
20	Jharkhand	12	1	7	7	10	10	12
21	Orissa	9	0	15	3	4	15	9
22	Chhatisgarh	4	1	1	0	0	0	4
23	Madhya Pradesh	11	1	2	8	6	0	9
24	Gujrat	2	0	4	4	3	0	2
25	Daman & Diu	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
26	Dadar Nagar Haveli	1	0	1	0	0	0	0
27	Maharashtra	1	0	3	10	1	1	0
28	Andhra Pradesh	7	0	3	11	5	4	6
29	Karnataka	4	0	3	9	8	8	4
30	Goa	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
31	Lakshadweep	0	0	0	0	0	1	0
32	Kerala	0	0	0	0	0	1	0
33	Tamil Nadu	0	0	0	5	4	11	0
34	Pondichery	0	0	0	1	1	2	0
35	Andaman & Nicobar Island	0	0	0	0	0	1	0

Source: Census of India, 2001

### Case of 50 lowest Literacy Districts

A similar trend is seen if we look at the bottom 50 Hindu literacy and Muslim literacy district (Table 4.9). For Hindus, 18 of the 33 low literacy districts in Bihar are in the bottom, 50. For Muslims, 13 of the 23 low literacy districts in Bihar are in the bottom 50. Similarly, 9 of the 39 Hindu low literacy districts and 13 of the 40 Muslim low literacy districts in Uttar Pradesh fall in the bottom 50.



Table 4.9: Position of Hindus and Muslims in Bottom 50 Literacy Districts

S.No.	States/UT	Hindu	Muslim
1	Andhra Pradesh	1	-
2	Arunachal Pradesh	-	1
3	Assam	-	5
4	Bihar	18	13
5	Chhatisgarh	2	-
6	Gujrat	1	-
7	Haryana	-	5
8	Jammu & Kashmir	-	1
9	Jharkhand	7	4
10	Madhya Pradesh	3	-
11	Meghalaya	-	1
12	Nagaland	-	1
13	Orissa	6	-
14	Punjab	-	1
15	Rajasthan	3	2
16	Uttar Pradesh	9	13
17	West Bengal	-	1

Source: Census of India ,2001

A detailed look at individual district populations revealed some interesting points, as discussed below:

- Kishanganj in Bihar has the lowest literacy average in the country. Interestingly, two-thirds of its population is Muslim, and yet, Muslim, literacy here is one of the lowest at 20.7 percent despite its majority status.
- Dantewada reports the lowest figure for Hindu literacy at 23.61, whereas all other religions are doing well. This is despite the fact that Hindus are predominant here with over 96 percent of the population.
- Districts such as Malkangiri, Nabarangpur, Jhabua and Koprput show higher literacy percentages in Muslim populations than Hindu literacy despite being Hindu majority districts.
- Out of the 20 lowest literacy districts, Hindus were predominant in 19 while Muslims were predominant in only 1 district, namely, Kishanganj.
- Out of the top 20 literacy districts, Hindus were predominant in 15, Muslims in 1 and Christians predominant in 4 districts. (Ibid.)

If we widen the base of analysis to the 50 lowest literacy districts, we find that average total literacy is lower among Hindus as compared to other religions. Even rural literacy figures for Hindus are less than that for Muslims, for instance, and the trend is seen in both males and females. In urban areas, however, literacy among Hindus is relatively higher. **In sum the educational status of religious minorities is not necessarily related to their minority status. Education status is contingent on socio-economic status of the family/household in principal, area and region of residence. No community can succeed in educational advancement in case basic development needs of health, hygiene, adequate means of livelihood; shelter and food are not met.**

## Inter District Disparity in Muslim Female Literacy Rate in Selected States

Table 4.10: Highest and Lowest Muslim Female Literacy Districts in Rural/Urban Areas in selected States in India 2001

Sl. No.	State	Residence	Female Literates %				
			Average	Lowest		Highest	
				District	%	District	%
1	J & K (66.97)	Rural	29.73	Udhampur	21.05	Pulwama	56.12
		Urban	52.45	Kupwara	46.30	Leh Ladakh	70.61
2	Uttanchal (11.9)	Rural	33.56	Udhamsingh	28.73	Pithoragarh	72.77
		Urban	50.90	Haridwar	40.14	Bageshwar	82.74
3	Haryana (5.8)	Rural	18.54	Faridabad	12.96	Kurukshetra	44.51
		Urban	39.93	Panipat	30.83	Yamunanagar	76.62
4	Rajasthan (8.5)	Rural	31.24	Jodhpur	13.80	Banswara	70.37
		Urban	50.42	Jaisalmer	30.83	Banswara	82.67
5	Uttar Pradesh (18.5)	Rural	31.58	Shrawasti	13.78	Ajamgarh	59.38
		Urban	47.31	Hathras	30.51	Ambedkar Ngr.	67.72
6	Bihar (16.5)	Rural	27.87	Purnia	13.98	Aurangabad	56.55
		Urban	56.70	Sheohar	28.63	Aurangabad	71.43
7	Assam (30.9)	Rural	38.41	Darrang	29.18	Sibsagar	77.75
		Urban	65.60	Dhemaja	44.70	Nalbari	81.69
8	Jharkhand (13.9)	Rural	32.82	Pakaur	19.69	Purbi Singhbhum	58.20
		Urban	70.77	Pakaur	47.49	Gumla	83.56
9	West Bengal (25.3)	Rural	47.87	East Dinajpur	25.19	Hugli	69.41
		Urban	59.23	East Dinajpur	39.81	West Dinajpur	82.04
10	Kerala (24.7)	Rural	84.91	Kasaragod	77.44	Kotlayam	91.37
		Urban	87.22	Kasaragod	82.23	Pathanmthitta	90.17
11	Tamilnadu (5.6)	Rural	71.80	Dharampuri	54.27	Kanya Kumari	85.17
		Urban	77.88	Vellore	67.28	Kanya Kumari	88.19
12	Karnataka (12.2)	Rural	52.00	Gulbarga	29.47	Udupi	83.90
		Urban	70.61	Koppal	53.76	Kodagu	86.69
13	Lakshadweep (96.0)	Rural	78.11				
		Urban	82.69				
14	Andhra Pradesh (9.2)	Rural	48.47	Kurnool	37.73	West Godvari	70.52
		Urban	66.87	Kurnool	50.23	Nalgonda	77.80
15	Maharashtra (10.6)	Rural	62.21	Parbhani	43.77	Rajgarh	88.21
		Urban	74.66	Parbhani	62.37	Bhandara	88.06

Source : Census of India 2001

Note : Figures in bracket indicates % of Muslim Population.

**Jammu and Kashmir** has 14 districts. Muslims constitute 66.79% of the State population. Muslim Female Literacy rate in the State is 34.9% compared to 58.7% for Muslim males. Muslim Rural Female Literacy is 29.73% as against 52.45% in urban areas. In all 9 districts fall below the State average and 13 fall below the national average. Within the state, Muslim Female Literacy ranges from 21.05% in District Udhampur to 56.12% in District Pulwama in rural areas and from 46.3% in District Kupwara to 70.61% in District Leh- Ladakh.

**Uttanchal** has 13 districts. Muslims constitute 11.9% of the State population. Muslim Female Literacy rate in the State is 40.3% compared to 60.4% for Muslim males. Muslim Rural Female Literacy is 33.56% as against 50.9% in urban areas. Only one districts falls below the State average and 3 fall below the national average. Within the state, Muslim Female Literacy ranges from 28.73% in District Udham Singh Nagar to 72.77% in District Pithoragarh in rural areas and from 40.14% in District Haridwar to 80.74% in District Bageshwar.

**Haryana** has 19 districts. Muslims constitute 5.8% of the State population. Muslim Female Literacy rate in the State is 21.5% compared to 55.8% for Muslim males. Muslim Rural Female Literacy is 18.54% as against 39.93% in urban areas. Only one districts fall below the State average and all 19 are below the national average. Within the state, Muslim Female Literacy ranges from 12.96% in District Faridabad to 44.51% in District Kurukshetra in rural areas and from 30.83% in District Panipat to 76.62% in District Yamuna Nagar.

**Rajasthan** has 32 Districts. Muslims constitute 8.5% of the State population. Muslim Female Literacy rate in the state is 40.8% compared to 71.4% for males. Muslim Rural Female Literacy is 31.24% as against 50.42% in urban areas. In all 14 districts falls below the State average and 12 are below national average. Within the state, Muslim Female Literacy ranges from 13.8% in District Jodhpur to 70.37% in District Banswara in rural areas and from, 30.83% in District Jaisalmer to 82.67% in District Banswara in urban areas.

**Uttar Pradesh** has 70 Districts. Muslims constitute 18.5% of the State population. Muslim Female Literacy rate in the state is 37.4% compared to 57.3% for males. Muslim Rural Female Literacy is 31.58% as against 47.31% in urban areas. In all 30 districts falls below the State average and 58 are below national average. Within the state, Muslim Female Literacy ranges from 13.78% in District Shrawasti to 59.38% in District Ajamgarh in rural areas and from, 30.51% in District Hathras to 67.72% in District Ambedkar Nagar in urban areas.

**Bihar** has 37 Districts. Muslims constitute 16.5% of the State population. Muslim Female Literacy rate in the state is 13.5% compared to 51.8% for males. Muslim Rural Female Literacy is 27.87% as against 56.71% in urban areas. In all 13 districts falls below the State average and 29 are below national average. Within the state, Muslim Female Literacy ranges from 13.98% in District Purnia to 56.55% in District Aurangabad in rural areas and from, 28.63% in District Sheohar to 71.43% in District Aurangabad in urban areas.

**Assam** has 23 Districts. Muslims constitute 30.9% of the State population. Muslim Female Literacy rate in the state is 40.2% compared to 56.0% for males. Muslim Rural Female Literacy is 38.41% as against 65.6% in urban areas. In all 9 districts falls below the State average and 16 are below national average. Within the state, Muslim Female Literacy ranges from 29.18% in District Darrang to 77.75% in District Sibsagar in rural areas and from, 44.7% in District Dhemaja to 81.69% in District Nalbari in urban areas.

**Jharkhand** has 18 districts. Muslims constitute 13.9% of the State population. Muslim, Female Literacy rate in the state is 42.7% compared to 67.6% of males. Muslim Rural Female Literacy is 32.82% as against 70.77% in urban areas. In all 9 districts falls below the State average and 10 are below national average. Within the state, Muslim Female Literacy ranges from 19.69% in District Pakaur to 58.2% in District Purbi Singhbhum in rural areas and from, 47.49% in District Pakaur to 86.56% in District Gumla in urban areas.

**West Bengal** has 18 Districts. Muslims constitute 25.3% of the State population. Muslim Female Literacy rate in the state is 49.8% compared to 64.6% for males. Muslim Rural Female Literacy is 47.87% as against 59.23% in urban areas. In all 8 districts falls below the State average and 9 are below national average. Within the state, Muslim Female Literacy ranges from 25.19% in District East Dinajpur to 69.41% in District Hughli in rural areas and from, 39.81% in District East Dinajpur to 82.04% in District West Dinajpur in urban areas

**Kerala** has 14 Districts. Muslims constitute 24.7% of the State population. Muslim Female Literacy rate in the state is 49.8% compared to 64.6% for males. Muslim Rural Female Literacy is 47.87% as against 59.23% in urban areas. In all 8 districts falls below the State average and 9 are below national average. Within the state, Muslim Female Literacy ranges from 25.19% in District East Dinajpur to 69.41% in District Hugli in rural areas and from, 39.81% in District East Dinajpur to 82.04% in District West Dinajpur in urban areas.

**Tamil Nadu** has 30 Districts. Muslims constitute 5.6% of the State population. Muslim Female Literacy rate in the state is 76.2% compared to 89.7% for males. Muslim Rural Female Literacy is 71.8% as against 77.88% in urban areas. In all 9 districts falls below the State average and none is below national average. Within the state, Muslim Female Literacy ranges from 54.21% in District Dharampuri to 85.17% in District Kanyakumari in rural areas and from, 67.28% in District Vellore to 88.19% in District Kanyakumari in urban areas.

**Karnataka** has 30 districts. Muslims constitute 12.2% of the State population. Muslim Female Literacy rate in the State is 63% compared to 76.9% for Muslim males. Muslim Rural Female Literacy is 52% as against 70.61% in urban areas. Twelve districts falls below the State average and 5 are below the national average. Within the state, Muslim Female Literacy ranges from 29.47% in District Gulbarga to 83.9% in District Udupi in rural areas and from 53.76% in District Koppal to 86.69% in District Kodagu.

**Andhra Pradesh** has 23 Districts. Muslims constitute 9.2% of the State population. Muslim Female Literacy rate in the state is 59.1% compared to 76.5% for males. Muslim Rural Female Literacy is 48.47% as against 66.9% in urban areas. In all 11 districts falls below the State average and 3 are below national average. Within the state, Muslim Female Literacy ranges from 37.73% in District Kurnool to 70.52% in District West Godabari in rural areas and from, 50.23% in District Kurnool to 77.8% in District Nalgonda in urban areas.

**Maharashtra** has 35 Districts. Muslims constitute 10.6% of the State population. Muslim Female Literacy rate in the state is 70.8% compared to 84.5% for males. Muslim Rural Female Literacy is 62.21% as against 74.68 in urban areas. In all 14 districts falls below the State average and none is below national average. Within the state, Muslim Female Literacy ranges from 43.77% in District Parbhani to 88.21% in District Rajgarh in rural areas and from, 62.37% in District Parbhani to 88.06% in District Bhandara in urban areas.

## B. Distribution of Literates by Educational Level

Literacy figures by themselves are not very effective predictors of the educational attainment of a person. Census definition of literacy connotes the ability to read and write and often just the ability to be able to sign one's name is declared by the respondents as being literate. Permanent literacy is a function of five years of schooling or its equivalent. Middle and general secondary education would enable a person to acquire functional language, mathematical and other skills for day to day living in present times. Higher Secondary is both a terminal stage and an entry requirement into higher technical education; it is therefore vital to see how women of different religious communities are situated at this level and at Graduate and above levels.

The data (for literate population above 7 years of age) indicates a vast difference among the literate population of the five main minorities groups, i.e. Jains, Muslims, Buddhists, Sikhs and Christians, in terms of their educational standards. The Jain community as well as Jain females have the highest educational achievements, followed by Christians, Sikhs, Hindus, Buddhists and the lowest amongst the Muslims. Gender gap exists in every religious group but is considerably narrow amongst the Sikhs, Jains and Christians.

Muslims display uniformly low educational indices Further, Muslims have lower literacy and educational attainments in the States having higher concentration of their population. Muslim girls in Maharashtra, Karnataka, Andhra Pradesh and Kerala are doing much better than the states like Uttar Pradesh and Bihar. The highest proportion of literates without any formal educational attainment is found among the Muslims (4.5%). Another 32% of Muslims have below primary level education, while 29% have completed primary level and another 15% have education up to Middle level; about 11% have completed high school and 4.5% have education up to higher secondary level. Only 0.1% complete Non technical Diploma level and 0.3% have technical diploma. Only 2.4% Muslim literates have education graduate and above.

### All Religions

- 28.2% of literate females of all religious groups attain primary level, 15.3% have middle level education, 12.5% are Matric/Secondary pass, 5.9 have higher secondary education and 5.4 % are Graduates and above.
- 24.8% of literate males of all religious groups attain primary level, 16.6% have middle level education, 15.2% are Matric/Secondary pass, 7.3 have higher secondary education and 7.6% are Graduates and above.

### Hindus

- 28.2 % of literate Hindu females attain primary level, 15.4 % have middle level education, 12.5% are Matric/Secondary pass, 5.9% have higher secondary education and only 5.6% are Graduates and above.
- In contrast, 24.6% of literate Hindu males attain primary level, 16.7% have middle level education, 15.4% are Matric/Secondary pass, 7.6% have higher secondary education and only 5.6% are Graduates and above.

### Muslims

- 30.5% of literate Muslim females attain primary level, 14.2% have middle level education, 9.5% are Matric/Secondary pass, 3.9% have higher secondary education and only 2.4% are Graduates and above.
- In contrast, 27.9% of literate Muslim males attain primary level, 15.8% have middle level education, 12.0 % are Matric/Secondary pass, 5.0 % have higher secondary education and only 4.4 % are Graduates and above.

### **Christians**

- 22.5% of literate Christian females attain primary level, 16.6% have middle level education, 17.2% are Matric/Secondary pass, 9.5% have higher secondary education and only 8.6% are Graduates and above
- In contrast, 20.6% of literate Christian males attain primary level, 17.6 % have middle level education, 17.7% are Matric/Secondary pass, 8.0% have higher secondary education and only 8.6% are Graduates and above.

### **Sikhs**

- 29.0% of literate Sikh females attain primary level, 16.1% have middle level education, 18.8% are Matric/Secondary pass, 7.4% have higher secondary education and only 7% are Graduates and above.
- In contrast, 23.8% of literate Sikh males attain primary level, 17.5% have middle level education, 22.6% are Matric/Secondary pass, 7.7% have higher secondary education and 6.9% are Graduates and above.

### **Buddhists**

- 27.7% literate Buddhists females attain primary level, 17.4% have middle level education, 12.5% are Matric/Secondary pass, 6.3% have higher secondary education and only 3.8% are Graduates and above.
- In contrast, 22.7% of literate Buddhist males attain primary level, 17.6% have middle level education, 15.2% are Matric/Secondary pass, 8.6% have higher secondary education and 7% are Graduates and above.

### **Jains**

- 18.9% of literate Jain females attain primary level, 13.2% have middle level education, 20.7% are Matric/Secondary pass, 12.8% have higher secondary education and only 18.6% are Graduates and above.
- In contrast, 13.2% of literate Jain males attain primary level, 11.5% have middle level education, 22.9% are Matric/Secondary pass; 14.8% have higher secondary education and 24% are Graduates and above.

Critical Levels: Gender Analysis of Educational Attainment at Secondary level and above.

***Percentage of women at Secondary and higher levels are lower than males among all the religious groups.***

***All religions:*** Among all religion only 5.9% females have acquired Higher Secondary education compare to 7.3% males. Among rural females only 3.7% have attained higher secondary level compare to 9.4% for the urban females. When we look at literates who are graduates and above, only 5.4% females have attained this level compare to 7.6% males. Rural urban divide is stark. Among rural female only 1.9% are graduates and above compare to 11.1% urban females.

***Hindus:*** Among Hindus 5.9% females have acquired Higher Secondary education compare to 7.6% Hindu males. Among rural Hindu female literates, only 3.7% have attained higher secondary level compare to 9.7% for the urban females. When we look at Hindu literates who are graduates and above, only 5.6% females have attained this level compare to 7.9% males. Rural urban divide is sharp. Among rural female only 1.9% are graduates and above compare to 11.9% urban females.

***Muslims:*** Among Muslims 3.9% females have acquired Higher Secondary education compare to 5.0% Muslim males. Among rural Muslim female literates, only 1.9% have attained higher secondary level compare to 6.1% for the urban Muslim females. When we look at Muslim literates who are graduates and above, only 2.4% females have attained this level compare to 4.4% males. Here also, rural urban divide is sharp. Among rural female only 0.9% are graduates and above compare to 4.3% urban females.

***Christians:*** Among Christians 9.5% females have acquired Higher Secondary education compare to 8.0% Christians males. Among rural Christian female literates, 7.5% have attained higher secondary level compare to 12.4% for the urban Christians females. When we look at Christian literates who are graduates and above, the picture is brighter as 8.6% Christians females have attained this level compare to 8.8% males. Rural urban divide is sharp. Among rural female only 4.9% are graduates and above compare to 13.9% urban females.

***Sikhs:*** Among Sikhs 7.4% females have acquired Higher Secondary education compare to 7.7% Sikh males. Among rural Sikh female literates, 5.4% compare to 11.3 urban female have attained higher secondary level compare to 12.4% for the urban Sikh females. It is interesting to note that there are more female who have attained graduate and above level compare to their male counter parts. When we look at Sikh literates who are graduates and above, the picture is brighter as 7.0% Sikh females have attained this level compare to 6.9% males. Rural urban divide is sharp. Among rural female only 2.2% are graduates and above compare to 16.4% urban females.

***Buddhists:*** Among Buddhists 6.3% females have acquired Higher Secondary education compare to 8.6% Buddhist males. Among rural Buddhist female literates, 4.3% compare to 8.6% urban females have attained higher secondary level. When we look at Buddhist literates who are graduates and above, the picture is not very encouraging, as 3.8% Buddhist females have attained this level compare to 7.0% males. Rural urban divide is sharp. Among rural female only 1.6% are graduates and above compare to 6.4% urban females.

***Jains:*** Among Jains 12.8% females have acquired Higher Secondary education compare to 14.8% Jain males. Among rural Jain female literates, 7.9% compare to 14.0% urban females have attained higher secondary level. When we look at Jain literates who are graduates and above, the picture is the best as 18.6% Jain females have attained this level compare to 24.0% males. Rural urban divide is sharp. Among rural female only 5.5% are graduates and above compare to 22.1% urban females.

**Other Religious Communities:** Among Other Religious Communities 3.9% females have acquired Higher Secondary education compare to 4.9% Other Religious Communities males. Among rural Other Religious Communities female literates, 2.3% compare to 10.2% urban females have attained higher secondary level. When we look at Other Religious Communities literates who are graduates and above. 3.8% females have attained this level compare to 4.6% males. Rural urban divide is sharp. Among rural female 1.3% are graduates and above compare to 13.9% urban females.

## Gender Gaps

From the above, we can compare the educational attainments of the literate sections of different minority communities. The percentage of literates without educational level is the lowest among Jains at 13.7% (12.8 males and 15.3% females), 23.2% for Christians (22.8 males and 23.73% females); 20.6% for Sikhs (20.5 males and 20.9% females); and 29.9% for Buddhists (28.3 males and 32.2% females); 36.4% for Muslims (34.3 males and 39.3% females) and 28.9% for Hindus (26.9 males and 32% females). This is dissatisfactory for all the communities, but is most prominent in the case of Muslims, followed by Buddhists and Hindus. The percentages for those who study beyond the secondary level and are graduates and above indicate a continuation of the same trend with respect to educational attainment of the different minority communities. Jains lead followed by Christians, Sikhs, Buddhists, Hindus, the last being the Muslims.

### *Urban females are highly advantaged as compared to rural females.*

- Among literate **Christian rural females** 7.5% have higher secondary education and only 4.9% are Graduates and above. Among literate **Christian urban females**, 12.40% have higher secondary education and only 13.9% are Graduates and above.
- Among literate **Hindu rural females** 3.7% have higher secondary education and only 1.9% are Graduates and above. Among literate **Hindu urban females**, 9.7% have higher secondary education and only 11.9% are Graduates and above.
- Among literate **Sikh rural females** 5.4% have higher secondary education and only 2.2% are Graduates and above. Among literate **Sikh urban females**, 11.3% have higher secondary education and only 16.4% are Graduates and above
- Among literate **Buddhist rural females** 4.3% have higher secondary education and only 1.6% are Graduates and above. Among literate **Buddhist urban females**, 8.6% have higher secondary education and only 6.4% are Graduates and above
- Among literate **Muslim rural females** 1.9% have higher secondary education and only 0.9% are Graduates and above. In comparison, 6.1 % of Muslim **urban females** have higher secondary education and only 4.3 % are Graduates and above.

## Mean Years of Schooling

Further, Mean Years of Schooling (MYS) by Socio Religious Communities estimated for 7-16 years age group of population in 2001, shows that a child goes to school only less than four years (3.9). The MYS of Muslims is the lowest (3.26 years) and that for SCs/STs is 3.67. The corresponding figures for urban males are 4.85 and urban females are 4.85; for rural male this figure is 4.0 and 3.34 for rural females. These figures are 4.02 for urban Muslim males and 4.03 for urban Muslim females; 4.4 for urban SC/ST males and 4.21 for urban SC/ST females, and, 3.53 for rural SC/ST males and the lowest at 2.75 for rural SC/ST females (Sachar Report, 2006). See Table At Appendix for state wise picture:

**Table 4.12: Mean Years of Schooling of Children aged 7-10 years - 2001**

States	Group	State			Urban			Rural		
		All	Male	Female	All	Male	Female	All	Male	Female
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11
India	Total	3.95	4.18	3.69	4.82	4.85	4.79	3.65	4.00	3.34
	SCs/STs	3.35	3.67	2.98	4.33	4.44	4.21	3.16	3.53	2.75
	Muslims	3.26	3.40	3.11	4.02	4.01	4.03	2.86	3.08	2.62
	All Others	4.39	4.61	4.15	5.21	5.22	5.19	4.08	4.38	3.75

*Source: Sachar Committee Report, 2006.*

### **Educational Attainment By Religion and By Sex Over Time : 1948/1953- 2001**

Sachar Committee has compared the levels of educational attainments Muslims at two points of time. At the Primary level the percentage of Muslims increased from 18.2% in 1948 to 60.9% in 2001. In the case of Muslim females (urban) the increase was about five times (from 13.9% to 70.9%) and for rural females the increase was more than ten times (from 4% to 47.8%). The percentage points increase in case of Schedule Caste and Scheduled Tribes as compared to Muslims was higher both for urban females as well as rural females (from 7.5% to 74.8% for Urban females and from less than 2% to 47% for rural females). Sachar Committee has compared the educational attainment of Muslims, SC ,ST and All Others at two points of time separately for males and females and for rural and urban areas.

Table 4.13: Percentage of Groups who completed Primary, Middle and Matric/High School ( All India)

Year	Total			Male (Urban)			Female (Urban)			Male (Rural)			Female (Rural)		
	Muslim	SCs/ STs	All Others	Muslim	SCs/ STs	All Others	Muslim	SCs/ STs	All Others	Muslim	SCs/ STs	All Others	Muslim	SCs/ STs	All Others
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16
<b>Primary</b>															
2001	60.9	61.4	79.3	71.3	80.2	89.6	70.9	74.8	88.1	58.9	66.1	80.9	47.8	47.0	67.6
1948	18.2	8.8	27.8	43.4	33.4	66.7	13.9	7.5	34.1	21.8	13.1	31.6	4.0	1.6	7.4
<b>Middle</b>															
2001	40.5	41.3	62.7	49.6	59.8	76.7	51.1	56.3	76.7	37.3	43.7	62.0	29.4	29.3	49.0
1948	8.6	3.8	15.7	25.5	19.2	50.3	5.2	3.3	18.8	9.4	5.1	15.2	0.9	0.5	2.2
<b>Matric</b>															
2001	23.9	21.1	42.5	36.1	42.1	63.0	32.2	31.8	57.9	22.0	24.5	41.8	11.2	10.2	23.8
1953	5.4	2.1	11.0	18.3	12.8	41.0	3.2	1.8	12.4	5.0	2.6	9.3	0.4	0.2	1.0

Source : Sachar Committee Report, 2006.

Note: .Completion of Primary Level has been worked out for persons of age 12 years and above ; for Middle Level ,persons of age 15 years and above; for Matric level, persons at least 17 years of age; for Higher Secondary( including those with technical / Non technical Diplomas), persons who have 19 years or more (p 59)

In the case of all those who have completed middle level, it has been found that while in 1948 only about 5% Muslim urban females had completed the level it was about 10 times more in 2001 (51.1%). In the case of rural Muslim females the increase has been from about 1% to 30% (30 times increase).

At the High School level, also there has been tremendous increase in the percentage of those who completed high school. In 1948 only about 3% of urban Muslim females had completed high school; in 2001 32.2% had high school level (10 times increase). In rural areas, the increase was less than half percentage point to more than 11% (about 22 times). At this stage one can also notice that percentage of Muslim females who have completed this level is slightly higher than Scheduled Caste and Schedules Tribe both in urban areas and rural areas.

When one compares the educational attainments of Muslim females with females of All Other Communities, one observes that in the case of rural females the situation was not much different in 1948. In 2001, however, the situation of Urban Females of Other Communities at all the levels was much better.

## C. Access and Enrolment

### The Proactive 1990s

*The 1990s were a very special period in the evolution of the education of girls in India*

The 1990s were a very special period in the evolution of the education of girls in India. The historic National Policy on Education (NPE) 1986 (revised in 1992) reiterated the Constitutional commitment to equality between sexes and gave the National system of education to play a positive interventionist role in the empowerment of women by fostering new values through redesigned curricula, text books, orientation of all educational personnel. Accent was on reaching out basic education to women and girls, removal of female illiteracy and provision of special support services, setting up of time targets and effective monitoring. Further, girls were to be encouraged to take up vocational, technical and professional courses especially in non traditional areas of study and in newly emerging technologies. Women's studies were to be promoted with a view to encouraging educational institutions to take up programmes of women's development. The states were asked to prepare their plans of action for education of girls keeping in view the Jomtien declaration, the National Plan of Action for operationalising the recommendations of the SAARC Decade of the Girl Child (1991-2000) as also the national commitment to the Convention on the Rights of the Child.

The last ten years witnessed intense EFA activities with a strong rural and gender focus, additional financial outlays for primary education, innovative girl child / people centred projects and mobilization of the communities. The national policies and programmes were designed to reach out to rural and remote areas and to the disadvantaged groups of population. The Eighth and the Ninth Five Year Plans saw education of girls and women's empowerment as the anchor sheet for national development. As such, education of the Girl Child and women's empowerment, inextricably linked as they are, remained the dominant themes for the 1990s and girls and women have made faster progress as we see from the literacy rates and educational participation rates. The year 2001 has been declared as the Year of Women's Empowerment by the government a special national scheme on Free Education for Girls is on the anvil. The Post NPE / Jomtien efforts in the area of girls' education appear to be giving positive results, a major yardstick being sharp increase in female literacy levels and greater retention and transition of girls to successive higher levels of education.

India has two major successes to report, one, is the faster growth of girls' participation at the elementary stage and more importantly the redesigning of the content and the process of education for promoting gender equality and for creating a girl friendly educational and social environment. There are two clear axes of promotion of girls' education viz., expansion of educational facilities at all levels of education and following the accepted policy of undifferentiated curricula and reorienting the content and process of education to make it gender sensitive and a vehicle of women's equality and empowerment. Indicators employed for Gender Audit of education of girls are: (a) access growth rate of female enrolments at the elementary stage; girls as percentage to total both in school and out of school, enrolment ratios, dropout rates / retention, internal efficiency, achievement levels and (b) measures to enhance women's empowerment and promoting gender equality through curriculum.

### Improved Access

During **1950-51 and 2003-04** the number of recognized educational institutions has seen a phenomenal rise:

- The number of primary schools have gone up from 209671 to 712239.
- The number of middle schools have increased from 13596 to 262286.
- The number of high/ higher secondary schools has gone up from 7416 to 145962.
- The number of colleges of general education has gone up from 370 to 9427.
- The number of colleges of professional education has gone up from 208 to 2751.
- The number of universities has gone up from 27 to 304 during this period.

On account of intense efforts, India has achieved near universal access to primary schooling through formal and non formal / alternative schooling facilities. However, middle school facilities continue to be very limited especially in rural areas. Twelve years of formal schooling is required for entry into diplomas, technical and professional education courses or general higher education and rural girls are very disadvantaged ***More than 72% of our population lives in rural areas but according to the Seventh All India Education Survey of the total 43, 869 higher secondary schools, only 22,847 were in rural area as compared to 21,022 (52%) in urban areas. In 2003-04, for every 100 primary schools, there are 37 middle schools; 14 high schools and 7 higher secondary schools.*** There are a total of 5,86,986 villages in India. Of these 4,63,378 villages have a primary school; 1,84,348 have Upper Primary schools; 67,167 villages have secondary/high schools and only 19,649 villages have a higher secondary school according to Seventh All India Educational Survey.

### Enhanced Educational Participation of Girls

During 1950-51 and 2003-04, India's total enrolments at various stages of education have gone up

- ◆ from 191.63 million 222.03 at all stages;
- ◆ from 113.8 million to 128.3 million children enrolled in the primary grades Classes I-V;
- ◆ from 42.8 million to 48.7 at the middle stage ( Classes VI-VIII) ;
- ◆ from 27.6 million to 35 million, at the higher / higher secondary stage( Classes IX-XII) and
- ◆ from 7.73 million to 10 million students enrolled in institutions of higher learning (MHRD, 2003-2004).

### Percentage Girls to Total

During 1950-51 and 2003-04: the percentage of girls has gone up

- ◆ from 28.1% to 46.7% at the Primary stage;
- ◆ from 16.1% to 44.04% at the Middle Stage;
- ◆ *from 13.3% to 41.12% at the Secondary stage and*
- ◆ from 10% to nearly 40% in higher education.

### Scheduled Caste Girls

During 1980-81 and 2003-04, the percentage share of SC girls to total SC students has gone up

- ◆ from 34.31% to 44.81% at the primary stage ;
- ◆ from 27.08% to 41.39% at the Middle Stage; and
- ◆ *from 21.35% of the total number of SC students at the Secondary stage in 1980-81; their share has gone up to 38.28% in 2003-04*

### Scheduled Tribe Girls

During 1980-81 and 2003-04, the percentage share of ST girls to total ST students has gone up

- ◆ from 32.77% to 45.87% at the Primary Stage;
- ◆ from 27.63% to 41.67% at the Middle Stage;
- ◆ from 25.23% to 37.37% at the Secondary stage .

### Enrolment Ratio

- ◆ **Gender differentials are narrowing.** At the *primary stage* gender differential is very small. Girls have GER of 95.58% compared to 100.63%. At the *middle level*, 57.2% girls of relevant age group are enrolled compared to 66.75% boys.
- ◆ At the Secondary Stage, in 1950-51, only 17.7% girls of the relevant age group (14-18 yrs.) were in school. In 2003-04, this ratio has gone up to 34.26%.
- ◆ In 1950-51, enrolment of boys was 46.43%, 29.36% points ahead of girls. In 2003-04, the gap has narrowed to 8.68 percentage points; the enrolment ratio of boys being 42.94% compared to 34.26% for girls.

## Drop Out Rate

There is increased enrolment and improved retention. The dropout rate for the primary Classes ( I-V) has gone down from 62% to 34 % for boys and from 71% to 29% for girls during the period 1960-61 to 2003-04. At the middle stage the dropout rate has come down from 75% to 52% for boys and from 85% to 53% for girls during the same period. The male female gaps in dropout rates are not very prominent as in the past, which augurs well for educational participation of girls. At the High/Higher Secondary level has dropped from 80% to 61% for boys between 1980-81-2003-04 and for girls from 87% to 65% during this period.

## Higher Education

In higher education, girls from all categories form 35.23 % of the enrolments in Ph.D./D.Sc./D.Phil; 36.58% in M.A; 44.46% in M.Sc.; 37.71% in M.Com; 38.12% in B.A./B.A. (Hons); 37.47% in B.Sc./B.Sc. (Hons.); 35.45% in B.Com./B.Com. (Hons.); **22.31% in B.E./B.Sc.(Engg.)/B.Arch**; 42.81% in B.Ed./B.T. 40.56% in M.B.B.S. ; **14.23% in Tech. Indus., Arts & Crafts School**; **20.26% in Polytechnic Institutes**; **51.19%** in Teacher Training Schools. Participation of women in technical education, engineering, architecture, industrial trades is low and needs further attention

## Enrolment of Muslim Girls

Data on Enrolment or Drop out of Muslim Girls is not available in Departmental Educational Statistics at the State or the Central Level as yet. The only comprehensive information on educational participation of Muslim girls has been collected by the NCERT for the Seventh All India Education Survey (2002) but is as yet not available/published.

**A lot has been said and written about the educational backwardness of Muslims especially Muslim girls and women based on small sample studies (highly localized) with limited generalization possibility and some very large all India sample surveys /studies by Aizazuddin Ahmed ( 1983, 93,94,95); Zoya Hasan & Ritu Menon( 2000-01), Shamim Shah(1983), among others. Besides, inferences were drawn from National Sample Surveys of NSSO, various rounds and from National Health and Family Surveys I and II. The NFHS III has put out some quick results but detailed/ published survey is still awaited.**

**All of these studies have pointed out the relative educational backwardness of Muslims, especially, their female half. The reasons and perceptions range from perceived neglect and discrimination in access, to low economic status, restrictive and often apathetic attitude of the community and parents and the constant refrain of lack of**

women teachers, separate schools and Urdu medium. Noted scholars and leaders from the same community, however, see regional disparities and heterogeneity in levels of basic infrastructure of education, health, water, sanitation, roads, electricity, transport and communication as key variables reflected in unequal income and capacity of the parents to avail even the existing educational infrastructure, howsoever poor or deficient.

We are basing our assessment of education of Muslim children on two recent large sample surveys, NSSO 61<sup>st</sup> round (in Sachar Committee Report, 2006) giving enrolment ratios for children age 6-14 years and a major study commissioned by MHRD, Department of Literacy and Elementary Education on Out Of School Children in age group 6-13 years in 2006.

School data on Muslim minority is not available as yet. *Stock variables of literacy and educational attainment by religion do indicate the educational backwardness of Muslims as per the First Religion Report of the Census 2001:* However, proportion of children aged 6-14 years enrolled by Social and Religious Communities (SRCs) - 2004-05 indicates that at the All India level, Muslim children have enrolment ratio of 82% as compared to 85% for children of all groups together. The lowest are the SC/ST at 80%.

*Muslim children are way behind in several states like Uttar Pradesh (69.4%); Uttaranchal (61.4%); Bihar (65.8%); Himachal Pradesh (73.7%); and Haryana with the lowest figure of 59.7%.*

Table 4.14 : Proportion of children aged 6-14 years enrolled by Social and Religious Communities (SRCs) - 2004-05

States	Total	SCs/STs	H-OBCs	H-Gen	Muslims	All Others
All India	85.3	79.7	86	94.9	81.8	89.9
West Bengal	85.7	83.6	91.4	91.9	82.8	70.8
Kerala	98.4	95.7	99.3	99.6	99	96.9
Uttar Pradesh	82.2	80.2	85.9	93.5	69.4	82.2
Bihar	70.9	56.3	74.7	91.8	65.8	78.5
Assam	90.9	93.1	92.9	94.5	87	86
Jammu & Kashmir	91.8	90	95.9	96.3	90.6	98
Jharkhand	79.4	73.8	86.5	89.2	69.2	78.6
Karnataka	88.3	82.2	90.3	93.5	90.7	94.3
Uttaranchal	90.4	90.3	86.1	97.4	61.4	97.8
Delhi	94.1	85.1	95.5	98.4	95.1	97.4
Maharashtra	90.2	80.1	91	94.6	91	94
Andhra Pradesh	86.5	84.1	86.6	91.8	83.4	92.3
Gujarat	84.8	85.4	81.7	94.9	78.9	73.5
Rajasthan	81.1	75.1	83	92.1	77.1	85.8
Madhya Pradesh	88.5	78.6	87.6	99	88	98.8
Haryana	88.8	79.4	92.1	95.5	59.7	90.6

Tamil Nadu	93.3	95.8	96.2	96.3	95.8	98.4
Orissa	82.6	73.8	87.3	93.7	90.6	82.4
Himachal Pradesh	97.3	97.3	97.9	98.7	73.7	87.1
Chhatisgarh	84.7	83.6	84.2	91.5	97.9	93
Punjab	90.2	89	90.6	94.2	89	89.6

*Sachar Committee Report, 2006*

In 2004-05, the Muslim enrolment rate was slightly higher than that of the OBCs but was somewhat lower than the average enrolment rate. This is a positive trend consistent with the increasing focus of the Muslim community on education reflected in various interactions with the Committee (See Chapter 2 of Sachar Committee Report).

A state wise analysis reveals reasonably high enrolment rates amongst Muslim children in most states. In Kerala, Karnataka, Delhi, Maharashtra and some other states the enrolment rates among Muslims are higher than the state average. On the other hand, in states like Uttar Pradesh, Bihar Jharkhand and Uttaranchal, enrolment rates are very low (below 70%). In fact, in Uttar Pradesh, Jharkhand and Andhra Pradesh, enrolment rates for Muslim children are lower than all other SRCs.

Sachar Committee was able to access the 61<sup>st</sup> Round NSSO data (2004-05). These figures were compared with the 55<sup>th</sup> Round (1999-2000) to examine the trends in the attendance rates over time. It can be seen that there has been significant increase in the current enrolment and attendance rates for all SRCs. While an increase enrolments observed for all SRCs, the increase has been the highest among SCs/STs (95%), followed by Muslims (65%). Though this substantial increase has not really changed the relative position of Muslims in terms of ranks, the gaps among SRCs have narrowed dramatically. In 1999-2000, Muslims had the lowest enrolment rate among all SRCs except SCs/STs and this rate was 78% of the average enrolment rate for the population as a whole (Sachar Committee, 2006,p.57).

The National Council for Applied Economic Research (NCAER) survey also estimated current enrolment rates. The provisional estimates are discussed below. The NCAER estimates of current enrolment rates are lower than the NSSO estimates. The difference between Muslims (74%) and the remaining population (83%) is much sharper.( Ibid)

Enrolment rates are above 90% in Kerala and Tamil Nadu and satisfactory (above 80%) in Karnataka, Maharashtra and Delhi. The difference in enrolment rates is also small in states like Kerala, Karnataka and Maharashtra. But it needs to be noted that in none of the states are current attendance rates amongst Muslims higher than that of the remaining population. On the contrary, there is a significant difference in enrolment rates in states like West Bengal, Uttar Pradesh, Assam Andhra Pradesh and some smaller rates.

The status of the students who are currently not attending schools has also been analysed from NSSO data. These students can be divided into two groups – those who have never attended any school at any time (never enrolled), and those who had enrolled but dropped out later (drop-outs). ***As many as 25% of Muslim children in the 6-14 year age group have either never attended school or have dropped out.*** This is higher than that of any other SRCs considered in this analysis. The incidence of dropouts is also high among Muslims and only SC/STS have a marginally higher dropout rate than Muslims.

Overall, while the share of dropouts and children who have never attended school is still higher among Muslims than most other SRCs, ***enrolment rates have risen significantly in recent years.*** In a recent study it was found that apart from the economic circumstance of the households, School enrolment for different communities is significantly affected by the local level of development (e.g.

availability of schools and other infrastructure) and the educational status of the parents. The study using 1993-94 data showed that higher levels of village development and parental education resulted in higher enrolment rates for all communities. Interestingly, once the children are placed in 'more favourable' circumstances (e.g. when parents, especially mothers are literate and infrastructure facilities are better), inter-community (Hindu/SC-ST/Muslims) differences in enrolment rates become insignificant. Moreover, differences in parental education were more important in explaining inter-community (especially Hindu-Muslim) difference in enrolment than regional development variables. (Borooah et.Al, quoted in Sachar Committee Report). In the light of these findings the increase in enrolment rates in recent years is quite remarkable, as one cannot expect a significant increase in parental education between 1999-2000 and 2004-05. Muslims seem to be overcoming barriers to enrolment arising out of parental illiteracy and other socio-economic constraints. (Ibid.).

## Out of School Children (MHRD Study, 2006)

The interventions under SSA and its predecessor DPEP have had a positive impact on school enrolments with substantially improved access and school environment. The number of out of schoolchildren was estimated at 42 million at the start of the Tenth Plan, has come down to 23 million in April 2003 and to 23 million in September 2004 according to Mid Term Review of the Tenth Plan (June, 2005).

The success of *Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan* is further evident as close to 93% children in age group 6-13 years are in school according to a recent study carried out by the Social and Rural Research Institute for MHRD in 2005. According to this study, there are a total of **13.5 million children (6.94% in all, 7.92% female and 6.18% male)** in the age group 6-13 years who are out of school; **7.89% of rural children and 4.43% children in this age group in urban areas**. Among **SC children** in this age group, 8.55% of rural children are out of school compared to 6.25% in urban areas. Among **ST children** in this age group, 10.11% of rural children are out of school compared to 4.21% in urban areas. Among **OBC children** in this age group, 7.73% of rural children are out of school compared to 3.83% in urban areas.

*Under SSA, a special data-base was set-up to track the Muslim children between 6-13 years. SRI-IMRB Survey 2005 included information on Muslim children – 9.97% of total 2.25 crores Muslim children in 6-13 age group were estimated to be out of school, about 12 lakh boys & 10 lakh girls. 12% of the out of school children were in rural & 7% in urban areas.*

Table 4.15 : Number & Percentage of Out-of-School Children Aged 6-13 years (All India) in 2006

States	Estimated Child Population ( 6-13 yrs.)			Out-of-School Children ( 6-13 yrs.)			% Out-of-School( 6-13 yrs.)		
	Rural	Urban	Total	Rural	Urban	Total	Rural	Urban	Total
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
All Children 6-13 years	145,542,890	48,485,753	194,028,643	11,353,597	2,106,137	13,459,734	7.80	4.34	6.94
Male Children	82,610,130	27,008,923	109,619,053	5,602,755	1,169,751	6,772,506	6.78	4.33	6.18
Female Children	62,932,760	21,476,830	84,409,590	5,750,842	936,386	6,687,228	9.14	4.36	7.92
Age 6-10 year	97,424,256	30,771,597	128,195,853	6,741,719	1,081,388	7,823,107	6.92	3.51	6.10

Age 11-13 years	48,148,634	17,714,155	65,832,790	4,611,878	1,024,749	5,636,627	9.58	6.06	8.56
SC Children	31,636,193	6,384,600	38,020,794	2,706,025	398,841	3,104,866	8.55	6.25	8.17
ST Children	15,679,597	1,690,685	17,370,283	1,585,833	71,145	1,656,978	10.11	4.21	9.54
OBC Children	52,496,839	14,172,257	66,669,095	4,059,259	543,001	4,602,260	7.73	3.83	6.90
<b>Muslim Children</b>	<b>13,031,745</b>	<b>9,562,673</b>	<b>22,594,419</b>	<b>1,567,717</b>	<b>685,535</b>	<b>2,253,252</b>	<b>12.03</b>	<b>7.17</b>	<b>9.97</b>
Other Children	32,698,516	16,675,537	49,374,053	1,434,764	407,614	1,842,378	4.39	2.44	3.73
All physically or mentally challenged	1,528,097			582737			38.13		
Mentally Disability	222,958			104838			47.02		
Visually Disability	218522			62709			28.7		
Hearing Disability	137,145			44299			32.3		
Speech Disability	179105			74454			41.57		
Orthopedic/Locomotor Disabled	593607			188589			31.77		
Multiple Disability	176759			107084			60.58		

Source : All India Survey of out of school Children – MHRD 2006

The study shows that in both age groups 6-10 years and 11-13 years, the proportion of girls who were out-of-school was higher than that of boys. And, this was well reflected at an overall level (6-13 years age) too, in the case of which the number of girls who were out-of-school was 7.92% as against 6.18% of boys who were out-of-school. An interesting trend that could be observed in Andaman and Nicobar, Chandigarh, Himachal Pradesh, Karnataka, Lakshadweep, Meghalaya, Mizoram, Punjab, Sikkim and West Bengal is that in these states/Union Territories the estimated percentage of out-of-school female children was lower as compared to male children.

Analysing by age groups, the national average of estimated number of children who were out-of-school in the age group 6-10 years was 6.1%. In this regard, the states that performed worse than the national average were Bihar (17.29%), Manipur (18.85%), Arunachal Pradesh (9.96%), Uttaranchal (9.75%), Jharkhand (89.42%), Madhya Pradesh (7.63%), Assam (7.1%), Uttar Pradesh (6.97%) and West Bengal (6.34%). The percentage of out-of-school children in the age group 11-13 years was 8.57%. In this context, the states/Union Territories that were worse than the national average were Daman & Diu (56.98%), Bihar (16.22%), Nagaland (14.6%), Manipur (14.59%), Jharkhand (14.33%), West Bengal (12.86%), Lakshadweep (12.77%), Assam (125.3%), Uttar Pradesh (10.84%), Chhattisgarh (10%), Gujarat (9.72%) and Rajasthan (9.01%).

Analysing by states/Union Territories, let us compare **the percentage of Muslim out-of-school children** who were in some of the states much above the national average. The national average percentage of **Muslim children who were out-of-school was 9.97%**. In this regard, the states/Union Territories that were worse than the national average were Bihar (28.34%), Daman & Diu (28%), Nagaland (16.16%), Uttar Pradesh (14.37%), West Bengal (11.33%) and Manipur (10.91%).

The national average percentage of **ST children** who were out-of school was 9.54%. The states/Union Territories that performed worse than this national average were Manipur (21.40%), Nagaland (10.36%) and Chhattisgarh (9.1%). As regards the **OBC** category, the states that were lagging behind the national average (6.90%) were Bihar (14.77%), Chandigarh (10.71%), Punjab (8.79%), Uttar Pradesh (8.57%) and Gujarat (7.79%). Finally among **the 'others' category**, the states that performed worse than the national average (3.73%), were Daman & Diu (31.56%), Uttaranchal (9.01%), Assam (7.79%), Bihar (6.27%) and West Bengal (5.87%)

It would be pertinent to note the variations between urban and rural areas in respect of social groups. Coming to out-of-school children in different social groups we found that while the percentage of out-of-school children was highest among Muslim Children, it was lowest among 'other' category in

*both urban and rural areas.* The above trend was well reflected at an overall level too. Thus the estimate of out-of-school children was highest among Muslims (9.97%) followed by ST group in which 9.94% children were out-of-school. It was lowest among 'other' categories (3.73%). ***In fact, the estimate of out-of-school Muslim children in rural areas (12.03%) was highest across all social groups. The urban-rural divide was significant in other social groups also.*** Thus, while in rural areas the percentage of ST out-of-school children was the second highest, in urban areas the percentage of SC out-of-school children was second highest. Here it is pertinent to note that the percentage of ST out-of-school children in urban areas (4.21%) was much lower than the percentage of such children in rural areas (10.11%).

### Gender Break Up of Out of School Children by Social Groups

**Table 4.16 : All India Gender wise estimated number of children out-of-school by Social groups among Children Aged 6-13 years**

Caste	Gender	Rural	Urban	All
1	2	3	4	5
SC	Male	1370449	217883	1588332
	Female	1335576	180958	1516534
	Total	2706025	398841	3104866
	% Female	49.36	45.37	48.84
ST	Male	767982	39864	807846
	Female	817851	31281	849132
	Total	1585833	71145	1656978
	% Female	51.57	43.97	51.25
OBC	Male	1919210	285517	2204727
	Female	2140049	257484	2397533
	Total	4059259	543001	4602260
	% Female	52.72	47.42	52.09
Muslim	Male	815834	414443	1230277
	Female	751883	271092	1022975
	Total	1567717	685535	2253252
	<b>% Female</b>	<b>47.96</b>	<b>39.54</b>	<b>45.40</b>
Other	Male	729283	212041	941324
	Female	705481	195574	901054
	Total	1434764	407615	1842378
	% Female	49.17	47.98	48.91
Total		11353598	2106137	13459734
Total Female		5750842	936386	6687228
<b>% Female</b>		<b>50.65</b>	<b>44.46</b>	<b>49.68</b>

Source: All India Survey of out of school Children - MHRD

***Muslim girls form about 45% of the out of school Muslim children, 48% in rural areas and about 40% in urban areas. As above data indicates, the situation of Muslim girls is better than all other communities which is a positive indicator of the impact of special efforts made under SSA to promote education of Muslim girls.***

## Percentage of Children enrolled in Schools in the Age group 6-13 by Social Groups

MHRD Study on Out of School Children (6-13 years) carried out by the Department of Literacy and Elementary Education in the context of Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan is the only source, which gives gender and community wise data for rural and urban areas. *On the basis of this study, it is possible to derive the present enrolment of Muslim girls in age group 6-13 years in comparison with other groups.*

From Table 4.15, one can infer that

- ◆ A little over 93% children in the age group 6-13 years , are enrolled in schools.
- ◆ *In the case of Muslims, about 88% are in school in this age group.*
- ◆ Enrolment of SC, ST and OBC children is better than Muslim children.
- ◆ Considering these groups are also disadvantaged , their better enrolment can probably be attributed to special incentives, schemes and facilities extended to these groups in the last 60 years. *One may also consider extending these facilities to Muslim children to bring them at par.*

Table 4.17 :Percentage of Children enrolled in Schools in the Age group 6-13 by Social Groups

Sl. No.	States	%age of in School		
		Rural	Urban	Total
1	2	6	7	8
1	<b>All Children 6-13 years</b>	<b>92.20</b>	<b>95.66</b>	<b>93.06</b>
2	Male Children	93.22	95.67	93.82
3	Female Children	90.86	95.64	92.08
4	Age 6-10 year	93.08	96.49	93.90
5	Age 11-13 years	90.42	93.94	91.44
6	SC Children	91.45	93.75	91.83
7	ST Children	89.89	95.79	90.46
8	OBC Children	92.27	96.17	93.10
9	<b>Muslim Children</b>	<b>87.97</b>	<b>92.83</b>	<b>90.03</b>
10	Other Children	95.61	97.56	96.27

Source : Derived from All India Survey of Out of School Children – MHRD 2006

## Continued Gender Gaps among Socially Deprived Children and Minorities (Muslims) in Secondary Education

An unpublished paper (Nuna, 2007) found that according to Seventh All India Educational Survey 2002, the proportion of rural girls in secondary (Classes IX-X) was 39% as compared to 45% in case of urban girls at the national aggregate level. Further, state wise analysis indicates wide inter state rural urban differentials in gender gap in secondary education in some states. *The states where such differentials were comparatively very high are Bihar, Chhatisgarh, Jharkhand, Madhya Pradesh, Rajasthan and Uttar Pradesh .*

The national aggregative analysis indicates that gender gaps in secondary education (Classes IX-X) among socially deprived children and Muslims have been reducing sharply over the years. It has

emerged from, Seventh Survey data that SC girls formed 39% of total SC children enrolled in Classes IX -X; ST girls formed 38% of ST children; ***and 42.9% of the total enrolled Muslim children at the secondary stage were girls.*** Bridging gender gaps in such groups have to be continued as despite five decades of planned development gender gaps among these groups exist. (See Table 4.18)

Table 4.18: Percentage Girls enrolled in Secondary (Classes IX-X) as per Seventh Survey, 2002

Sr. No.	States/UTs	%age girls to Total Secondary Stages (Classes IX-X)							
		Rural				Urban			
		All	SC	ST	Minorities	All	SC	ST	Minorities
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
1	Andhra Pradesh	40.84	37.71	31.87	42.23	49.46	50.34	42.00	54.19
2	Arunachal Pradesh	40.64	46.46	40.04	31.57	44.05	43.90	43.57	43.33
3	Assam	47.76	48.05	47.74	45.76	49.39	49.70	47.35	47.49
4	Bihar	29.19	24.15	27.56	27.21	36.40	33.28	35.11	35.41
5	Chhattisgarh	33.63	32.04	32.19	35.80	44.88	42.76	44.98	43.26
6	Goa	46.96	45.55	92.85	40.26	48.53	42.81	52.27	49.88
7	Gujarat	37.43	37.17	39.84	33.60	42.90	40.83	43.90	41.71
8	Haryana	40.58	36.83	38.60	33.15	43.76	44.18	49.53	35.23
9	Himachal Pradesh	47.58	46.65	46.52	46.92	47.69	50.05	43.53	58.21
10	Jammu & Kashmir	40.40	42.47	39.32	38.16	46.51	44.00	39.89	45.83
11	Jharkhand	31.48	24.75	34.64	30.28	41.68	36.37	40.34	44.35
12	Karnataka	43.93	40.54	40.06	42.44	49.15	46.82	44.86	52.80
13	Kerala	49.41	49.04	48.78	50.32	52.57	51.98	55.51	50.53
14	Madhya Pradesh	29.58	24.29	26.26	29.57	39.16	35.17	35.57	39.93
15	Maharashtra	42.82	41.85	39.35	43.64	47.20	45.94	46.52	50.77
16	Manipur	48.72	45.40	46.91	46.94	49.37	48.19	41.99	47.28
17	Meghalaya	50.61	46.61	51.82	36.20	51.99	57.92	53.73	50.00
18	Mizoram	49.19	Nil	49.19	0.00	52.05	41.88	51.45	33.33
19	Nagaland	52.89	47.91	47.10	45.45	48.99	43.81	49.21	44.91
20	Orissa	43.61	40.73	36.48	45.36	46.96	46.17	47.48	47.87
21	Punjab	46.35	44.98	NST	45.31	49.82	51.72	NST	52.94
22	Rajasthan	24.37	19.02	22.26	19.96	35.84	30.74	25.41	32.89
23	Sikkim	48.89	46.72	52.60	51.21	53.76	48.00	57.76	24.00
24	Tamil Nadu	46.35	47.53	40.36	45.42	49.93	50.74	49.80	48.56
25	Tripura	45.37	45.25	42.65	45.72	49.69	49.50	51.21	47.62
26	Uttar Pradesh	31.27	29.08	30.29	30.33	40.08	34.97	49.48	43.46
27	Uttaranchal	39.12	30.90	41.79	34.58	46.49	45.35	47.50	50.59
28	West Bengal	42.47	38.29	32.20	45.07	47.15	42.88	40.06	46.56
29	Andaman & Nicobar Island	48.10	NA	51.84	0.00	48.12	NA	62.06	0.00
30	Chandigarh	54.98	46.20	0.00	37.25	46.11	49.96	40.74	46.66
31	Dadar & Nagar Haveli	38.12	45.23	34.99	37.50	47.45	43.28	50.92	53.95
32	Daman Diu	43.28	36.58	36.89	42.85	45.36	37.03	47.45	52.17
33	Delhi	48.28	53.41	50.00	50.54	46.26	48.15	47.98	47.82
34	Lakshadweep	47.34	NA	47.27	1.00	49.36	NA	48.38	0.00
35	Pondicherry	47.06	44.90	0.00	42.89	49.51	50.89	38.46	43.53
	<b>India</b>	<b>38.96</b>	<b>36.97</b>	<b>36.98</b>	<b>39.45</b>	<b>44.98</b>	<b>43.59</b>	<b>43.32</b>	<b>46.76</b>

Source : 7th All India School Education Survey, 2002 NCERT, New Delhi

### Interventions in SSA for Education of Minority (Muslim) Children

- i. One of the thrust areas is to ensure availability of schools in all minority concentrated districts. During 2005-06, 4624 primary and Upper Primary schools, and about 31,702

- EGS Centres were sanctioned in minority concentrated districts. During 2006-07, 6918 new primary and upper primary schools have been sanctioned in minority-dominated districts. 32,250 EGS centres with a total enrolment of 120.90 lakh children have been sanctioned for 2006-07.
- ii. Sanction has been accorded for enrolment of 11.25 lakh children in Alternative & Innovative Education centres/AIE during 2006-07 in these districts.
  - iii. Madrasas/ Makhtabs have been covered under SSA. The Madaras affiliated to the State Madarsa Boards and satisfying certain conditions are ` eligible for such assistance as is available to other regular schools under SSA. So far 8309 madaras have been assisted.
  - iv. Taking note of the fact that a large number of children, especially girls, are found studying in Madrasas the States have been advised that, an EGS centre or an AIE intervention may be started at such Madaras by the local body concerned, whereby free textbooks and an additional teacher if required can be provided. In all 4867 makhtabs/madaras have been taken up under EGS/AIE .
  - v. Free textbooks are provided to all minority girls from classes I – VIII.
  - vi. Urdu textbooks are provided for Urdu medium schools and for Urdu as a subject.
  - vii. Based on the 1981 Census, 93 districts (now 99) in 16 states have been identified for focused attention. ***The major focus is on the states of Bihar, West Bengal, Uttar Pradesh and Assam where Muslim Female literacy and educational attainments are very low.***
  - viii. Out of the 1180 KGBVs, 210 schools have been sanctioned in minority blocks, 1430 Muslim girls have already been enrolled in KGBVs till 31.3.06.

The Ministry of Minority Affairs has identified the 103 districts as minority concentration districts, where the population of religious minorities exceeds 25%. ***These include districts with different religious minorities including Hindus, Sikhs, and Christians etc.*** Under the Prime Minister's new 15 Point Programme, the targets, allocations and performance of SSA in these districts would be monitored. ***Of the various religious minorities, Muslims are the most educationally backward.***

SSA has undertaken sensitization of States and UTs on the issue of providing a special focus in identified Muslim concentration districts. Additional resources have been provided to these districts for recruitment of teachers, construction of school buildings and classrooms. The strategy of providing AIE grants to Makhtabs/Madaras for introducing/strengthening the teaching of general subjects for children who are attending Makhtabs/Madaras, but not going to regular schools is being followed in several States.

### Further Proposed Measures

- Ensuring that adequately provided primary and upper primary schools are available in all minority concentration areas. It is crucial to ensure that upper primary schools are located close to Muslim habitations to ensure that adolescent Muslim girls can continue their education.
- Social mobilization to promote the demand for education, especially for older girls. This will require a special effort from, teachers, education administrators and programme functionaries to work with parents, religious leaders, and panchayat representatives etc. to overcome barriers due to social and cultural traditions.

- Religious minorities are usually not included in incentive programmes like scholarships. Children of religious minorities, especially Muslims may be provided scholarships at least at the upper primary stage in identified educationally backward districts.
- Urdu medium schools need to be set up wherever required based on demand and the local language pattern of the minority community. In other Muslim concentration areas the teaching of Urdu as a subject may be encouraged, wherever there is a demand.
- The focus of work should be on ensuring that Muslim children attend regular schools. The strategy of providing grants to Maktab/Madarsas should not be dominant strategy for ensuring universal participation of Muslim children. Wherever possible, Maktab/Madarsas could serve as institutions for providing bridge education for mainstreaming of children into regular schools.
- Older children especially girls in the 9+ age group who have not been to school and cannot be mainstreamed easily, could also be encouraged to join centers to run for at least 4 hours in the premises of Maktab/Madarsas in the forenoon/afternoon, before or after the religious instruction.
- KGBVs need to be located within Muslim dominated areas with the option of studying in Urdu medium, if necessary.
- Additional hostels for boys and girls need to be set up in minority dominated areas covering the upper primary of education stage.

## Education of Muslim Children in Madrasa - Maktab

Maktab-Madarsas are autonomous institutions, which form an integral part of Muslim cultural tradition and play an important role in the enculturation process of their children. The word which derives its origin from Al-Dars i.e. to teach or to learn has become synonymous with the traditional seats of Islamic learning today. At present, there are several thousand Islamic schools spread all across India. Most mosques have a primary religious school or *maktab* attached to them, where Muslim children learn the Qur'an and the basics of their faith. For children who desire to specialize in religious studies and train, as imams and *maulvis*, numerous large seminaries or *Madarsas* exist, with each Muslim sect having its own chain of such institutions. For many poor families, Madarsas are the only source of education for their children, since they charge no fees and provide free boarding and lodging to their students. In a vastly unequal social set-up, they provide a religious and cultural refuge to the poor Muslims by promising social security through bondage of religion in the Indian context.

### Types of Madrasas in India

Madrasas in India are mainly of two kinds: Some madrasas are affiliated to state governments like and come under Minority Welfare Departments. Though small, these madrasas draw salaries and collect grants from their respective governments. Thus, the curricula of these madrasas are by and large similar to those of state sponsored schools or colleges in addition to Islamic subjects.

The community based Muslim religious educational institutions are again of four types-Maktab ; Darul Qura'an ; Madrasa and Jamia which are institutions corresponding to schools, high schools, colleges and universities in English language. In common parlance,all these four types of Islamic educational institutions are referred to as madrasas.

**Standard Class Level Equivalent to**

- ◆ *Tahtania* - Upto Class V; Primary Education
- ◆ Foqania - VI to VIII; Middle/Upper Primary
- ◆ Munshi/Moulvi - IX-X; Secondary/High School
- ◆ Aalim or Alia - XI-XII Intermediate/Sr. Secondary
- ◆ Kamil - Graduate
- ◆ Fazil - Post Graduate

## Curricula of Madrasas in India

It is not possible to make any general statement about present curriculum of madrasa, as some Jamiaat follow their own pattern. So we will have a look at the curricula of a few famous Islamic institutions. Most of the remaining non-governmental madrasas in India are, some how or the other, affiliated with them or following their system and curricula.

- i. Darul Uloom Deoband: Deoband's Darul Uloom has a comprehensive syllabus that is not exactly Dars-e-Nizami, as people wrongly understand, but a mixture of three educational institutions that existed in the recent past. The three are 'Madrasa Rahimia' of Shah Waliullah in Delhi, 'Ferangi Mahal' of Mulla Nizamuddin in Lucknow and Madrasa of Allama Fazl-e-Haq in Khairabad.
- ii. Darul Uloom Deoband's present syllabus is for four stages — primary, middle, high and specialization. In the primary (and pre-primary 5 years) syllabi students are taught Urdu, Persian, Hindi, English, Mathematics, Geography, Arabic Grammar and Composition.
- iii. Darul Uloom Nadwatul Ulama Lucknow: Nadwatul Ulama of Lucknow also brought about certain far-reaching changes in the traditional curriculum of the Qaumi Madrasas of India in response to the changed circumstances and needs of the time. The primary five years cover complete primary education as prescribed for general schools besides giving a sound religious base to its students. Higher efficiency in Arabic literature and the knowledge of English
- iv. equivalent to the Intermediate standard of the U. P. Board of High School and Intermediate Education are the special features of Alimiyat course at Nadwa.
- v. Jamiatul Hidayat at Jaipur: To face and deal with the realities of life and take on the modern challenges, in 1986 a new institution at Jaipur- 'Jamiatul Hidayat' was established. Education in this madrasa begins at the upper primary stage i.e. from class VI and continues for a period of nine years divided into two levels of Sanwi and Aali. The syllabus of Jamiatul Hidayat includes Hindi, English, Social Sciences and intensive technical training besides Islamiyat. In the Jamia the standard of teaching of modern sciences is equivalent to a graduation level course and that of technical education to a certificate level course.
- vi. At present all these three distinct patterns of curriculum are being followed in the madrasas of the country and each pattern is being separately headed by Deoband, Lucknow and Jaipur.

## Subjects in Madrasa curriculum

The subjects are divided into two parts: Dini and Duniyabi. The dichotomy between Deen and Duniya is stark and clear where the madrasah vision is concerned. Deen stands for religious discourse, while Duniya is in the political power domain. The madrasah teacher or the student goes to a madrasah to reinforce his Deen and to pick up tools to work for his religion, at the same time; one third of the aforesaid three categories of madrasa curricula includes purely secular subjects. For instance, all Languages, Logic, History, Elocution, Philosophy, Scholasticism, Geography, Metaphysics, Arithmetic, Biography, Anthropology, Civics, Rhetoric, Philology, Calligraphy and all sciences are completely secular and are taught in modern institutions too. The only difference is that in madrasas these subjects are taught in Arabic that has been taken for granted as the language of Muslims.

Although the exact number of Madarasas is not known, there are more than 3,00,000 madarasas, big and small, in India from where hundreds of students graduate every year (M. Shoeb Ansari z). A state-wise analysis shows that there are 721 madrasas catering to over 1,20,000 children in Assam, 1,825 madrasas catering to over 1,20,000 children in Gujarat, 961 Madarasas for 84,864 children in

Karnataka, 9,975 for 7,38,000 children in Kerala, 6,000 for over 4,00,000 children to Madhya Pradesh and some 1,780 catering to over 25,000 children in Rajasthan. In Uttar Pradesh, the number of Makhtabs is more than 15,000 and madrasas over 10,000 and there are 3,500 Madrasas in Bihar (MHA, GoI). At present there are official Boards of Madarsa Education in Assam, Bihar, West Bengal, Orissa and U.P. A large number of madarsas come within their jurisdiction and subsist on government funds.

**Table 4.19 : Girls as % of Madrasa students in India**

States	Primary		Middle		Secondary		Higher Secondary		Total Students			
	Total	% Girls	Total	% Girls	Total	% Girls	Total	% Girls	Boys	Girls	Total	% Girls
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13
India	750807	46.1	208163	46.5	64254	45.6	12160	29.3	559825	475559	1035384	45.9
West Bengal	40801	46.2	57389	55.1	29077	54.1	3202	28	63388	67081	130469	51.4
Kerala	11673	47.3	5323	49.2	1027	45.7	132	22.7	9513	8642	18155	47.6
Uttar Pradesh	283329	46.5	21465	40.3	6000	33.8	2482	22.4	170227	143049	313276	45.7
Bihar	166025	44.3	69171	43.3	15204	41.2	3577	32.8	143038	111239	254277	43.7
Assam	54817	50.3	20292	43.3	5130	34.3	1175	31.2	42917	38497	81414	47.3
J & K	2090	39.7	455	23.5	146	17.8	0	#DIV/0	1729	962	2691	35.7
Jharkhand	29991	47.2	13528	41.7	2935	41.3	330	16.4	25737	21047	46784	45
Karnataka	8976	48.3	3669	51.6	1381	50.3	274	69	7188	7312	14500	50.4
Uttaranchal	4781	47.2	121	37.2	0	#DIV/0	0	#DIV/0	2599	2303	4902	47
Delhi	288	24.3	225	0	0	#DIV/0	0	#DIV/0	443	70	513	13.6
Maharashtra	9206	34.1	4999	47.5	965	27.9	332	2.7	9708	5794	15502	37.4
Andhra Pradesh	17921	24.2	1052	44	496	28.6	0	#DIV/0	14519	4950	19469	25.4
Gujarat	1168	40.8	1778	38.3	687	37	368	53	2395	1606	4001	40.1
Rajasthan	33320	56.3	2835	40.1	256	37.1	182	42.9	16508	20085	36593	54.9
Madhya Pradesh	61429	46.6	2485	49.5	131	48.9	23	8.7	34185	29913	64098	46.7
Haryana	1156	41.2	232	47	46	54.3	0	#DIV/0	824	610	1434	42.5
Tamil Nadu	1333	47.8	214	45.3	411	24.8	41	14.6	1157	842	1999	42.1
Orissa	10509	43.4	1393	49.2	128	19.5	42	0	6800	5272	12072	43.7
Himachal Pradesh	102	26.5	30	23.3	0	#DIV/0	0	#DIV/0	98	34	132	25.8
Chhatisgarh	2418	42.1	20	80	0	#DIV/0	0	#DIV/0	1403	1035	2438	42.5
Punjab	2064	50.2	248	62.9	17	100	0	#DIV/0	1120	1209	2329	51.9
Other States	6880	49.9	1239	38.1	217	46.1	0	#DIV/0	4329	4007	8336	48.1

Source : Sachar Committee Report (p.293)

***Girls form about 46% of the students enrolled in madarasas/makhtabs in India; their share ranging from 13% in Delhi to more than 50% in Rajasthan, Punjab, Karnataka and West Bengal.***

Sachar Committee Report, 2006 did not see any major difference in the choice of educational institutions across Socio Religious Communities (SRCs) for which data was analyzed. Both Muslim and 'other' children mostly attend the inexpensive Government or Government-aided schools; about one third attend private schools. Many of the government – aided schools may effectively be privately run; an analysis of the proportion of children going to government versus government-

aided schools would be instructive. ***A small proportion (4%) of Muslim children also attend Madarsas.***

***In actuality the number of Madarsa attending students is much less than commonly believed. For example, in West Bengal, where Muslims form 25% of the population, the number of Madarsa students at 3.41 lakhs is only about 4% of the 7-19 age group.***

NCAER figures indicate that only about 4% of all Muslim students of the school going age group are enrolled in Madarsas. At the all-India level this works out to be about 3% of all Muslim children of school going age. The NCAER data is supported by estimates made from, school level NCERT (provisional) data; which indicate a somewhat lower level of 2.3% of Muslim, children aged 7-19 years who study in Madarsas. The proportions are higher in rural areas and amongst males.

One reason for the misconception that the majority of Muslim children are enrolled in Madarsas is that people do not distinguish between Madarsas and Maktabas. While Madarsas provide education (religious and/or regular), Maktabas are neighbourhood schools, often attached to mosques that provide religious education to children who attend other schools to get 'mainstream' education. Thus Maktabas provide part-time religious education and are complementary to the formal education institutions.

Apart from the role Madarsas have played in providing religious education one needs to recognize their contribution towards the education of Muslims in the country. Very often one finds that Madarsas have indeed provided schooling to Muslim children where the State has failed them. Many children go to Madarsas and there by acquire some level of literacy/education when there is no school in the neighbourhood. This effort needs to be recognized. This could be done by establishing 'equivalence' to Madarsa certificates for subsequent admission into government schools and universities. For this purpose, equivalence between the two systems of education will need to be established at different levels. Many Madarsas have shown an interest in the modernization scheme of the government and are keen to incorporate science, mathematics and other 'modern/regular' subjects in their curriculum and introduce modern methods of pedagogy. However, given the small number of children attending these institutions the 'modernization scheme' cannot be a substitute for mainstream education.

When modernization of Madarsas is planned, policy makers should be careful to distinguish between these two types of institutions. The Maktabas and residential Madarsas are necessarily traditional and meant only for religious education, because their social function is to carry on the Islamic tradition. On the other hand, it is the constitutional obligation (under Article 21A) of the Government to provide education to the masses. Aided Madarsas are often the last recourse of Muslims especially those who lack the economic resources to bear the costs of schooling, or households located in areas where 'mainstream' educational institutions are inaccessible. The solution in such cases is not only to modernize Madarsas, but also to provide good quality, subsidized 'mainstream' education and create an adequate infrastructure for education. Therefore, the state must also fulfil its obligation to provide affordable high quality school education to the masses through the formal education system.

It is important to recognize the Madarsas although primarily and usually intended for producing human resources for manning the mosques and the Madarsas themselves are also expected to produce Ulema who are looked upon by Muslims for guiding them in matters of importance in daily life and in social and political discourse. The modernization scheme is designed also to make them aware of what is considered the domain of secular learning and enable them to participate in interfaith dialogues. (Sachar Committee Report p.76)

Moreover, in the case of the implementation of the Scheme for Modernization of Madaras a number of deficiencies were discovered by an evaluation exercise. Some of these were: The number and quality of teachers assigned to Madaras for teaching modern subjects and their remuneration were inadequate. Besides, the important aspect of finding space for modern subjects in the Madarsa curriculum appears to have been ignored.

- ◆ *The modern stream remained un-supervised at the Madarsa level and un-inspected at the state level. A fresh evaluation of the scheme, which may result in its being overhauled, is needed.*

## Chapter V

# Research Action and Reflection

In this section we present a brief overview of researches on Muslim women's education, and a few successful experiments advancing education of Muslim girls and women as also some reflections on issues, challenges and strategies.

### A. Studies on Muslim Women's Education

Several studies have sought to explore the reasons for low literacy and low educational participation of Muslim girls. Greater emphasis has been placed on locating empirical studies. Due to constraint of time and space only a few of these studies are being included. An extensive bibliography has been prepared for facilitating the work of future scholars.

A valuable study on efforts being made by Muslim organizations to promote Muslim education is **Shamim Shah's** Educational Report on Muslim-Managed Schools and Colleges in India with Special Emphasis on Science Education (New Delhi Hamdard Educational Society, 1983). This study is based on a survey of 590 Muslim-managed schools and colleges in 16 states of India providing details on existence of such institutions by level of education, types of facilities available, sex ratios of students, teachers and management bodies, sources of funds, details of curriculum, medium of instruction, availability of trained teachers, teachers' in-serving training facilities, laboratory and library facilities, science clubs, access to special funds for science education and students' performance. The study has a separate section on Muslim girls' education with details about number of Muslim, girls' schools and colleges, attitudes to girls' education, dropout rates and performance.

According to the study, 35% of the surveyed institutions are till Class X and only 3.3% are till Class XII. Out of these, 12.47% are co-educational, 33.2% for boys only and 19.8% for girls only, 95% of the principals are Muslims, 75.8% of them being males. 35% of the schools do not own the buildings in which they function; 89.3% have no hostel facilities, and most of those that do have very small hostels accommodating less than 30 students. Library facilities are, on the whole, inadequate. Very few of such institutions get funds from, the Central Government, although 67% get some funds from, the state governments, 57% have provision for religious education as well.

In all, 33.6% of the girl students studying in the surveyed institutions are at the primary level, 36.4% at the middle stage, 23.9% in the high school and only 6% in the higher secondary classes. *Generally, the performance of girls was found to be better than that of boys.*

Of the 70 Muslim-managed colleges surveyed in 13 states, it was found that very few had female principals; 88% owned their own premises and 43.2% had some hostel facilities. About 32 % of their students were Muslim and Muslim girls accounted for 8.3% of the total students. *The dropout rate among Muslim students were considerably higher than among non-Muslims.*

The study concludes with suggestions for improving the performance of Muslim managed educational institutions, including *increased allocation of funds from, the state, Wakf Boards and the Muslim community for education, the setting up of teachers' training schools, especially for Muslim women, reservation for Muslims in institutions of higher education, increase in the number of Urdu-medium schools, technical training institutes and students' hostels in areas of Muslim concentration, better provision of Urdu textbooks and expansion of scholarship schemes, including from Zakat funds.*

**Sabiha Hussain (1990)** found that Muslims rank among the most marginalized communities in Bihar. The author attributes this, in large measure; to the pre-conversion caste/class background of the vast majority of *non-Ashraf* Muslims in the state, being mainly converts from the 'low' caste Hindus. She also sees pre-Islamic customs, conservative interpretations of Islam and various economic and political factors as contributing to Muslim women's marginalization. Also in the wake of the Partition of India many Ashraf elites from Bihar migrated to Pakistan. Hence, the Muslim middle-class, which could have played a key role in promoting education of the community was greatly reduced.

As regards modern education among Muslim girls in Darbhanga town, the author notes growing enthusiasm for education, particularly among economically more prosperous families. For such families, modern education for girls is seen to be in consonance with their understanding of Islam, thus *enabling girls to be better Muslims and to distinguish between 'right' and 'wrong'*. Support for girls' higher education is more evident among younger generation respondents, increasing numbers of whom, *see education not only as important for girls to be better housewives but also to enable them to be economically empowered by taking up employment outside the home*, usually as teachers. Despite this growing enthusiasm for girls' higher education among the Muslims of Darbhanga, the study notes an alarmingly high dropout rate of girls after secondary school. This owes to several factors including poverty, lack of separate girls' schools, early marriage and community resistance. Another major difficulty is the problem of finding appropriate husbands for highly educated Muslim girls. This is because relatively few Muslim boys go in for higher education because of poverty and the perception of discrimination in government employment, forcing many Muslim boys to discontinue their education take to some sort of private employment or self-employment in order to augment family's meager earnings. Considerable opposition to co-education exists, as this might lead girls astray. Many families tend to withdraw their girls from education after high school for fear of girls' safety, especially if colleges are located far from their homes. Only 12.5% of the respondents interviewed in this study are not opposed to their daughters studying in co-educational institutions.

The study also reveals a sharp criticism of the orthodox Ulema on the part of many educated Muslim women, who feel; these men equate patriarchy with Islam. These women argue for gender equality but within an Islamic paradigm, calling for reforms in Muslim personal law, critiquing the orthodox Ulema.

**Abdul Hafiz Mabood (1993)** carried out a study based on a sample of 70 Muslim teachers in government and government-aided schools and Madrasas in the Azamgarh district in eastern Uttar Pradesh. The Study also included parents of students studying in these institutions. The study notes that while male literacy is fairly high among the Muslims of Azamgarh, female literacy rates are very low. The aim of the study was to discover why this is so, focusing particularly on the attitudes towards Muslim Women's education.

- ◆ Almost all the *Madrasa teachers* surveyed believe in the importance of girls' education but stress that the ideal education that Muslim girls should receive is religious, plus modicum of general subjects that can enable them to become good housewives and there should no distinction between boys and girls. Some of them favour school education for girls but in all girls' schools under female teachers till the attainment of puberty. These schools should be located within the locality where the girls live.
  
- ◆ All the *school teachers* stress the importance of girls' education, 80% of them are in favour of both religious as well as secular education for Muslim girls and 70% of them are not opposed to co-education. In contrast to Madrasa teachers, almost all of them believe that the observance of pardah is not an obstacle to girls' education and 70% of them are not opposed to girls attending school outside their locality.
  
- ◆ Among *the parents*, the study found that 66.7% believe that secular education for girls is not forbidden in Islam; 83.3% support education for girls but only till the age of puberty. Many parents were in favour of sending their girls to good schools but were unable to do

so because of poverty and/or the lack of all girls' schools in the neighborhood. This and the desire on the part of most parents that their girls should have a basic grounding in Islam, explains the high proportion of girls studying in *Maktabs* in the district. Many parents would also support sending their girls to higher level Madrasas after they finish their basic Islamic education in *Maktabs*, but as the study notes, there are very few such institutions in the district, although there are numerous boys' Madrasas in Azamgarh. Some parents are also willing to send their girls to colleges outside their village but are unable to do so owing to the lack of proper girls' hostels in the towns in the region where such colleges are located. Hence, there is an urgent need for establishing more residential girls' Madrasas that teach religious subjects as well as impart a basic grounding in various secular disciplines.

***Rokaiya Begum (1998)*** focuses on attitudes to Muslim women's education among rural Bengali Muslims.. Muslims account for more than 20% of the population of West Bengal and along with the Scheduled Castes, they are the least educated community in the state. In 1991, only 25.9% of the Bengali speaking Muslims of the state were literate, while the state literacy rate was 47.15%. The female Muslim literacy rate is woefully low, owing mainly to widespread poverty, practice of female seclusion and negative attitudes towards women's education. Many of the women in the Study villages were officially described as 'literate' but in actual know only how to write their names. Some of them had been to primary school, but very few had gone to secondary school and beyond. Muslim villagers generally perceive that modern education for girls is not an economic asset, since they believe that the proper place for women is the home. The lack of all girls' schools and the poor quality of teaching and infrastructure facilities in state schools are also major factors for the lack of enthusiasm for girls' education.

The study finds that ***many Muslim families are in favour of religious education for girls.*** In the *Maktabs* in the two villages a large proportion of the students are girls. More than 60% of the females in the villages had received or were receiving some sort of religious education from such institutions. Generally this consists of basic Islamic knowledge, including the rules of prayer, ablutions and various supplications. ***Only 16% of these females could, however, read the Qur'an.*** Since the *Maktabs* attract a sizeable number of Muslim girls, they could be encouraged to include basic secular subjects as well. The author suggests the need for reforms in the management of the *Maktabs*, given that attendance is very irregular and there is high drop-out rate, *owing partly to the fact that education imparted there in is in Arabic and not in Bengali, the mother tongue of the villagers.*

**Zoya Hasan and Ritu Menon (2004)** point out that owing to several factors, not least ,the deeply-rooted patriarchal traditions, Muslim women, on the whole, suffer from, various disabilities, some that are specific to them. According to a survey conducted by them in 2000-01 in 40 districts in 12 states of India, it was found that roughly 60% of Muslim women report themselves to be illiterate while the school enrolment rate for Muslim girls is 40-66 percent. The proportion of illiterate Muslim women is substantially higher for the rural north than it is for the rest of India where more than 85% women in the rural North report themselves to be illiterate. Less than 17% of Muslim women enrolled in schools completed eight years of schooling and less than 10% completed higher secondary schooling, which is below the national average. The educational status of Muslim girls in north India is particularly abysmal, resulting in substantially lower enrolment rates at the middle school and higher secondary school levels (4.58 and 4.75% respectively as opposed to the national average of 17.86% and 11.42% respectively). The proportion of Muslim women in higher education is only 3.56%, lower even than that of the SCs, which is 4.25%. The overwhelming majority of women reported themselves as not working. The average work participation rate for Muslim women is 14%, which is lower than for Hindus (18%), SCs (37%), and other backward Classes (22%). Few

Muslim women are employed in the formal sector. The survey also found that Muslim women had very little awareness of government schemes, and like many of their Hindu sisters, had little power of decision-making in their homes.

The authors point out that contrary to prevalent stereotypes about forces of conservatism being the cause for low levels of education among Muslim girls, financial constraints outweigh parental opposition as chief obstacle to girls continuing their studies. In the north zone, financial constraints are much more important for Muslims than they are for Hindus, underlining once again the poverty of Muslim households in this part of the country and this provides the most powerful explanation for the poor levels of Women's education in the north as a whole. The south presents a different picture. Girls belonging to lower socio economic classes have as good a prospect of continuing in school as girls from higher classes. This is because of higher levels of state investment in education, a larger percentage of female teachers, extensive network of roads and good transport facilities that enable easy access to schools. This is a critical determining factor for both girls and female teachers. Even though Kerala is not a prosperous state, it is spending 6.3% of its gross domestic product on education. Uttar Pradesh's ratio is around 3.7%. Over 60 percent of teachers in Kerala and over 40% primary school teachers in the south zone are women, in contrast to 18 percent in Uttar Pradesh. Further, road transport is reliable and readily available in Kerala enabling female teachers to travel long distances to teach in rural schools. While regional factors, poverty and the role of the State in providing resources are critical, the impact of violent communal conflict as well as impact of communalization of education on Muslim girls is significant.

**Zoya Hasan and Ritu Menon (2005)** in another study looks at the condition of Muslim women's education in five cities in India, namely, Delhi, Aligarh, Hyderabad, Kolkata and Calicut (Kozhikode). It is argued that given the poor condition of Muslim women's education there is a special need for the state to take a pro-active role in this regard in order to promote social justice and empowerment of Muslim women and to remove the barriers that systematically reinforce their marginalization.

**In India as a whole, the authors reveal, Muslim girls' school enrolment rates continue to be low: 40.6% as compared to 63.2% in the case of 'upper' caste Hindus. In rural north India it is only 13.5%, in urban north India 23.1% and in rural and urban south India, above 70%, which is above the all-India average of all girls. Only 16.1% of Muslim girls from, poor families attend schools, while 70% of Muslim girls from economically better-off families do so, thus clearly suggesting that low levels of education of Muslim girls owes not to religion but to poverty. 98% of Muslim girls are said to study in government of private schools and only 2% in Madrasas, the majority being from poor families. Less than 17% of Muslim girls finish eight years of schooling and less than 10% complete higher secondary education. In the north the corresponding figures are 4.5% and 4.75% respectively, compared to the national female average of 17.8% and 11.4% respectively. Only 1.5% rural Muslims, both boys**

and girls and 4.8% urban Muslim children are enrolled in senior secondary schools. The average number of years that Muslim girls study is a dismal 2.7 years, as compared to 3.8 years in the case of Hindu girls. The number of years that Muslim girls studies in north India is half that of her south Indian counterpart in other words, on the whole. Muslim girls are characterized by a very high drop-out rate from the formal schooling system.

*In Delhi*, the authors note a growing enthusiasm for modern education among many Muslim families, although this is generally thwarted by widespread poverty and the fear that well-educated girls might find it difficult to find suitable husbands because of the relative paucity of well-educated Muslim men. Another hurdle is the desperate shortage of Urdu schools, which many parents would prefer to send their girls to. There are only 15 Urdu-medium government primary schools in the city and when students pass out from these schools they are faced with either being forced to enroll in Hindi-medium secondary schools drop-out from, the formal schooling system. The Delhi Government has not appointed a single Urdu teacher in over a decade, indicating its lack of interest in promoting Muslim education. There is only one government Urdu medium primary school in New Delhi although a large number

of Muslims live in this part of the state as well. On the whole, Urdu schools in the state suffer from, shortage of funds, trained teachers, textbooks and inadequate infrastructure.

*In Hyderabad*, where Muslims form, almost 40% of the population, the study found that 84% of sample Muslim women are illiterate. However, a growing number of girls from, economically better-off families are now enrolling in English-medium schools and in colleges. Girls' education has witnessed a considerable degree of progress in recent years due to economic prosperity among some Muslim families because of remittances from relatives working in the Gulf. Reservation for girls and for Muslims in professional colleges and government jobs, state aid to Urdu schools and recognition of Urdu as the second official language of the state of Andhra Pradesh has had a positive impact. The author in Calicut and Aligarh noted a similar enthusiasm among some Muslims for girls' education although for the same economic and social reasons mentioned above. Muslim girls' continue to be characterized by *a high drop-out rate* from schools. In addition, *it was also found that in recent years a number of Muslim-managed girls' schools have been set up that impart both modern as well as religious education which make them more culturally relevant and acceptable to many Muslim families.*

An interesting development in recent years in some parts of India is the emergence of higher-level Madrasas for specialized religious education for girls. *Asma Arif Ali's Study Hyderabad Ke Dini Madaris Mai Sunni Ladkiyon Ki Talim-o-Tarbiyat ( 2002)* documents girls' Madrasas in Hyderabad city. It begins with a brief overview of girls' religious education in Hyderabad city under the Nizams, showing how the Nizam and the Muslim nobility patronized Muslim schools located in mosques; Sufi lodges and Madrasas. It points out that the institution of

girls' religious schools in Hyderabad is a novel one, the first such school, the *Madrasa Aisha ul-Niswan*, having been established as late as 1986.

*Mohammad Zeyal Haque's* analysis of the 55<sup>th</sup> round of NSSO indicates that twenty-nine percent of rural Muslims live in absolute poverty, with monthly consumption expenditure per head of Rs.300/- or less. 51% of rural Muslims, as compared to 40 % rural Hindus, are landless. In urban areas, 40% Muslims, as compared to 22% among Hindus, belong to the absolute poor category. Only 27% of urban Muslim households have a working member with a regular salaried job, compared to 43% among Hindus. 48% of rural Muslims and 30% of urban Muslims are illiterate and these corresponding figures for Hindus are 44% and 19% respectively though only 44% Hindus come under the category. In the towns and cities, 30% of Muslims are in that category as opposed to only 19% of Hindus.

M. Akhtar Siddiqui's (2004) begins with a broad historical survey of Muslim education in India in India and then focuses on the contemporary situation. In the aftermath of the Partition the author says, Muslim education suffered a tremendous set-back, with the dissolution of princely houses and feudal estates on which numerous Madrasas had depended for patronage, and the Indian state's discriminatory policies vis-à-vis the Urdu language. He shows how Muslims have sought to maintain and promote the tradition of Islamic education in the face of tremendous challenges through novel experiments. ***For instance, in Uttar Pradesh, as a response to the marked Hinduisation of the government school syllabus and the numerous negative references to Islam and Muslim personages in government-prescribed textbooks, the Dini Talimi Council established a number of Maktabas combine religious and secular education as well as Urdu until the fifth grade and allow their students to join government schools thereafter.***

Siddiqui sees the state's discriminatory policies vis-à-vis the Urdu language as one of the major reasons for Muslim educational backwardness, particularly in north India. However, he argues, while Urdu is 'an important element' of Muslim identity, it is wrong to identify the language as 'Muslim' even though today, for all practical purposes, non-Muslims have abandoned it, as a result of which Urdu is today restricted largely to Madrasas. This is one reason why many Muslim families prefer to send their children to Madrasas instead of schools. In the Urdu 'heartland', Uttar Pradesh, 'Urdu today languishes, dying a slow death, there being hardly any Urdu medium state schools, this being a gross violation of the Constitutional right of Muslims to be taught in their own states beyond the Hindi-Urdu belt, such as Maharashtra, Karnataka and Andhra Pradesh, where state governments have funded several Urdu schools, although their standard is said to leave much to be desired'.

Siddiqui provides detailed information on the failure of various government-funded schemes ostensibly meant for minority education as well as the routine harassment that Muslim educational institutions seeking recognition and grants-in-aid are subjected to in many states. *'Even Schemes that were officially declared to be 'successful' were often a mere bog-wash'.* Thus, for instance, the Programme of Action 1992 claimed that all 41 districts in India with a high Muslim concentration had been covered under the community polytechnic scheme but in many districts it was found that Muslim student representation in these institutions was between 3 and 12 %, much less than the Muslim proportion in the total population of the district. In several places it was also found that the polytechnics were located at a considerable distance from Muslim localities. Another scheme that was advertised as a 'success story', the setting up of resource centers in selected universities with a high Muslim presence,

soon turned defunct. Other schemes also proved to be major flops. The scheme of providing Urdu teachers, Urdu Text Books and Urdu teachers training facilities, envisaged in the Revised Programme of Action, proved to be a non-starter. A good indication of the indifference with which the government greeted the scheme, Siddiqui says, is the fact that in Uttar Pradesh, home to the largest Urdu-speaking population in the country, there is only one Junior Basic Training Institute for Urdu-medium primary school teachers. Likewise, the official three-language formula is far from adequately being followed in many states; with Urdu-speaking Muslim children denied their right to learn the language in state schools.

The Scheme of the Area Intensive Educational Development programme ( AIED) was launched in 1993 by the Department of Education MHRD, GOI. The objective of the scheme is to promote education of children belonging to educationally backward minorities in areas of concentration of educationally backward minorities that do not have adequate provision for elementary and secondary education and also to promote participation of girls in science, commerce, humanities and vocational courses. **Anita Nuna (2003)** collected first hand information from, 8 states (Andhra Pradesh, Karnataka, Kerala, Tamil Nadu, Assam, West Bengal, Bihar & M.P.) and found that only in Kerala the programme was well implemented through NGOs who carried out a school mapping exercise and the schools were opened on the basis of demand and need of the community, thus, covering maximum number of beneficiaries. In Bihar and Assam, the Scheme had not taken off and the rest of the States used the grant for other activities like construction/reconstruction/upgrading, toilets, electricity connections, teacher's salaries etc. of existing schools which was not permissible under the scheme. The AIED thus had very little impact.

Another region-specific study of Muslim education is **Sekh Rahim Mondal(1997)**. The author argues that the educational backwardness of Muslims in India should be understood in the wider context of their overall socio-economic and political marginalisation. Being a vulnerable minority, they feel their identity and lives as being under threat, which enhances the influence of the orthodox and conservative ulama, known for their lack of enthusiasm for 'modern' education. Many Muslims are engaged in 'marginal' economic activities that do not require 'modern' education. This in addition to widespread poverty among Muslims limits their levels of educational aspiration. To add to this is the fact that many Muslims are descendants of 'low' caste converts, retaining many of their pre-conversion beliefs and practices as well as remaining mired in poverty like most other 'low' caste people, which make higher education an unaffordable expense for many of them. Making the situation more complicated has been the mass migration of the north Indian middle class, who could have been expected to take a leading role in promoting modern education in community, to Pakistan in the wake of the Partition.

The study reveals that people preferred to send their children to regular schools (54.45%) as compared to those who preferred to send them to Madarsas. However, even those who sent their children to regular schools made some arrangement for their religious education at home or in the village Maktab. The vast majority of parents who sent their children to part-time Maktabs wanted them to have basic religious knowledge and only 17.12% wanted them to go on to become religious specialists. This suggests, the author says, that they wanted secular education for 'routine requirements' and religious education for 'religious merit'.

*Interestingly, the survey discovered that the majority of the students in the Maktabs were girls. Besides its religious worth, knowledge of Quran was seen as adding to the prestige of the girl and helping her in finding a good match in the future. Only 22.89% of the Muslim females in the villages were found to be literate. However, the majority of these*

*literate women could only read and write their names; 68.27% of them had studied till the primary level only, 27.63% till the secondary level, 3.35% till the high school level and only 0.75% till the graduation level.*

*The high drop-out rates and low levels of Muslim girls educational attainment owed to various factors, including poverty, withdrawal of girls from school to engage in household chores, opposition to co-education after puberty, opposition to girls' working out of the home, the belief that the right place for women is the home, for which higher education is not required, difficulty of finding a spouse for a highly educated girl and the fear that girls' studying out of their home after a certain age might be assaulted by males or by associating with boys might sully the family's name. Yet, the survey also found that while the older generation males and females favoured only Quranic education for Muslim girls, many younger generation Muslims advocated both religious and secular education for them.*

A study on 'Socio-economic Status of Minorities – Factors for their Backwardness', by **CERPA (Centre for Research, Planning and Action)**, New Delhi, conducted in **2005-06** in five states i.e. Maharashtra, Punjab, Tamil Nadu, UP and West Bengal, spread over 15 cities selected on the basis of high concentration of religious minorities, covered households with income up to Rs.3,000/- p.m. A large proportion of minority population covered in this survey had either no formal education (35.68%) or primary education (24%). Graduates were only 5.82% and post-graduates 1.26%. The ratio of those with no formal education or primary education was as high as 71% among Muslim families that is much higher than the average of all communities covered under the survey. This indicates that direct efforts need to be made to enhance access to education for Muslim families.

Another study conducted on Educational Status of Minorities by **AROH Foundation**, New Delhi, (2005-06) found that many Muslim families do not enroll their children in regular schools. Children sent only to religious schools (Madrasas) lag behind their compatriots in the mainstream educational system. Students from Madrasas are unable to take advantage of upcoming employment opportunities as they mismatch qualifying educational requirements. The study suggests that a large proportion of Muslims do not attach much value to modern education. Intensified efforts need to be made to dialogue with Muslim community members, deal with their problems and dilemmas, and improve access to schooling, particularly for the females among the Muslim community.

### **Maktab and Madrasa Education**

Studies on Muslim education have looked at both Madrasa as well also 'modern' education. *It has been found that contrary to widely-held stereotypical notions, only a very small percentage of Muslim children of school-going age attend fulltime Madrasas which train religious specialists or 'Ulama'. Considerably more study in party-time Maktab or Mosque schools, while also receiving education in regular government or private schools as well.*

Maktab exist in almost every locality where Muslims live. They play a crucial role in transmitting the Islamic tradition to the younger generation. These institutions have the potential to be used to promote literacy and some degree of modern education, although this does not seem to have been taken advantage of in any noticeable way. **Jameel Ur-Rehman (1995)**, in his study notes the poor infrastructure facilities and the low pay that teachers receive, considerably less than the minimum statutory wage for unskilled workers. **According to the study, both boys and girls study together in the Maktab, but the latter only till the age of puberty.** It appears that the situation of Maktab education in other parts of India is similar to that described in this study. The author raises the possibility and stresses the desirability of certain 'modern' subjects as well as English being taught in the Maktab in order to help promote general education among Muslims. It appears that some

Muslim organizations have in recent years, made some moves in this direction, although these have not been documented.

As compared to Maktabas, Madrasas, institutions for higher Islamic learning, have received more scholarly attention. **Yoginder Sikand's** (2005) provides a fairly comprehensive account of Madrasas and their evolution in South Asia. It begins with a discussion on the notion of 'knowledge' in the Qur'an and the Hadith; traditions attributed to or associated with the Prophet Muhammad and then discusses the history of Madrasas in Pre-colonial India. It examines their changing sources of support and patronage, their curricula and teaching methods and their roles in training bureaucrats and religious specialists. It looks at crucial transformations in the Madrasas with the onset of colonial rule, leading to a narrowing down of the curriculum, the emergence of a sharp distinction between 'religious' and 'worldly' knowledge, a major shift in the social composition of their teachers and students as well as organizational changes inspired by the colonial model. It examines debates about reforms in the Madrasa curriculum, with different visions of normative Islamic education being offered by different sets of actors, including several who argued for the inclusion of some 'modern' subjects in the Madrasas for various purposes. In this context, the author also discusses the varying attitudes of ulama and different schools to British rule, the freedom, struggle and the question of Hind-Muslim relations.

**Washim Ahma (2005)** focuses on the Maktabas and Madrasas of eastern Uttar Pradesh. The author argues that the sort of education that these institutions today impart must be understood in their historical context, particularly in relation to the British divide-and-rule policy that resulted in the increasing marginalisation of large numbers of Muslims, who, in the aftermath of the 1857 Revolt, were seen by the British as potentially subversive and hence, were cruelly suppressed. This led to an increasing insularity among the ulama, who believed that Islam was under 'threat' from the British and so consciously eschewed any association with the forms of knowledge associated with the British. The author suggests that a radically reformed and modernized syllabus be tried out on an experimental basis in a small number of Madrasas willing to accept it, for which well-trained teachers should be employed. This experiment might enthruse other Madrasas to follow suit over time.

**Noor Mohammad (2003)** suggests that, while maintaining their religious character, the Maktabas can be transformed into non-formal education centers by employing additional teachers for subjects such as basic Hindi, English and Mathematics, so that after completing their basic education their students can go on to join government or private schools in the sixth grade. Likewise, he suggests similar curricular revision in the higher level Madrasas so that students who complete the 'aim course can be considered on par with those who have passed the higher secondary examination and so can be enabled to join regular schools if they want. He argues that after Madrasas are suitably modernized their certificates can be recognized by the state educational authorities. For this ambitious programme of modernization of Maktabas and Madrasas, the author suggests that funds could be procured from the state, the Maulana Azad Educational Foundation (which received funds from, the Union Government) and from Waqf Boards. In recent years, there has been much talk of the alleged link between Madrasas and 'terrorism'. Several books have appeared on the subject, each making its own claims on this very controversial subject. **Mukhtar Alam** (2004) deals with the issue at length while also providing interesting details about Madrasas located along the Indo-Nepal border. The author argues that, for from, working in league with 'anti-national' forces, these Madrasas are engaged in promoting education among impoverished Muslim families living in areas where the state has hardly made any provision for their education. According to the study says, in recent years some smaller Madrasas in the area have included modern subjects as well in the syllabus. The argument that all Madrasas are averse to reform, is, therefore, mistaken. Most of the students, many of their

parents and 52% of the teachers favour some degree of modernization of the Madrasa syllabus including the teaching of computers and English and vocational training.

*The Himalayan Region Study and Research Institute* made a Comparative Study of Religious Educational Institutions taking a sample of religious educational institutions from four states, namely Delhi, Haryana, Uttar Pradesh and Uttaranchal. Owing to various constraints, such as absence of a particular religious educational institution in some states, 25 random institutions were selected for making this study. In the sample *Seminaries*, there was a co-educational system in place whereas the *Madrasas, Gurukuls and Monasteries* did not have such a system. By and large they were all imparting education from the primary to the higher levels. The sample Seminaries and Monasteries were completely unaided by the state/central governments, and so were majority of the sample Madrasas. Majority of the sample Gurukuls were however partially aided by the state/centre.

The sample Madrasas used a mixed syllabus. They all concentrate on religious education. All sample Gurukuls were teaching both religious and modern subjects including languages and social sciences. The sample Monasteries were trying to include additional subjects such as English, Hindi and Mathematics etc in their curriculum, along with following a traditional Monastic education system. The sample seminaries have included inter-disciplinary subjects in their curriculum, although more importance has been given to theological subjects

The contribution of the sample religious educational institutions to a large extent, is only limited to providing religious knowledge and basic education. In other areas of education such as in the social sciences, science, economics, Indian history and Constitution their contribution was not up to the mark..

None of the sample monasteries have affiliation with any organization. As far as other sample religious educational institutions were concerned, majority of the sample Madrasas did not have any affiliation and majority of the sample Gurukuls and Seminaries were affiliated with different bodies/institutions. All of the Sample institutions were registered bodies. Foreign Contributions were the main sources of income of the sample Monasteries and Seminaries and donations were the main source of income of the Madrasas and Gurukuls. All of the samples had their own buildings, hostels and library facilities and other required infrastructure facilities such as classrooms and hostels with fans, toilets, electricity and drinking water etc. As for playgrounds, majority of the Madrasas were lacking in this respect.

Cent per cent of the sample students of the adrasas were muslim, Gurukuls were hindu, Monastries were Buddhists and seminaries were Christians respectively. The strength of the students ranged from 80 to 3434 in the sample Madrasas between 75 to 250 in Gurukuls, between 25 to 413 in Monasteries and between 64 to 214 in Seminaries. The drop out rates in the sample religious educational institutions ranges between 5% to 20%. *It was the highest in the madrasas and Gurukuls and lowest in the Seminaries and monastries.* All students in the Monasteries belonged to below poverty line (BPL) and in the Seminaries, all students belonged to above poverty line (APL).In the gurukuls and madrasas,the percentage of the students belonging to BPL category ranges between 69.1 to 90.2%.It was the highest in the Madrasas and the lowest at 69.1 % in the Gurukuls.

In the sample religious educational Institutions, all the sample students in the madrasas and Monasteries were males. In the gurukuls and seminaries, the percentage of girl students was 16.2 and 15.4% respectively. In the sample, all Monasteries had male teachers. The Gurukuls

had the highest percentage of Female teachers at 25% and the lowest at 6.5% in the Seminaries.

### Status of Education in Religious Educational Institutions

	<b>Madarsas</b>	<b>Gurukuls</b>	<b>Seminaries</b>	<b>Monasteries</b>
<b>Curriculum adopted (Subjects taught)</b>	Mixed syllabus Generally concentrate on religious education	Teach both religious and modern subjects	Inter disciplinary subjects giving more emphasis on theological subjects	Provide monastic education (Buddhist Philosophy) with additional subjects like English, Mathematics and Hindi.
<b>Level of Education</b>	Varies from matric level to post-graduation level	Varies from Senior Secondary level to post-graduation level	Post-graduation level	
<b>Affiliation of the educational institutions</b>	Majority not affiliated	Mostly affiliated	Mostly affiliated	Not affiliated
<b>Pattern of school</b>	Separate for boys and girls	Separate for boys and girls	Co-educational	Separate for boys and girls

*Source: Study report on the Role of Religious Educational Institutions in the Socio-Economic Development of the Community by Himalayan Region Study and Research Institute, 2007*

## B. Case Studies of Successful Experiments in Education of Muslim Girls:

While extensive analysis of available Census Data and other major official surveys like NSSO (various rounds), NFHS, MHRD SSA survey on out of school children indicated that over the last two decades reasonable progress is noted in the educational participation of Muslim Girls. It was however considered that in addition to State policies and programmes directed at advancing education on Muslim Girls, the role of NGOs in tackling the problem of low female educational participation amongst Muslims, can not be ignored. It was therefore, decided to identify some NGOs who have made substantive contribution in gaining acceptance of the Muslim community specially the religious leaders for encouraging girls to receive general secular education over and above the religious instructions received by them in traditional Muslim learning centers namely Madarsas and Maktabas.

A few case studies of some successful and innovative experiments in education of Muslim girls were undertaken to explore and identify workable planning an implementation strategies for promoting education of Muslim girls.

Due to time and resource constraints, it was decided to select some outstanding innovative experiments in areas of Muslim concentration pockets with very low levels of female education and in the states of Uttar Pradesh, Rajasthan, and Andhra Pradesh. It was decided to limit field visits to some selected NGOs with outstanding track record in education of out of school children and adolescent the four organizations selected for field visits interaction for:

- i) **Beti Foundation** with Head Quarter in Lucknow, Uttar Pradesh
- ii) **Doosra Dasak** with Head Quarter in Jaipur, Rajasthan

- iii) ***Mahita*** with Head Quarter in Hyderabad, Andhra Pradesh
- iv) ***SARD***, with Head Quarter in New Delhi

## BETI Foundation

*“When girls are linked to sources of sustained livelihoods, not only do they register an improvement in their levels of learning, but they are also seen to be much healthier as compared to their counterparts.”*

*The Better Education Through Innovation (BETI) Foundation* was established in March 2000 with a dream to bring smiles and give meaning to the lives of optimum girl children, especially those deprived and marginalized. The intervention began as a part of an AED (Academy For Educational Development, Washington) Project on Girls Education in 1999 with financial support from the global WID-TECH (Women in Development Technology) funds of USAID, U.S.A.. At the end of USAID funding, the Foundation moved from a Donor Supported Project to an independent entity in October 2001 towards working for self-reliance.



The BETI Foundation is registered as a Non-Profitable Public Trust under the Public Trust Act, 1972. BETI has full time professionals, responsible for assigned tasks and projects of the Foundation. They come from different streams i.e. Education, Management, Communication, Health, Nutrition, Finance, Training and Research etc.

BETI has bilateral ties with multiple organizations such as United Nations- UNDP; UNODC; TATA Trusts; Government; NRI – EKTA Foundation (London); Unniti Foundation ; Bilateral Donors- DFID, Action Aid; CARE India; SEWA- Lucknow

### **Mission**

“To contribute without political, religious or social prejudice or favour and with full recognition of the varied contributions made and planned by different stakeholders for improving the life of the girl child, including adolescent girls and young women.”

### **Vision**

The Foundation envisions having an ethos and sensitivity of an NGDO (Non- Government Development Organization) that is close to ground realities and communities- with which empathy can be nurtured and consistently strengthened in need responsive ways.

The Foundation continuously promotes-

- Processes of building systems which are effective, efficient, transparent and interdependent. The values of “commitment to beneficiary groups through responsible team action are pivotal.
- Interventions to increasingly reflect excellence and productivity in individual and corporate performance.

Majority of the students in the Alternative Learning Centres are Muslims. This is due to the fact that literacy rate in Muslim families is abysmally low. Since, the objective of **Vidyadaan** is to reach out to the out of school adolescent girls, most of the beneficiaries are from Muslim families. The Project area covers the loom belt; 50% girls come from the families of weavers and Muslims have monopoly over this occupation since medieval ages.

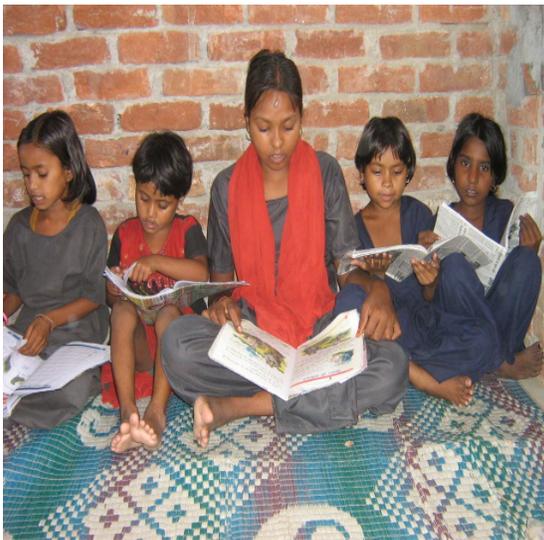
## Major Interventions

### 1. Promotion Of Education

BETI recognizes and is constantly internalising the large body of empirical evidence that demonstrates the strong benefits of girls' education on a wide range of areas including maternal and child health, positive demographic results, social stability and cohesiveness, gender equity, environmental benefits and economic growth. Girls' education and the promotion of qualitative changes in girls education are seen as critical for Sustainable and Rights based Development. Policies and actions that do not address gender disparities miss critical development opportunities. The demand for girls' education has been addressed by BETI with several initiatives in its field areas, focusing on Equity and Qualitative Education of adolescent girls so that they can achieve established Minimum Levels of Learning.

#### Alternative Learning Centres (ALC's)

Alternative Learning Centers have been set up for a specific group of 'out of school' and 'drop out' girls, in the selected areas. These Centres enrol girls between the age group of 11-14 years and 15-18 years and help them achieve academic competencies appropriate for their age in a short period of time. The girls are then mainstreamed into formal education system. A number of innovative activities are carried out to promote and facilitate educational empowerment and all round development of girls at the ALC's. *The learning strategies comprise of condensed/bridge courses/back to school camps, residential/non-residential camps and drop-in centers.*





- ◆ A woman with a minimum qualification of High School is selected from the community as an Instructor through a transparent process in which the Core Group Members and Block representatives participate along with representatives from BETI. The Instructors are trained and supported by the Foundation through an initial residential training and subsequent refresher trainings.
- ◆ The maximum number of girls at one ALC is 30-40. Girls are taught basics of Hindi, English, Social Science and Mathematics apart from Family Life Education, which comprises of information on health, hygiene, nutrition, sanitation, family planning, child rearing, HIV/AIDS, legal rights etc.
- ◆ The time span of one ALC is six months. Now however some changes are being made for different ages with differing educational targets.
- ◆ Parents-teacher meetings are organized every month, with the intention of motivating the community on the importance of girls' education as well as other issues related to their holistic development.
- ◆ Emphasis is laid on participatory processes. Local and national festivals are celebrated at the Centres with the full involvement of the community.
- ◆ A total of 108 ALCs have mainstreamed 2576 girls.

### **Other Education Initiatives under Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan**

BETI also conducts Non-residential Bridge Courses (NRBCs) and Residential Bridge Courses (RBCs) under its Education interventions. These are supported by the State Government under Sarva Shiksha Abhiyaan (SSA). Children between 11-14 years are educated in NRBCs for 6 months and are then mainstreamed. BETI has established 20 NRBCs in four districts, including 800 children. Adolescent girls between 11-14 years are educated in RBCs for 6 months and are then mainstreamed. BETI is running 2 RBCs in 2 districts, Shravasti and Balrampur, covering 120 girls. The Instructors for RBCs and NRBCs are selected by BETI from the community and are trained at respective DIET's.

## **2. Promotion of Livelihood**

**BETI believes that building an independent means of livelihood for women will not only raise the economic status of the family, but would also reduce the negatives of gender discrimination, early marriage and all kinds of gender inequities, abuse and violence. The Foundation is also broadening livelihood opportunities for the whole community through various needs responsive and relevant interventions.**

#### Vocational Training Centers (VTCs)

**Livelihood trainings are a part of the educational process in all programmes of BETI. Skill trainings for livelihood are combined at Vocational Learning Centres (VTCs) along with the transaction of Basic Education. After completion of six months of basic education, girls are trained in vocational skills, which would provide them viable livelihoods. BETI is running 46 VTCs under its current interventions, imparting training to 1380 girls.**



The girls at VTCs are trained in various skills, viz: **Cutting and stitching; Chikankari and other forms of embroidery i.e. Zardozi, Kaamdaani etc.;** Better Agro-forest based micro-enterprises, processing of condiments and making other semi processed products. In all of the above, at the initial stage itself, availability of raw material and marketing outlets are explored and ensured as also expanding market for the products in the vicinity. Trainings on production of wire brushes, making candles, pickles, baskets, coasters, hand-made fans, Crochet work and honey production are also being explored and introduced based on local need assessment.

*The VTC's run for 18 months. The whole period is divided into 3 segments, each comprising of 6 months. The curriculum of VTC's is also divided on the basis of the segments: -*

- **1<sup>st</sup> Term- 6 months: Basic Education**
- **2<sup>nd</sup> Term- 6 months: Vocational Training**
- **3<sup>rd</sup> Term- 6 months: Apprenticeship and Formation of SHGs. (Formation of SHG includes Thrift and Credit, Simple Accountancy, Leadership and Group Dynamics)**

VTCs not only train the girls in vocational skills but also groom their personality by building confidence and providing them opportunities for leadership development, group dynamics and socialization. The Chikan work produced at some of the VTC's is marketed by SEWA, Lucknow. The girls are paid regularly and this has a tremendous impact on their lives.

The past experiences show that in the absence of skill learning activities, girls and their families start losing interest in the first 6-months of the VTC's, possibly due to poverty and other compulsions, and this affects the continuity and retention of girls at the Centers. Therefore, the first two terms i.e. Basic Education and Vocational Training have been combined which has helped in maintaining the interest of girls and more importantly their parents, as well as the village the community in the activity of the Centers'.

*BETI has received accreditation from the National Institute of Open Schooling (NIOS), under which certificates can be given at A B C levels of prescribed curriculums A level certificate is provided for up to class 3 level, B level for up to class 5 level and C level for up to class 8 level. The certification along with the Basic Education Curriculum also covers Vocational Training. Thus, BETI has created new avenues for the VTC girls by guiding them to appear in National Institute of Open Schooling NIOS Exams and receiving a certificate, depending upon their acquired learning levels. A total of 46 VTCs are functioning covering 1380 girls out of whom 300 girls have applied for NIOS Exam.*

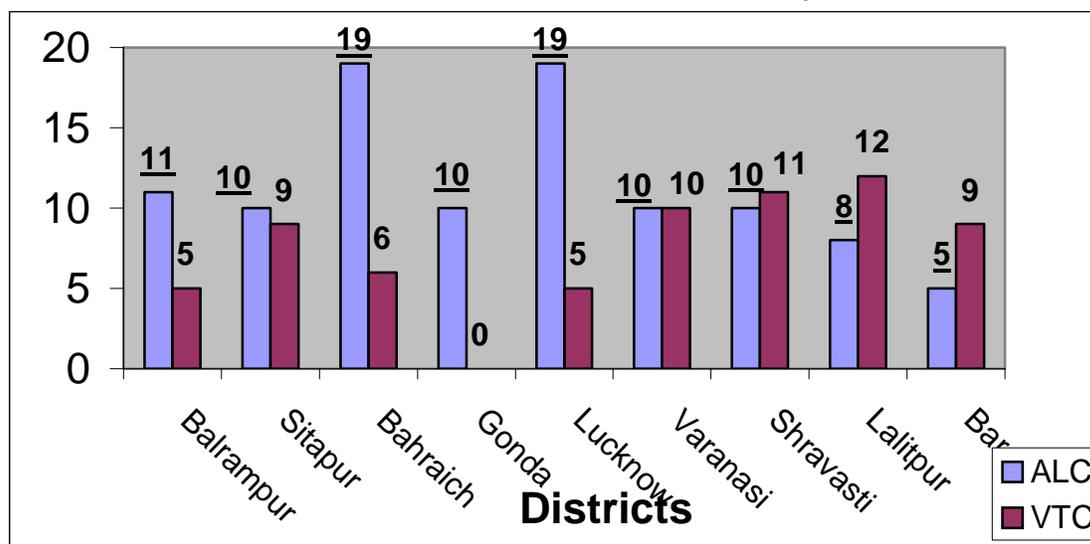
#### **Other Livelihood Initiatives**

- ◆ The Foundation mobilizes and trains young girls and women from different communities to form Self Help Groups (SHGs). The girls and women are linked with banks through SHGs.
- ◆ BETI also helps in linking adolescent girls and their families with various anti-poverty government programmes such as Swashakti, Swa-Adhar and Swarn Jayanti Rozgar Yojna and Kishori Vikaas Yojana.
- ◆ Under the 'Gaon Chalo Abhiyan' supported by TATA Tea Ltd., the Foundation motivates villagers to earn an additional livelihood through the marketing of tea in rural areas. Small shopkeepers, tea shops, physically challenged individuals, unemployed youth widows, retired persons and other disadvantaged people from the community are identified and provided TATA Tea at rates after which sale by them at the given MRP allows an attractive margin. . This supplementary income is vital for families and adds value to the quality of their lives. The Project demonstrates the TATA Groups commitment to CSR and giving back to Society.

### **Education & Livelihood Initiatives By BETI Foundation in U. P.**

**Total ALC=102 & VTC=67**

### 3. Promotion Of Health, Nutrition And Food Security



Poor access to health, nutrition and food leads to the incidence of repeated morbidities, increased mortality and indebtedness due to family expenditure on health. This at times leads to living at subsistence levels, which further compounds deprivation, of the area as well as its population. In rural areas especially, this vicious cycle of poverty, food insecurity, malnutrition and poor health reinforce each other. BETI has addressed these issues at grassroots and higher levels, especially focusing on adolescent girls and young women, through different strategies with a human rights-based approach.

***BETI works to promote the health of adolescent girls/young women based on shared responsibilities at primary levels. The Life Cycle approach is central to the Foundation’s strategic planning vis a vis health interventions.***

**Youth Resource Centers (Yrc’s):**The BETI Foundation has established Youth Resource Centers in the community with the purpose of educating youth on HIV/AIDS and Sexual and Reproductive Health Education (SRH). YRCs are functional in urban slums and also in selected colleges.



- ◆ Youth Resource Centers are established at a central place with accessibility.
- ◆ YRC's are managed by the local youth and separate time slots are allocated for girls and boys to access these Centers.
- ◆ Behavioural Change Communication (BCC) material comprising newspapers, newsletters, pamphlets, brochures, flip charts etc. are available at these Centers for the reference of young people.
- ◆ Adolescents and youth between 14-24 years are identified from the communities and colleges, to form a group of **Peer Educators**. This group is trained and oriented on **HIV/AIDS and Sexual and Reproductive Health (SRH)** by the BETI staff and other experts. SRH includes personal and environmental hygiene, sanitation, physical and emotional changes during puberty, menstrual cycle, pregnancy, family planning and contraceptive usage etc. The Peer Educators further reach their peers and disseminate the information in the whole community.
- ◆ Capacity building of Peer Educators is done through dissemination of IEC (Information Education and Communication) material on HIV/AIDS and SRH, training sessions/lectures, counseling, film shows and other activities.

- ◆ Meetings are also arranged with School Management, Parent-teachers Associations and Community members for their orientation on the subject.
- ◆ From time to time programmes are organized to enhance participation of youth. An interactive learning programme for HIV/AIDS 'SAWAN SAMAROH' was arranged on International Youth Day at A.P Sen Girls' College Lucknow, to increase the knowledge of girls on their reproductive and health rights, gender rights and HIV/AIDS

### Important Components of YRCs

**Family Life Ducation (Fle) And Hiv And Aids:** FLE is transacted at ALC's and VTC's to make girls aware on the above mentioned health issues. The Instructors and Supervisors are separately trained on FLE in order to counsel and support adolescent girls as and when needed. Classroom sessions on FLE are carried out in identified schools and colleges of urban and rural areas. Principals and teachers of these Institutions are also oriented on the subject to help their students.

Awareness on family life is also spread at the health camps set up at Gram Panchayats and Block levels in the intervention areas. Community orientation on HIV/AIDS and FLE is done through trainings, participatory activities, dissemination of IEC material and arranging events on occasions like World AIDS Day.

### Other Health Initiatives

- ◆ Health camps are set up from time to time at Gram Panchayat and Block levels. Rigorous community mobilization is undertaken for the purpose through activities like street plays, puppet shows, and film projections.
- ◆ Awareness on availability and accessibility of health services is created in the community.
- ◆ Community members are also encouraged and informed about their rights to avail the health opportunities provided through government schemes.
- ◆ Linkages with government departments have been established for free distribution of IFA tablets anywhere in poor communities with percentages varying from 75% to as high as 91% of tested adolescents, as anemia is a major challenge.

### Nutrition And Food Security

BETI recognizes the malnutrition and poverty consequences of the poorest of the poor. These differences, however get much more enhanced when gender inequities in access to food become a prime factor. The interventions and interests of BETI therefore include malnutrition and food insecurity, especially focusing on women and adolescent girls.

Girls at ALCs and VTCs are given information on health and nutrition, which are important and significant for Reproductive Child Health. Through Community Resource Centres (CRC's) and other measures BETI reaches to the community and builds their understandings on health and nutrition. Particularly, information on female health including reproductive health care, safe motherhood and positive new born care. The Foundation also helps communities in utilizing various government schemes and essential supplies available through the Public Distribution System, directly and through Panchayats for the weakest and most deserving individuals. Amongst these are subsidized food supplies and other essential goods, widow pensions, appliances for the physically challenged, anti-poverty programmes such as NREG, SJRY etc. Besides broad nutrition and health issues, gender specific factors regarding the same are also researched and looked into by BETI. The individual status of women and girls within the family, the percentage of quality and quantity of food shared by them and traditional norms regarding the same are some of the other key factors addressed.



#### 4. Promoting Protection For Women And Adolescent Girls

The BETI Foundation is doing tremendous work to fight the menace of **trafficking** on Indo-Nepal Border. BETI focuses on prevention through **Education and Livelihood Generation**. However, it also recognizes the need to strengthen criminal justice responses to trafficking through legislative reform, awareness raising and training of people in rescue and rehabilitation. Other activities include coordination and networking at planning and policy levels. The efforts of BETI in this direction are :

**Helplines** : BETI has initiated 2 Helplines in collaboration with the Police Department to strengthen Parivar Paramarsh Kendras (PPKs). PPKs are initiated by The Police Department to resolve family disputes before they are brought under the purview of either Criminal Procedures or other judicial processes.

The Helplines of the Foundation are functional in Bahraich, Balrampur and Shravasti districts but people belonging to other nearby areas also use the Helpline. Besides being major work areas of BETI, these districts are very poor and extremely prone to human trafficking along the long International border with Nepal. Hence the idea of establishing active Help lines in these district was conceived and grounded.

#### Other Protection Initiatives For Adolescent Girls And Women:

**Campaigns:** Campaigns for preventing trafficking are organized in coordination with other organizations. These campaigns are carried out at different places in the form of street plays, public debates, signature campaigns, film shows, competitions and other activities. Within the strategic framework of interventions, key issues are addressed through capacity development at different levels.

**Legal Literacy:** As a part of regular curriculum at the VTC's, a special component on Legal Literacy has been incorporated to educate girls on their rights. The main provisions covered

during the Instructors Training pertaining to Legal Literacy includes:

- Right to Live
- Right to Equal Status
- Right to Freedom
- Protection of Fundamental Rights
- Legal Provisions for the Development of Women in the Indian Context
- Womens Human Rights
- Right to Equal Wages
- Right to Property
- Right against Sexual Exploitation
- Immoral Trafficking (Prevention) Act
- Prevention of Child Marriages Act
- Right to live Alone
- Right to Empowerment
- Right to Education
- Dowry (Prohibition) Act
- Rights of HIV Positive Persons

**Networking:** Advocacy on trafficking is done through networking, convergence and other ways at various levels. Regular dialogue is maintained with stakeholders as an effective measure to bring about social change. These interactions include:

- Networking with the District Administration
- Interactions with Police
- Consultation with State Level Functionaries
- Consultation with families and communities.
- Consultation with other NGOs and CBOs
- Consultation with Panchayats
- Consultation with the Media

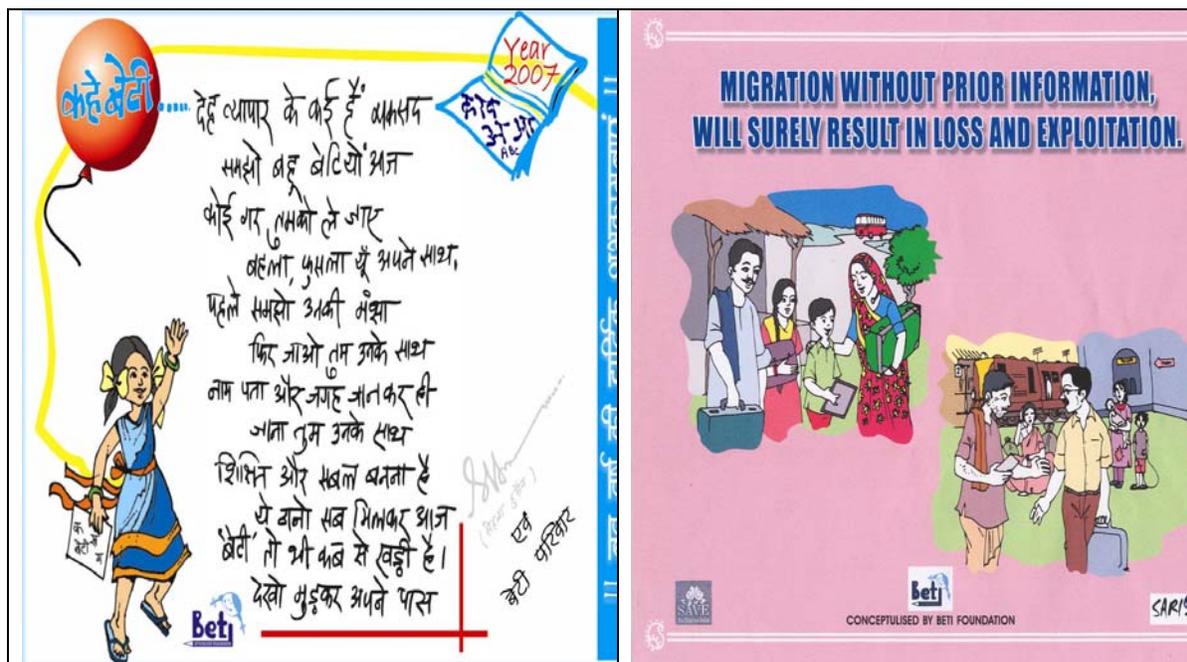
**Advocacy:** To combat trafficking is the other significant effort made by the Foundation. These include: -

- Advocacy at Annual Fair of Syed Salar Masood Ghazi, Bahraich
- Advocacy at Devi Patan Fair, Balrampur
- Mass Mobilization Campaign jointly organized under the leadership of the Sashastra Seema Bal (SSB)---- a wing of the Border Security Force along the Indo- Nepal border.
- Screening of films on Thematic Issues
- Street plays for preventing trafficking

**Research:** To understand various factors related with trafficking and to build strategies to combat it. BETI has conducted both primary and secondary research which includes -

- a. Research on Migration Patterns in Uttar Pradesh;
- b. Research on the Role of Women in Islam;
- c. Research on Police Records.
- d. PLA Research under TAHA.
- e. Action Research Report on trafficking and HIV/AIDS under RCPLA

**IEC MATERIAL:** The Foundation has prepared a Tool Kit on **Safe Migration** for awareness generation of communities. The Kit includes



- Posters to be put up at different locations
- Street Plays Scripts for mobilizing communities.
- Brochures for Service Providers in destination areas

## 5. Promoting Participation

A democracy works when all citizens including the most marginalized, have the capability to ask questions, seek accountability from the state and participate in the process of governance. Participation in any process presupposes the existence of knowledge about the process itself, its operation and its inputs as well as outcomes. BETI promotes the **participation of people** at grassroots level, works with local CBO's and other organizations including corporates to influence Institutions, policies and processes for equitable and Sustainable Development. The Foundation works to enhance capacity for participatory processes and social accountability and assess constraints faced by CSOs, which retard the impact of their interventions. For promoting participation, BETI focuses on local priorities around which thematic modules are evolved and transacted.

### Community Resource Centers (CRCs)

Libraries and CRCs are established by BETI for the community, to access information and enhance their knowledge about matters, which are interesting and relevant. This makes it possible to make informed choices about accessing entitlements. The CRC's are rapidly evolving into Community Development hubs. These Centers are set up at a centrally located place, identified and selected by the community. The first Community Library was supported by the Unniti Foundation, which now supports additional units. With appropriate convergence with other community based interventions these have now evolved into successful models.

CRCs are run with the support of a Motivator and volunteers. The Motivator is provided a bicycle for the collection and dissemination of books/ material in neighbouring localities. CRCs possess

books and material on Education, Panchayats, Agriculture, Gender, Health, Value Education, General Knowledge, Environment, Autobiographies, Hindi, English and Urdu etc. Apart from serving as a community library, the Centres are a place for policy advocacy, positive socialization and capacity building of people. Govt. and private bodies, other libraries and individuals are being linked with CRCs for retrieving more material for the usage of readers. Various trainings are also conducted at the Centres. External experts are invited to the CRCs to orient the community on issues such as flood and disaster management, gender concerns, child rearing and child health, special concerns of adolescence, legal literacy etc. Local, national and international events are celebrated at the CRCs, encouraging participation from all sections of the community.

### Core Groups

To increase the participation of people from grassroots and also to maintain social accountability of it's efforts, BETI has constituted Core Groups in its work areas. These Groups work as decentralized units of the Foundation for advocacy, information dissemination and other tasks at gram panchayat level.



The Core Group is constituted of 15-25 members. It comprises panchayat representatives, ICDS Aanganwadi workers, ANMs, ASHAs, social workers of local CBOs, minority members, teachers, youth, respected members of the Community and religious leaders etc. Orientation workshops and need-based trainings are organized for proper functioning of Core Groups. Besides helping the community, the Core Groups also assist The Foundation in understanding the community and its requirements and planning strategies accordingly. This is especially relevant for micro planning at village level for local issues to be included in block and district annual plans. This results in Community Driven which ultimately is the answer for true democratic development which is equitable and just..

### **Self Managed Groups (SMGs)**

There are certain local problems at village level that demand local solutions for better understanding and management. With this in mind the Foundation has facilitated the formation of 33 SMGs of adolescent girls/young women at village level. These SMGs which have begun to practice thrift and credit would later evolve into formal SHG's and be linked to Microfinance for establishing small entrepreneurial interventions. ***BETI builds the capacity of SMGs on various aspects as livelihood options at local level, trafficking prevention, government schemes for rural areas, scientific agriculture and infrastructure development etc.*** From time to time the Foundation helps the SMGs by providing information on different issues and helping them to meet block and district level offices.

### **Strengthening Local Self-Governance**

Panchayati Raj Institutions – the grassroots units of self-government – have been proclaimed as the vehicles of socio-economic transformation in rural India. Effective and meaningful functioning of these bodies would depend on active involvement, contribution and participation of its citizens both male and female. Gram Sabhas have been assigned important responsibilities to make it a vibrant forum of self-governance. The Foundation strengthens the local self-governance through various initiatives.

BETI helps in the capacity development of Gram Sabhas and Panchayats Committees in its intervention areas. Women panchayat members are trained by The Foundation to increase real participation of women in panchayat activities and panchayat elections. Gram Sabhas and panchayats are motivated to utilize the power assigned to them by the Constitution and take a collective measure to reduce rural vulnerability. Their responsibility and accountability is communicated to them. Besides the panch members, the Foundation also provides supportive monitoring to optimally strengthen respective local governance. The communities are made aware of the duties of gram panchayat and gram sabhas and the mandatory meetings they are supposed to hold during the year.

### **Other Participation Promotion Initiatives**

- SHGs are also a mechanism of encouraging participation of rural women and adolescent girls in income generation.
- To enhance participation of women in development activities The Foundation works on promoting group dynamics and leadership skills of adolescent girls and women.
- All the programmes of BETI are community centered. Working on a needs-responsive approach, BETI recognizes the requirement of the community, jointly evolves strategies, motivates local participation for maintaining accountability and better results and encourages the community to evaluate its status accordingly.

## **6. Advocacy**

BETI believes that change for the better will not happen without advocacy. Advocacy represents the strategies devised, actions taken and solutions proposed to influence decision-making at the local, block, district, state and higher levels to creating democratization of democracy through various mechanisms. These mechanisms include research findings, observations during capacity development activities attitudinal and behavioral change, SWOT analysis etc to key issues for advocacy at every level-from village to block, district and state. Some major concerns are brought to the attention of the National Advisory Council, of which the Executive Director is a member.

**Community Mobilisation:** For first tier advocacy BETI has formed Core Groups and Self-Managed Groups in intervention areas. These groups comprise of different stakeholders from the community in order to facilitate participatory approaches to advocacy. In order to increase the visibility and impact of work, influence policymakers and generate public opinion, the community is mobilized on different issues through various tools in which social mobilization and sensitization of the media (electronic, print, folk etc) are very relevant. Group meetings and interactive discussions are also held.

**Campaigns:** In cooperation with partners, other non-government and voluntary organizations and communities, BETI implements campaigns to advance individual, public and human rights. BETI also supports partner organizations for policy and legislative change at the national level. For instance- a mass publicity campaign was organized at the Sashastra Seema Bal, (SSB) Fair. SSB has been appreciative of the efforts of BETI and has supported its initiatives at all levels.

## 7. A Strong Research Base

BETI has used different research methods in order to describe, explore and understand social conditions and build strategies for intervention and also to develop an environment that is conducive for empowering adolescent girls. For the purpose, both quantitative and qualitative methods of research are used. A Baseline Survey is carried out in the beginning of every intervention, for better understanding of the area, people and their aspects of life. A survey was conducted in village Hamirapur of Malihabad block of Lucknow district to understand the socio-economic status of the area and the status of women, adolescents in a predominantly Muslim minority area. The research also sought to suggest measures for evolving micro action plan for empowering adolescent girls and promoting livelihoods in a more open environment where social bonds were widened. In some programme areas a Micro Study was done on profiling the elected representatives of panchayats specifically women representatives. A Private School Study was conducted and a study report was prepared to understand the psyche of rural parents towards education per se Participatory Learning And Action (PLA) exercise is carried out at village level in various districts to understand the socio-economic profile, its subtle nuances etc. in order that with conscientisation and motivation people could be helped to help themselves as per their requirements.

**Research On Specific Issues:** Trafficking; Status Of Women In Islamic Society; Crime Against Women.

## 8. Capacity Building

For the best and maximum contribution of every available resource in the process of development, the BETI Foundation develops human skills and societal systems within the communities, PRIs, other institutions and CBOs and relevant stakeholders. The capacity building process of BETI also includes orientation of institutional, financial, political and other groups. Several Capacity Building Workshops, Trainings of Trainers, Orientation Programmes, Refresher Trainings and Problem Solving Sessions are conducted from time to time to upgrade human resource. Internal and external experts facilitate these programs as resource persons.

<b>BETI'S Statistical Scorecard</b>		
1	No. of ALC's in current projects	102
	No. of VTC's in current projects	67
	No. of Help Lines in current projects (Functional & Proposed)	4
2	No of Girls beneficiaries in current projects	5625
	No. of Peer Educators in CHAYAN projects	280
	No. of CRC users annually in all projects (Approx.	5600
3	No. of girls mainstreamed till date by BETI	2514
	No. of Girls appearing for NIOS in 2006-07	408
4	No. of Core Groups formed in all projects (Core groups trained in approx. 51 batches)	145
	No. of Core Groups Members	2302
5	No. of BLCC + DLCC Groups in all projects formed/strengthened (11+8)	19
6	No. of SHG's formed in 2006-07	48

## The Plans Ahead....

### Education....

- ◆ Decrease drop-out rate by mainstreaming more girls in the primary level through a recognized NIOS certificate.
- ◆ Supporting mainstreamed girls, to stay in school and not drop out.
- ◆ Advocate innovative methods to reach out to girl students especially of Junior –High school (Classes VI-VIII)
- ◆ Nurturing close partnerships with Government schools and working closely with Government run Primary and Junior Level Schools.
- ◆ Promoting Mother–Teacher association for better sustainability and enhanced outcomes.

### Vocational Skills and Income Generating Activities....

- ◆ Integrating more agro-based vocations in the vocational curriculum.
- ◆ Linkages are being established for technical support from Khadi Gram Udyog, Krishi Universities & Krishi Vigyan Kendra`s in this regard.
- ◆ Development of Modules for Vocational Training.

### Organizational Development....

- ◆ To diversify to newer and need based areas related to Girl Child/Young Women like Domestic Violence, Child labour, livelihood promotion etc.
- ◆ Capacity Development
- ◆ Support partnerships and networking with like minded organizations to promote effective functioning and best practices.
- ◆ Integrating more vocations in the vocational curriculum.
- ◆ Website update is in progress.

*“Together we have achieved as we move forward to increasingly actualise our Mission into reality. Dreams with invincible commitment indeed are the seeds of change, which spread in ever widening circles.” Saheba Hussain*

## Overview of Projects

### BETI Project Summary 2006-07

S.No.	Project Name	Focus Area	Period (Duration)	Funding Agency
1	Samajh	Education	2002-2006 (4 years)	Sir Ratan Tata Trust (SRTT)
2	RBC & NRBNC	Education	Oct-2006 Mar 2007 (6 months)	State Sarva Siksha Abhiyan
3	Chayan	Community Prevention HIV/AIDS	Dec 2003- Dec-2006 (3 years)	CARE, India
4	PACS	Community Empowerment	2005-06 (3 years)	Development Alternatives (DFID)
5	Raksha -TAHA	Trafficking and HIV/AIDS	June-2006 - mar-2007 (10 months)	UNDP Trafficking & HIV/AIDS (TAHA) project
6	Tata Tea	Rural Livelihood	June 2006 ongoing	Tata Tea Pvt Ltd,
7	Livelihood Interventions	Livelihood	June 2006 ongoing	Beti Foundation
8	Tijori	Community Development	2004 till date	Unnati Foundation

9	RCPLA	Community Development	June' 06 - Mar'; 07	UNDP
10	Core Grant - Global Fund	Programme Support	Aug, 05 - Aug-06 (1 Year)	Global Fund for Women

## 1. Reaching the Poor: Rural Income Generation Project [Tata Tea Project]

### Aim & Objective

- ◆ To enable rural households earn **additional income** by distributing Tata Tea produced by Tata Tea Pvt. Ltd. with BETI Foundation in an intermediary role.
- ◆ To establish **vibrant linkages** between technical and financial resources on one hand and market demands on the other.

**Coverage** : 1980 Grampanchayats spread in 8 Districts of Uttar Pradesh

**Target Group** : Differently-abled persons, Persons belonging to SC/Stand minority groups, widow, unemployed, feriwallas, family in need

**Monitoring:** : *Daily Sales Report, Daily Visit Report (beet plan), Weekly Summary, Monthly Summary, Bill Book Etc.*

### Key Achievements

- i. Successful example of Private-Non Profit Sector Partnership.
- ii. Beneficiaries outreach: 1980
- iii. Helped to generate *Additional Income* between Rs. 750-1000 per month approx. by each beneficiary by dedicating just 2-3 hours /day for this task..
- iv. **Capabilities and services are continually being developed in terms of technical /advisory assistance from Tata Tea & BETI as well as improving economic opportunities.**

### Future Plan

- ◆ To incrementally increase the outreach within blocks in the Tehsils.
- ◆ ***Developing Social cohesion though Social capital*** –promoting & sustaining existing networks and social relations at the local level as well as convergence of appropriate resources by involving more SHG`s , Cooperatives and Federations and by tying up with relevant marketing hubs in rural areas.

## 2. RAKSHA-TAHA Project

The project specially focuses on the prevention of *trafficking in girls and women*. It addresses action mechanisms within the gender exploitative nexus and ways to contain them in the source and the destination areas through concerted activities. **Coverage: 4171 Beneficiaries in 60 Gram Panchayats/Urban Wards spread in 6 Districts of Uttar Pradesh**

### Key Activities

- ◆ **PLA:**TOT on PLA , PLA Exercises, PLA Report Compiled, PLA knowledge sharing workshops (in-house)
- ◆ **Advocacy:** Thematic monthly campaign on issues like - Education, Migration, HIV/AIDS , Trafficking , Child Marriages, awareness camp and workshop in Ardh Kumbh, mass mobilization on Children's Day & World AIDS Day &
- ◆ **Core Groups:** Formation of core Groups, Orientation trainings, Monthly meetings, Core Group empowered as Surveillance Committees/Pressure Groups

- ◆ Establishment of Community Resource Centre
- ◆ Strengthening & formation of DLCC & BLCC .
- ◆ Strengthening of existing Help lines at Bahraich, Shravasti and Balrampur.
- ◆ ALC Establishment Selection & training of female instructors, place identification for ALC, its establishment and smooth running.
- ◆ Monitoring : Progress Report, Technical staff Visits.
- ◆ Networking with concerned departments, CSO`s & media.

### Key Achievements

- i. Establishment and smooth running of 60 ALC in 6 Districts.
- ii. ***Efforts For Creating Enabling Community environment fostering rapid disposal of matters related to sexual abuse and gender discrimination***
- iii. To promote effective and sustainable sensitisation of the community as well as to create ripple effect in the community through the formation of 60 Local Surveillance Committees.
- iv. Rigorous attempts are being made to seek attention of sex workers and counselling them to enrol their daughters at ALCs.
- v. Multi-level decentralized efforts for Capacity Development of the stakeholders and programme functionaries.
- vi. Core groups are successfully acting as pressure groups that are at present as will in future; address the problem of trafficking in the region, by pressurizing BLCC & DLCC, to act upon the traffickers and those involved in the nexus.
- vii. Sustainable networking has been established with SSB and Police at local and district level for awareness generation and combating various abuses against girls and women. Simultaneously, Parivar Paramarsh Kendra and Helplines have been strengthened .
- viii. The project has set an excellent example of Networking with –Nehru Yuva Kendra Sangathan in mass mobilization activities
- ix. –Various government and non government departments through thematic camps
- x. –UPNP+ to involved Sex workers and HIV positive survivors for counseling and mass mobilization□□

### 3. SAMAJH Project

**Specific Aims & Objective:** Reduce Gender gap in Selection, Retention & Learning.

**Coverage:** 5 Gram Panchayats in Gaisari Block (Balrampur District)& Jamunaha Block (Shravasti District) each of Uttar Pradesh

#### ***Beneficiaries Coverage :***

- i. Direct Beneficiaries : 460 (Girls :300)
- ii. *Indirect Beneficiaries: 11800*

#### Key Activities - SAMAJH

- i. Mainstreamed a total of 2356 girls through this project between 2003-06.
- ii. Advocacy: Mass mobilization on

<u>Event Name</u>	<u># participants</u>	<u>Activities</u>
Children's Day	500	Slogans, games, poem competition, debate

World AIDS Day	200	Signature campaign, Street Plays
International Rural Women's day	10,000	Rallies, slogans, poster exhibition, poems, pamphlets distribution
International Women's Day	500	Debate, poems & songs

- iii. **Core Groups** : Formation of 10 core Groups, Orientation trainings, Monthly Meetings.
- iv. **Skill Training** : received on stitching.
- v. **SHG Formation** : Girls/young women mobilized to form 10 SHG`s.
- vi. **Networking** with concerned departments, CSO`s & media.

### **Impact of the Project On Girls & Instructors**

#### ***Educational and Social Level Changes***

- **Learning Level** : All 300 girls attained the skill of Level A, class 3. Some girls have acquired the capacity of Level B- class 5 and Level C- class 8 also 7 will appear in NIOS exam in 2007. A total of 2356 girls were mainstreamed through this project between 2003-2007.
- **Professional Skill:** All 300 girls have received training in sewing for a period of 3 months by a skilled trainer.
- **Improved social status of women/girls:** Certain Examples include: increased participation of beneficiaries in SSB camps and melas, positive social status of instructors and promotion towards decision making and advisory role in the community, 12 instructors out of 30 instructors are working efficiently as Aanganwadi workers after project completion.\*\*\*

#### **Impact of the Project On Girl Personality Changes**

- Project provided an opportunity for social interaction, where they can interact with their friends, share their knowledge and openly talk to them.
- **Development of feeling of self-identity and self esteem; have an increased level of curiosity, increased desire to study further & have career goals.**
- Beneficiaries well informed on self-health, hygiene, reproductive health, vaccination, nutrition, human trafficking, gender discrimination and domestic violence etc.
- The girls have become confident and extrovert and are able to initiate dialogues during discussions.
- Acquired Basic Literary Skills& Professional skills.

#### **Impact of the Project On the Community**

- Enhanced Access
- Concurrent Monitoring;
- Participating in Core Group Meetings;
- Participative Analysis

### **4. Resource Centre on Participatory Learning and Action [RCPLA Project]**

**Specific Aim & Objective:**

**To reduce the vulnerability of community to trafficking and HIV/AIDS Through developing/ nurturing Self Managed Groups.**

**Coverage** : 7 villages of Bahraich district in Uttar Pradesh

**Beneficiaries** : 12707

**PLA Tools Used**: Social Map; Services & Opportunity Mapping; Social capital; Poverty analysis; Causal Loop Diagram; Flow Diagram; Lifeline

### **Key Activities RCPLA Project**

- i. **PLA** : TOT on PLA , PLA Exercises, PLA Report compiled
- ii. **Self Managed Groups (SMG)** : Formation of 33 Groups, Orientation training, monthly meetings for problem identification and discussion.
- iii. **Advocacy**: Poetry/songs, awareness, Community meetings on World AIDS Day, International Rural Women's Day.
- iv. **Establishment of Community Resource Center** in Mihinpurva and Nawabgunj Blocks.
- v. **Networking** with concerned departments block & district level functionaries, CSO`s etc.
- vi. **Toolkits** prepared: Participatory tool kit and Training manual; Tool kit on assessment and identification of vulnerability to Trafficking.

### **vements & Future Plans RCPLA Project**

- i. Set up an excellent example of Community ownership and partnership by involving the SMG`s to undertake following problems:
  - Infrastructure bottlenecks ex. Unavailability of road/kharanja, safe drinking water
  - Social problems: ex. Child marriage, absenteeism of teachers, Primary teacher appointed with efforts of SMG.
- ii. Quality **Information generated** on trafficking & sex workers.
- iii. Efforts are ongoing to link the villagers with technical knowledge on advanced agriculture techniques from Krishi Vigyan Kendra`s. Khadi Gramudyog has assured to give loans & technical support for livelihood to the villagers.

## **5. Kaamyab Project**

**Specific Aim & Objective:** To develop the network and capacities of beneficiaries (age 6-9, 10-14 & 15-21 years) and the community as a whole so that the beneficiaries are able to function with increasing self-reliance for their own development as well as for the development of their communities.

**Coverage:** Hamirpur Gram Panchayat in Barabanki District **Beneficiaries Coverage:**

**Direct Beneficiaries: 378**

**Indirect Beneficiaries: 7000**

## Key Activities, Achievements & Future Plans Kamyab Project

### Key activities

- i. Baseline Survey & PLA
- ii. Community Mobilization
- iii. Orientation & Refresher trainings of Instructors.
- iv. Beneficiaries Update:

No. Girls Enrolled in 8 ALC+VTC : 160+160=320

No. Beneficiaries Mainstreamed : 56

No. Beneficiaries appearing for NIOS : 40

No. SHGs Formed : 12  
(@15 members/SHG)

### Achievements & Future Plans

- ◆ To provide functional literacy & vocational skills to 160 more beneficiaries.
- ◆ To mainstream more number of girls & to provide follow-up support.
- ◆ Core Groups in certain project areas mobilized resources for the construction of pathways and household toilets. Served as mobilization agents for the donation of 3000 sq. feet of land to construct Hospitals.
- ◆ Refresher Training of core groups.

## 6. Residential Bridge Course & Non-residential Bridge Course (RBCsNRBCs)

### RBC Overview

**Coverage:** District Balrampur (Block Shivpura); District Shravasti (Block Jamnaha)

**Beneficiaries Coverage:** Direct: Girls & Boys (120)+ Instructors (4); Indirect beneficiaries: 2000

### NRBC Overview

**Coverage:** District Lucknow (Block Mohanlalgunj, Hazratgunj, Mal; District Barabanki (Block Banki); District Shravasti (Block Jamnaha); District Bahraich (Block Mihipurwa)

**Beneficiaries Coverage:** Girls & Boys: 800+40 Instructors; Indirect beneficiaries: 15000

**Key Activities & Achievements till date:**

- i. Community Mobilization
- ii. Selection of instructors
- iii. Establishment and running of RBC & NRBC.
- iv. *Sensitising government frontline workers, family members and common people for an enabling environment.*

**Achievements till date & Future plans**

- i. Lessons learnt & Experience gained for running RBC courses.
- ii. Planning to establish networking with Kasturba Gandhi Vidyalaya (SSA sponsored scheme), which works specifically for RBC.

**7. TIJORI Project**

**Coverage** : One Block each of Balrampur, Sitapur & Lucknow

**Beneficiaries Coverage** : 17000

**Activities Update:**

- No. of Users in 3 CRCs in 2006-2007-1284;
- No. of literary material in 3 CRCs combined-1584;
- No. of community members meetings conducted each year in 3 CRCs-36

**8. CHAYAN Project**

**Coverage** : 3 Slums in Alamnagar Block and 1 Slum in Aliganj Block of Lucknow.

**Beneficiaries Coverage** : **280 peer Educators.**

**Activities** : 1. Peer Educator Trainings.

2. Fortnightly meetings.

3. Advocacy & participation in public events.

## 9. BHAVISHYA PACS Project

### *Specific Aim & Objective:*

The Project aims to generate an environment conducive for positively impacting incremental socio-economic development with reduction in the incidence of poverty.

**Coverage** : One Block each of Bahraich , Shravasti, Lalitpur District

**Beneficiaries Coverage** : 15796 ( Indirect Beneficiaries: 13040)

## MAHITA Experience

Mahita is a Sanskrit term meaning rejuvenation or regeneration. Mahita is a non-government development society working in the critical areas of facilitating child rights in particular and human dignity in general. Mahita is a group of social scientists from varied disciplines committed to the cause of development of the deprived sections through interventions in the fields of education, health, promotion of Child Rights and Empowerment of Women. ***The prime focus is on promoting education amongst girl children who are engaged as child labour, developing livelihood skills for adolescent girls and in empowering women in enhancing their social status and decision making.***

### Vision and Mission

Mahita has a strong belief that education is not mere literacy but that which wakens the mind and brings conscientisation to the individual and the community and that

- ◆ Every child has the right to live its childhood to its fullest, enjoying all opportunities for growth and development.
- ◆ Every parent has the bounden duty to provide opportunities and the environment to children to attain their complete potential; and that
- ◆ The State should endeavor to create child friendly policy framework and structures for its effective implementation.

**It is the firm belief of Mahita that all programs to be successful need to be self-sustaining and independent. Therefore, only people can help themselves though community participation with the NGO merely playing the role of a facilitator. Mahita in particular facilitates a process of self-help with decreased dependence on NGOs.**

### Geographical area and coverage

**Mahita is working in 82 Urban Slums of Hyderabad and Ranga Reddy Districts of Andhra Pradesh. The target area consists predominantly of the Muslim population.**

### Socio-economic Features

**The slums of Hyderabad reflect abject poverty with none or minimum basic facilities. Apart from the local urban poor, the slum population consists of poor rural migrants from the various districts of Andhra Pradesh including the bordering states like Karnataka, Madhya Pradesh and Maharashtra. As the family income is below subsistence, children are forced into employment for their survival. Parents perceive lack of relevance of today's education system to the livelihood. Most children are encouraged to work with traders and other service sectors, as parents believe they would be gaining necessary skills at a very young age. The trades of these people fall under the informal sector and are heavily dependant on the middlemen who pay pittance for the work. On an average a family earns hardly a few hundred rupees a month that is barely enough for their survival. In spite of the so called opportunities as urban society can offer the situation of the migrants is as grim as it was in their native places if not worse. Rising population, increase in the density of the population, difficulty in accessing basic amenities, medicare, coupled with low paid occupations of the men and home based**

work a meager wages for the women have continued to plague the lives of the people in the slums of the Old city.

All this has a cumulative effect on the rights of the child. While the male children work as apprentices in various mechanical and technical trades including the service sectors, the girl

children are involved in the home cottage industry as daily wage earners. The girls in the project area mostly work in informal and un-organized sectors, as they can be located within their own house. The different trades where girl children work are incense stick making, bangle making, footwear making, ornament making, zarda packing, plastic work, embroidery, vermicelli packing, candy & chocolate wrapping, betel nut cracking envelope making, scrap collection etc.

There is resistance to issues related to reproductive health and apprehensions about the medium of education. The Urdu speaking community has the least access to elementary education. Parents expressed a desire that their children to be taught in Urdu. The girls of the community are being denied the right to education because of the lack of physical and social access to elementary education. The problem is compounded because of the constraints posed by the community's attitude to girl's education, especially the post-puberty girls. Consequently, the incidence of working children is very high. *Almost all the girl children of the post-puberty age group work along with their mother in the home based occupations such as toffee-wrapping, safety-pin making, incense stick making and the like.*

Though middlemen contract work to women, it is a girl child who assists here mother in her work. The girls child also has to take care of household responsibilities when mother is either marketing or seeking work with middlemen. As the work is not directly contracted to children it becomes difficult to bring these children under Child labour act. Consequently enforcement becomes difficult. The girl children are also bound by local traditions and norms. They have a low status and due to Purdah system mobility is severely restricted. Due to cultural and religious constraints, girls face severe restrictions on their mobility. As soon as they reach puberty they are confined to the four walls of the house. *Many girls are trafficked to Gulf countries under guise of marriages to sheiks. Some boys are also trafficked as camel jockeys to these countries. Due to vested interest groups and mafia operation violence against children is high.*

There are no separate primary schools for girl children. The few that are available are not within their reach either because of distance, limited number of seats, low income of the family, etc. In any case, the girl child is to be given off in marriage and education is seen as an unwanted investment. The health of the girl child is effected by the long hours of work that she does both in the income generation of the family and household chores. Very often she is not able to share her health problems and suffers silently. The girls suffer from, eyesight problems, body pains, allergy, pollution, anemia, low blood pressure, skin diseases, gynecological and various other problem.

High illiteracy and dropout rates are reflective of the inadequacy of the educational system. Dropout rates are high because children are forced to work in order to support their families. Another determinant is access to education. In some areas, education is not affordable or is found to be inadequate. With no other alternatives, children spend their time working. The main reason why child labour persists is that the parents look at it as a source of augmenting the family income.

*Among the other causes are: unattractive and poorly maintained schools, paucity of essential learning materials, teachers absenting themselves frequently and a general feeling among parents from, the slum areas that school education does not entail improvement for their progeny. Illiterate child workers become an illiterate and unskilled adult, condemned to a life of deprivation. Therefore even in the near future, he/she would lack the means to ensure that his children receive either the education or nutrition necessary to keep them out of the child labour market. A cycle of poverty is formed and the need for child labour is reborn after every generation.*



## Programme Design

In order to address this issue, the projects of Mahita are exclusively designed to provide opportunities for education and livelihood skills to the girls children in the urban slums of Hyderabad. All interventions are carried out through the concept of Motivation Centers run by Motivators. All the Motivational Centers are run by Motivators, usually a young educated girls recruited locally for familiarity and easy accessibility with the households of the area. The community members on the basis of their commitments and articulation select the Motivators. The Motivators are the grass root functionaries of Mahita. It's the motivators who take the responsibility of convincing the adults on the importance of education for their children. Exclusive training is given to the Motivators after recruitment to make them effective functionaries. They are trained in effective communication, gender perspective, micro-planning, and pedagogy including community organization. The Motivator in turn trains the local adolescent girls who will act as change over agents either in the absence of motivator or she quitting the post. We have established Motivation Center in all our project areas. These Centers operate as bridge schools and imparting of training in various vocational skills.

Younger children are provided education in order to improve their Minimum Learning Levels and are mainstreamed in to regular schools. Adolescent girls too are given education and are then provided linkages to the AP Open School as also to Open University.



The adolescent girls, apart from going through the education component of the programme, are given training in various livelihood skills like Embroidery, Beautician Course, Tailoring, Fabric Painting and Computer Literacy. Resource persons from outside provide training in different livelihood skills and linkages for employment. Over a period of time some of the adolescent girls who had successfully completed the training were appointed to give training in place of the resource persons. A unique feature of Mahita's livelihood skill development programme is the training in computer skills. After the development of Minimum Level of Learning's (MLLs), interested children are provided training in such computer skills like data entry, DTP and Internet

operations. The demand for this vocation has far exceeded the anticipation and Mahita is therefore are running the course in three different batches from morning to evening.

The children in the centers are divided in to age groups and classes are conducted accordingly at different time intervals. The curriculum is also defined according to the age group. The

three different age groups are six to nine years, ten to thirteen years and fourteen years plus. Skill development and vocational training classes for adolescent girls are also conducted in the centers.

Mahuita has extensive interactions with academics and pedagogy experts and adopted a *unique phonetic methodology*. In this novel method literacy is not seen as an end by itself. It is used as a tool to provoke critical thinking, to analyze their situation and to seek solutions. In all, there are 25 key words (codes) for learners in the age group of 6-9 years of age and 31 codes for 10-12 & 13-17+ age groups. The Codes represent various issues related to our day-to-day life. From each code more words and issues influencing in everyday life situations are generated. The approach has enabled children to easily pick up and recognize the alphabets through their respective sound and they are also able to identify other words using the same sounds. Another very unique and innovative feature in this package is to develop a *Worldview*. The information which is imparted through the codes has enabled the girls to broaden their frame of thinking and develop a positive outlook towards their lives and themselves. The methodology includes development of Awareness creation; Literacy/numerical skills; Problem identification and Alternatives and finding solutions.



For instance, the word '*khooda*', meaning garbage in Urdu, leads to the learning of such related words like '*uda*' (Flying), '*Vada*' (a food item) '*kada*' (bracelet) and '*kadakna*' (lightening) including environment issues like health, sanitation, etc. Consequently, the girls are taught on maintaining clean surroundings in and around their households. So also the code '*Ishara*' apart from relating to other words also refers to the traffic signals, traffic congestion and to population growth. It emphasizes on the importance of having a small family. This particular methodology is being adopted by the A.P. Open School Society (Government of Andhra Pradesh) for its Urdu teaching.

## Co Sponsors

MAHITA is supported by several like minded donor organizations and government departments/agencies such as Rajiv Gandhi Foundation, Child Relief and You (CRY), Manous-Undias, Save the Children, DK Austria, SARI/Q, USAID, Indian Literacy Programme, Australian High Commission, UNICEF, District Administration, Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan, Women and Child Development Department, Jana Shikshana Sansthan, Andhra Pradesh Minority Finance Corporation, Urban Community Development (MCH).

## Linkages with other interventions

As part of its activities in creating space for child rights in the larger society, Mahita is actively involved in various networks and consultation for advocacy. It is a key member in the AP Alliance for Child Rights and has been networking with NGOs in the state to promote child rights among officials, political leaders, elected representatives, community leaders and other important stakeholders in the civil society. Since the last one-year especially we have conducted workshops, rallies and consultations to sensitize the larger sections of the civil society on the need to make education and other related child rights issues as part of their every day agenda. We have also been networking at the national level with NAFRE. At Micro level the interventions have developed community linkages with Government schools (education), Urban Health Post (health), Municipal Corporation of Hyderabad (drainage and sanitation), Urban Community Development (trainings and matching grant for SHGs), AP Minority Corporation (Trainings and matching Grants), Jana Shikshana Samstha (Training to adolescent girls and women groups on micro Entrepreneurship Programs) and district level programs (old age pensions, ration cards etc.)

## Programme Interventions

### 1. Towards Education

MAHITA is facilitating educational opportunities for the children through establishing Motivational Centres in many clustered slums with an ultimate goal of creating development amongst marginalized and

deprived children, who are vulnerable to various forms of exploitation. The centres functioning in the slums are not just being instrumental in bringing development for the children, but also been striving towards sensitizing the community members on issues of child labour, early child marriages, child, civic and human rights etc. thus building a community based developmental group. The years of interventions with the communities have changed lives of many working and non-schooling children through mainstreaming them to the manifold of education. The regular interfaces and interactions with community, school managements, employers, and government departments are further strengthening our initiatives in bringing educational development among the children.

- *12 motivational centers creating educational opportunities for 630 children*
- *1439 children were mainstreamed into regular schools*
- *240 working children are enrolled into Mahita's motivational centers through various campaigns and rallies*



## 2. Child Participation

The unique strategy adopted by MAHITA towards making the children sensitized about their rights and responsibilities, have been very effectively working out, through the Child Clubs. These clubs are promoted in slums as well as in various government and private schools of old city of Hyderabad. The basic functions of these child clubs are to act as a sensitization force towards the realization of child rights. To hold discussions, meetings with teachers, parents and community members on the critical issues being faced by the children in schools, home and community for promoting child friendly atmosphere. The Child clubs not only been involved in sensitization process but also been actively in advocacy and lobbying campaigns with government for bringing policy changes and reforms in child rights.

- 65 Child Clubs with 2945 child members functioning in 45 government and private schools of old city of Hyderabad
- 43 interfaces and meetings were held during the year 2005-06 on various child rights issues with child club members
- **4 memorandums were submitted to MP and MLA for improving the status of schools**

## 3. Social Mobilization: Towards Child Protection

Child Protection committees, (CPC) towards addressing the vulnerabilities of children such as child marriages, contract marriages, education, health, social evils and child labour etc. The Child Protection committees consisted of women, community, religious leaders, professionals, youth and adolescent girls, whereas the youth and adolescent girls are playing a vital role in mobilizing the opinion of the community members towards protection of children from abuse and exploitation.

These committees are proving instrumental in sensitizing the parents and community segments on the importance of child rights and the need for protection of girl child from being exploited. The Committee members are also resorting to provide counseling and guidance to the victims of exploitation, by providing them with information and linkages to various government and non-government agencies for seeking solutions.

- ◆ ***30 Child Protection committees with 230 members from all the segments of community facilitated towards monitoring the issues of children such as Child Marriages, Trafficking, Child Marriages, and eve teasing et.***

#### 4. Adolescent Girls Groups Interventions through Capacity Building

During the interventions in the slums, it was noticed that the issues of adolescent girls are even more complicated than of women, the reasons could be the inequality, inaccessibility of information, shyness, social constraints etc. In order to bring the adolescent girls to the mainstream of development, toward this MAHITA has mobilized and facilitated Adolescent girls groups and provided them with trainings on Leadership, communication skills, livelihood skills, gender, health and reproductive health rights. Apart from this, the group members have also been provided opportunities for economic development. Know the small initiatives of adolescent girls group is coming up as a strong federation of social change agents towards creating a socially just environment for girls. ***The year 2005 -06 has been primarily focussed on the strengthening of adolescent girls federation.*** To hold discussions, meetings with teachers, parents and community members on the critical issues being faced by the children in schools, home and community for promoting child friendly atmosphere the Child clubs have not only been involved in the sensitisation process but also have been actively engaged in advocacy and lobbying campaigns with government for bringing policy changes and reforms in child rights.

- ***35 adolescent girls groups with 210 girls formed in 35 slums.***
- ***300 adolescent girls sensitized on Reproductive Health Rights***
- ***1675 adolescent girls outreached through various trainings and programmes.***



#### 5. Livelihoods

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Since the beginning of interventions, MAHITA has always added economic and skill development aspect to all the programmes and activities for attaining sustainable development. The livelihood programmes were based on need and demands of the market with high potential for development. So far MAHITA has trained many young girls and women in various vocational trades like, Tailoring, Beautician, Jute work, Crochet, Mehendi Designing etc. During the year 2005-06 MAHITA, has provided the young girls with an opportunity to access advanced training through establishing linkages with ***Jana Shikshana Sansthan***, (An institution, Under Ministry of Human Resource Development, Government of India). The process of skill development not just ended with training, but also been their entire training period was followed up and at the successful completion, they were linked for placements and will be guided to start to set up their own entrepreneurship units. Towards this MAHITA had played a very effective role in building linkages with Government departments such as Andhra Pradesh Minority Finance Corporation, MCH etc.



- *740 young girls trained in various vocational skills.*
- *243 girls linked to placements*
- *120 girls started their own units through Mahita's support*

## 6. Bridging Gaps through Computer Literacy

### **Self Sustainability Through Economic Empowerment**

Changing needs and demands is always been a threat for the young girls living in slums, due to limited accessibility of resources and less priorities, this further becomes a challenge for development. We are well aware that Hyderabad is currently emerged as a hub for information technology, creating enormous opportunities of livelihoods due to insufficiency of technical hands.

Accessibility of advanced technical courses is always been seen as the distant dream by the young girls of Slums, due to which many of educated girls are lagged behind in development pursuit.



MAHITA has taken up this as a challenge and initiated Computer Literacy Centres in a cluster of slums and started up teaching Basic Job Oriented Courses like Data Entry, Desk Top Publishing etc. The computer courses not only focused towards computer literacy but also been emphasized improving English language proficiency, communication skills and interactions with volunteers from Corporate sectors.

- *300 young girls trained Job oriented Computer courses through 4 computer centers of Mahita.*
- *53 girls were linked to Jana Shikshana Sansthan for advanced computer courses*
- *49 girls are currently working as computer /Data entry / D.T.P, operators in various establishments*

## 7. Self Sustainability Through Economic Empowerment

Frequent interactions and meetings with the women, towards bringing economic empowerment created an impact amongst the women, the facilitation of Self Help Group activities since the inception of the MAHITA, is further strengthening year by year. The efforts of MAHITA have yielding very favourable results in brining the economic independence among the marginalized women members. The development of rapport and linkages with ongoing government programmes towards support the initiatives have effectively been utilized by the Self Help Group members as a revolving funds and matching grants for starting up their own small entrepreneurship unit's etc. compared to past years the year 2005-06 the self help group are obtained loans, matching grants and revolving funds up to Rs.12,00,000/-.

- *40 Self Help Groups with 800 women members proceeding towards economic sustainability*
- *23 Self Help Groups, received a revolving fund of Rs. 8,00,000/-*

- *14 women Self Help Group members established their own units through availing loans from Government*

## 8. Unorganised Sectors Interventions with Push Cart Vendors

Learning from experiences MAHITA strongly felt the need to work with unorganized sector community members towards upbringing them to the mainstream of economic and social development. It was learnt during our interventions that their still exists a gap in addressing larger issues of community, such as the economic empowerment of poor and marginalized parents of the children, as the slums are predominant with many socio-economic, political and cultural issues. Lack of proper employment opportunities, access to government schemes, the middle men interventions further more adding complexities in the lives of poor unorganized sector community members, this is resulting in developmental deprivation of children, especially the girls.

At the beginning of the year the Unorganized Push Cart Vendors community were mobilized and made to form into organized groups for making them economic sustainable for betterment of their families, especially their children and also to raise voices on the atrocities and exploitation. 15 groups of Push cart vendors in 15 slums areas of Karwan in old city of Hyderabad was formed with a membership of 1,200 members, currently shaped into a federation and named as *“Humari Awaaz”*.

- *1200 push cart vendors were facilitated to form into union*
- *7 meetings and interfaces were held very frequently with market yard committees and push cart vendors towards building their capacities on purchase and sales mechanisms*

## 9. Towards Community Ownership



Capacity building of the stakeholders is a most important aspect in achieving sustainable development and MAHITA is very keen in building the capacities of the community and its partners in development. As far as concerned to this year MAHITA so far organised 120 training in all the project slums involving all the segments of the community. These trainings were covered the major

issues like Education, Child Rights, Health, Legal Rights etc apart a wide discussions on mobility of girls, early child marriages, HIV/AIDS, Social Evils, Personal Health and Hygiene were also being the part of these capacity building programme, together sensitized 1,200 people. Linkages have been established the Urban Health Posts and AP Aids Society.

- *13 Community Based organizations with 210 members are provided with trainings on various issues.*
- *75 community leaders oriented on Child Rights through workshops Libraries are great sources of information.*



## 10. Community Library

To strengthen quality education in the centers and to promote the habit of reading books, MAHITA established 5 community libraries in five different areas with 5000 books on various themes and topics. The community library in the slum are as of Yakutpura attracting many young readers, who not only take part in reading books but also discuss about the current happenings around them. This is doing well at the library as the young girls who use to remain at their homes were habituated to visit library for reading newspapers and books. Not only this women members and adolescent girls also have taken the active role in maintenance of the library, they frequently inspects the library facilitates the readers in reading the books; mobilize the community members towards the library.

- ◆ *Five Community Libraries with more than 5000 readers are becoming instrumental in wide spreading knowledge among the community members, especially women and adolescent groups*

## 11. Towards Health Through Community Interventions

Towards addressing the health issues of the community, MAHITA has always taken a lead, right from the beginning. During the past few years MAHITA has specifically focussing on the need of information dissemination to the community members on pre and postnatal care, immunization, common alignments, and women diseases, Sexually Transmitted diseases etc. The interventions have

been effectively implemented and were encouraged by the community, thus ensuring their active involvement in meetings, workshop and camps. The mobilization of link volunteers, towards taking responsibility of every 20 households of their lanes in providing accessibility to health facilities and up-keeping health status data through a specially designed Health Tracking Cards which were designed in consultation with Medical Health Officers and Department of Health. further moving ahead with the link volunteers, MAHITA has oriented them to form as Mahila Arogya Sanghas (MAS). These Arogya Sanghas are acting as a bridge between the community and Urban Health Post, Hospitals in brining accessibility of health facility to each and every household. Towards strengthening process, the Mahila Arogya Sangha members were regularly oriented and trained on various health aspects. During the past 2 years these Mahila Arogya Sangha's are very actively been involved in brining awareness among the community on health related issues, apart this the unique achievement through this Sanghas is full fledged involvement of members in a Wide Scale Birth Registration campaign which has achieve a remarkable figures of 5,500 births during a week long campaign, another remarkable work of Sanghas is their active participation in campaign against Determination of Sex of unborn babies, in which the members have identified 12 un- registered scanning centres and pressurized the District Administration to take stringent action against the centres. Not only this, the Mahila Arogya Sanghas also taking up responsibility in carrying out immunization camped for children through regular interaction with ANM's and Urban Health Posts.

- *250 community link volunteers actively taking part in brining health awareness among the pre and postnatal care.*
- *24 Mahila Arogya Sanghas are effectively advocating with the government towards improving health status of women and children in the slums.*
- *13 Community Based organizations with 210 members are provided with trainings on various issues.*
- *75 community leaders oriented on Child Rights through workshops.*

## **12. Use of Theatre Towards Community Awareness**

Theatre and puppetry shows were used as tools of generating awareness, among the community. Towards this the identified children from the child clubs, were provided with trainings for developing issues based street plays. During the whole year these plays were performed in each and every nook and corners of projected slums. The prime highlighted in the plays were on Child Labour, Education, Domestic Violence and Arab Marriages. The plays and puppet shows are also designed to address the sensitive situation of the children in the slums with a little content of comedy, songs, issue based subject content and solutions. Apart these wall paintings, distribution of flyers were also been done for bringing more specified awareness at the community level.

- ◆ *3215 community members sensitized through Theatre and Puppetry shows performed in various Slums*

## **13. Religious Leaders Interventions**

Towards building trust among the religious and community leaders, towards the gender equality and free mobility of young girls. Interfaces were conducted with Religious and community leaders occasionally, the interfaces were widely carried out in all the projected slums, and during this the help of other community members were taken. The process on interface was very tough during the initial stages, as the predominated versions of religious and orthodox mindsets ruled the process. But slowly the frequent interactions and rapport visits with them facilitated the process and were succeeded in sensitizing on the various vulnerabilities and issues of the girls being faced by them. As

a result of all these efforts the religious and community leaders were motivated and joined us in dissemination of information on the child protection issues.

- ◆ *120 Religious leaders were sensitized on Early Child Marriage, Child Labour, and Gender discrimination issues.*
- ◆ *52 seminars, Consultations, workshops held involving religious and community elders.*
- ◆ *13 Community Based organizations with 210 members are provided with trainings on various issues.*
- ◆ *75 community leaders oriented on Child Rights through workshops*

#### **14. Towards Building NGO's Capacity**

MAHITA Resource Center has ignited the child rights movement in the state of Andhra Pradesh through involving many grassroots level organization and their counterparts. The resource center had not only provided them with regular updates of child related acts and policies, but also has been involved with them in various grassroots level interventions in their respective districts. The capacity building initiatives of the Resource Centre has marked a good achievement in bringing them on to a common platform towards advocating on the issues. This further provided them with wide exposure of the issues. The strong rapport with various issue based networks provided a boost to MAHITA Resource Centre in taking up more specified issues of the children in the state. Not only this had the Center also reached the Academicians, Civil Society organizations. General community members through wide dissemination of information through electronic discussion groups. The advocacy initiatives through interfaces with Government authorities, Public representatives and Political leaders are also become the part and parcel of the regular programmes of the centre. Further initiating the process, towards strengthening Grassroots level NGOs on the issues perspective of Child Rights for addressing the issues of child rights from all the dimensions. Huge rallies and public meetings were organized during the process, with various stakeholders and community, shown visible impact on Elected Representatives, Concerned Authorities and Community members? The Resource center had also catered the needs of Grassroots level organizations through frequent trainings, feeding necessary and valuable inputs in terms of Documentation support, Linkages with Concerned authorities at the state level, and also by providing valuable information on Acts, Policies and Bills in the vernacular languages. It has also played a major role in facilitation of Hyderabad Child Rights Networks in Hyderabad. The Network is a group of grassroots level organizations working in the urban slums of Hyderabad. During the formation process MAHITA played a very active role in brining all the members for meetings to discuss about the common issues and common areas of interventions. Currently there are 30 active members regularly been carrying out activities of the network.

- ◆ *12 capacity building trainings on Child Rights and Child Protections issues held during the year 2005-2006*
- ◆ *250 NGO's were provided with information on various child rights issues*
- ◆ *25 NGO's in urban slums of Hyderabad were facilitated to form into a child rights network.*

#### **15. Media Sensitisation On Child Rights Issues**

Sensitization of media is one of the prime component for seeking the wide spread coverage of the issues to all the segments of society. Towards this MAHITA conducted a interface with 21 representatives and journalist of various local and non-local print and electronic media, with the collaboration of Press Academy of Andhra Pradesh. During the interactions issues such as the increasing incidences of child marriages with Arab nationals, the incidences of domestic abuse and violence of girl's children, domestic child labour and atrocities on them, government inactiveness were the prime focused issues of the discussions. During the process the media representatives were

provided with copies of do's and don'ts encrypted in Juvenile Justice Acts and Constitution of India for their reference. The posters on various child related issues developed by the children in various consultations were also been released by the Chairman of Press Academy of Andhra Pradesh. The journalist and reporters who attended the consultations were assured to take up the child protection issues as the core issues while writing their journals and articles.

- ◆ *and media reporters, were sensitized on child rights” through workshops*

## 16. MLA Consultations

Bringing political will is an utmost important component of Mahita's strategy. Towards this MAHITA had succeeded in mobilizing the legislators, and a consultation was also been held to interface directly with the legislators towards promoting child Friendly constituencies. The unique feature of the consultations is 8 women legislators actively participated and assured to take up child rights issues in their constituencies *discuss on Child*. The consultation was also attended by NGO's, NGO's, Networks, Government Officials, and Civil Society members.

- ◆ *8 Women Legislators actively participated in consultation to Friendly Constituencies”*
- ◆ *46 NGO's, 7 INGO's, 4 Government Officials, 9 media representatives interfaced with legislators on promoting child rights*

## Visits to Mahita Project Locations

### Karwan Sarwasnagar (Hyderabad, Old City)

The Center was crowded by all burqua clad Muslim minority adolescent girls ranging from 12-18 years. Some of them were already married. There were three categories of girls. Some were dropouts from Classes III and IV; others were VII class pass and at least one had completed matriculation. The Classes III and IV dropout were being prepared for the VIIth class examination of A.P. Board. Those who have passed learning to write Alim's exam. The Xth passed students are coming to centre to improve their language skills in English and they are also coming to learn vocational training like tailoring, beautician, embroidery etc. which is also provided at Mahita motivational centre. Interacting with the girls revealed the following :

- ◆ Family size is large (8-10) members in each family so most of the girls are involved in taking care of younger siblings. Girls who are in the age group of 11-15 years wanting to take admission in Class VI or VII but are unable to do so because school authorities ask for transfer certificate which they cannot produce being a dropout. “Please make admissions in the school easy without Transfer Certificate up to VII.”
- ◆ Most of the girls want to continue their education through National Open School but find that Urdu medium is not available. “National Open school should also develop their syllabus in Urdu so that many minority children can get benefited by it”, puts in their teacher.”
- ◆ They also wanted that there should be no age bar for Andhra Pradesh Open School examinations.
- ◆ All girls without fail wanted to study further, at least matriculation and many aspire for college education.

We visited to another center of Mahita located at Kishannagar. The room was jam-packed. The girls there were more active compared to the previous set. Shabana who was teaching them was previously a student of same Mahita centre. She first passed her ClassVII and continued to complete her matriculation due to very strong motivation and effort, her own and that of Mahita Motivators and teachers. Shabana became a teacher of “Rehbar Centre” and is now doing her graduation from, Ambedkar Open University. *She has emerged as a role model who supplemented Mahita efforts in convincing parents to send their daughters for education.*

An interesting episode narrated by the girls was how their Motivators inspired them to go and meet the Local M.P. so that he would pay their examination fee for the A.P. Board exams from the M.P. Fund. Parents were unwilling even as the Mahita Centres do not charge any fee. Finally, these 20 odd girls succeeded in their mission and came back jubilant.

Many of the girls from this centre are able to get education due to flexible hours. Mahita plans the time schedule for the girls according to their need and requirement. These girls come to these centres for only 2 hours for education as their parents are not able to spare them for any more time due to their involvement in household based industry/piece wage work commissioned to their mothers. Attending a regular government school from 9 am to 3 pm is not feasible. Nearly all girls are involved in petty work in their houses to support family income.

A member of the Mahita Core Team who dons Pudah when she moves out of her in laws house for work was accompanying us. She had interesting views on Purdah.”I was the only daughter of my father who is an engineer and was educated up to B.A in Karnataka before marriage. No Pudah was observed. After marriage, my in laws made observing Purdah mandatory for me to move out of the house. My husband encouraged and I completed my Master’s in English Literature with three children born one after another. Finally, she joined Mahita and goes about her work on a motor bike covering anything from 80 to 100 kilometres a day in narrow alleys and bye ways, monitoring and supervising centers spread all over the Old City. She states, “ The madarsas are producing the children who strongly believe in their religion without any logical understanding. When they came out from Madarsa after spending few years they can either work only in the mosque or in the same kind of madarsa on very low salary. For girls Madarsa education is good for religious knowledge. But what about the other knowledge, which is needed (must) in the competitive world. That is why Madarsa should get recognized and use syllabus of a State/Central Board of Education. Professional/Technical education should be included in the syllabus and then only the child’s overall development can be occur. Otherwise they will be good for nothing.”

Visit to the Bhawani Nagar, Charminar – Computer Centre was very interesting and educative. It was a pleasure to see this centre function. Meeting young girls aged 12 to 17 years who were pursuing education and computer training with enthusiasm was very rewarding. In the beginning parents were not really keen to send their daughters to schools. When Mahita motivators convinced parents, they agreed and over time saw the good results. Now they are ready to send their daughters even to a regular school if available in the vicinity. ***Girls want to learn computer also to cope up with the new era’s challenges.***

Says, the Centre in Charge, “A total of 53 students (Boys 12, Girls 41) have been mainstreamed into regular schools. More than 12 students who were never enrolled into schools are coming to the Mahita Centre and are preparing to write the ClassVII exam. Within one year they will get the Class VII certificate which is a great achievement. These girls are grown up and learn very fast through our special Urdu phonetic methodology where we work around their existing experience of crafts, trades and day to day life maths.”

Tasleem, a non-school going girl, came to know about Mahita center from her friend and joined the centre. She has passed Class VII exam and has been mainstreamed into Class VIII of a regular school. Even now, she keeps coming to Mahita to learn more, especially English, Computers and Zari work.

Mahita established community libraries in the slums where basti members and girls visit regularly and gain knowledge. This came out when we asked a question who is the president of India, girl replied, Pratibha Patil. That she came to know through News Papers from the library. Another girls had watched TV and knew about Sunita Williams' safe return from the space after six months.

Anjum who is a deaf and dumb girl also joined Mahita. She learnt writing things and has received Vocational training and is earning some money to help her family. Trades in which girls are involved at home in this area are Agarbatti making; Sleeper making; Friendship band making; Stone bangles making; Zari & Zardozi work; Jewelry box making.

All the girls of the motivational center are voluntary workers involved in Pulse Polio programme and try to cover the whole slum. Monthly PTA meetings are conducted in which attendance and regularity of the children, their progress is discussed.

All the records & registers were well maintained to include the Moment register; the Attendance register, the Mainstreaming register, the Pulse Polio record and the Review meetings minutes.

Health camps are also conducted at regular intervals for Eye check ups, General Check ups, Pulse Polio camps and Gynae check ups etc.

## Doosra Dashak

**Doosra Dashak (DD)** means the second decade. this programme is about persons in the age-group 11 to 20, i.e. persons in their second decade of life. DD began on a small scale, somewhat of a pilot and expanded into a larger programme extending to several parts of the country. The programme is being implemented by recently established Foundation for Education and Development. The implementation commenced in July 2000.

### Vision

- ▶ Moving towards construction of a new social order based on the values of equity and justice through community participation, providing second chance of education to unschooled adolescents and preparation of a cadre of committed adolescents and young persons equipped with relevant education and skills.

### Mission

- ▶ Taking measures to enable community to participate in the processes of education and empowerment of adolescents and develop organisations at the village level to facilitate redefining caste, class and gender relationship at the village level.
- ▶ Provision of holistic education, integrated with issues relevant to adolescents lives and simultaneously provide them opportunities / spaces to translate their learning into action through linking learning with practice.
- ▶ ***Empowerment of adolescents in order that they may develop commitment to democratic values, gender, caste, class and religious equity and strive for human rights.***

### Objectives

- i. To meet the basic learning needs of adolescents and to relate learning to their life, work and environment.
- ii. To offer holistic, value based education to out of school adolescent persons, including education about health and sanitation.
- iii. To enhance critical awareness so that they could understand their present predicament and take measures to change it through proactive action and interventions.
- iv. To equip them for adolescence and family life through improvement in their health awareness and development of a positive attitude towards small family norm.
- v. To enhance vocational and life skills.
- vi. To initiate continuing education for reinforcing initial residential education and to provide for unmet learning needs.
- vii. To work towards improvement of the formal system of education.
- viii. To take planned measures for amelioration of lives of the people through improvement in working of public services such as schools, health-care centres, early child-care centres, drinking water, etc.
- ix. To harness their energies for nation building through creation of cadres who may provide educated, informed and responsible leadership.

- x. To create a cadre of adolescents and young persons to strive for human rights including right to information, right to education, right to work/employment and women's right to a life accept attain of dignity.
- xi. To employ science and technology for improving the lives of the people.
- xiii. To engage in advocacy and dissemination at local, provincial, and national levels to create a favorable environment towards recognition of the learning needs of adolescents and provision accordingly.

A very large number of educational and related programmes have had a bearing on Doosra Dsshak. In essence DD was a crystallization of several earlier programmes but it went far beyond the past experiences. Some of the programmes which influenced the planning of Doosra Dashak were : Women's Development Programme (WDP)- 1984 onwards; [Mahila Samakhya \(MS\)](#)- 1989 onwards; Shiksha Karmi Project (SKP)1988-2004; [National Literacy Mission \(NLM\)](#) and [Bharat Gyan Vigyan Samiti \(BGVS\)](#) 1989 ; Lok Jumbish (LJ) 1992-2004.

***Some of the aspects of LJ which have influenced DD were:***

► **A Central Focus on Gender:** From its beginning LJ acknowledged that work with women would make it possible to bring about a change in people's thinking about the status of women in the family and society. The LJ management reflected this perception and circumstances were created for them to work with dignity.

► **Community as Partners:** The field workers of LJ worked with the community to create a sense of ownership of the school. The Village Education Committees (VEC) in LJ were not set up by an official directive, but through a gradual process of selection of interested persons, their training and reposing trust in them. These VECs became the communities' organs to see that the school was supported by the people and that it provided education of satisfactory quality.

► **Local Presence of Field Workers:** There are very few programmes in which well trained and committed workers reside close to the community and even fewer in which a majority of them are women. What this accessible presence of the management structure did was to earn the confidence of the community. The presence of women workers served as an ongoing message that the programme stood for women's equality and for their participation in development processes.

► **Review and Planning Process:** The management of LJ was characterised by monthly review and planning meetings (RPMs) at all levels. These RPMs became a forum to critically appraise the work done in the field and to introduce timely improvements for future planning. This was also a successful technique of staff development and of sustaining programme vitality. It was successfully incorporated in the DD management system.

While DD has benefited from LJ, the challenges before the two programmes were quite different. LJ was a fully government funded programme (even though 50 per cent of the money came from foreign sources), whereas DD is entirely an NGO effort. It can be argued that the commitment to people's rights and entitlements which characterize DD could not have been pursued had it been a government programme. Another difference is that while LJ attempted to create a convergence for the transformation of the school system, the efforts of DD has a much wider significance. This is a programme in which education and the inculcation of values among adolescent persons is seen as an effort to bring about social transformation. Yet another difference is the focus on the empowerment of SCs, STs and socially deprived minority communities in the case of the latter.

## **Essential Principles of DD**

► **Work with the community:** It is, perhaps, true of all social and human development projects, particularly those which give importance to gender equity, that work with the community has to be the indispensable strategy not only at the initial stages of the project, it has to be sustained till the conclusion of the project. Not only the response of the people, and parents of the persons who are to be educated, depend on it; even more important, sustainability of the project is dependent on active involvement of the community.

- i. **Priority:** DD gives an unambiguous priority of the weakest sections of society and to women.
- ii. **Organization building:** Sustainable energetic involvement of the community is facilitated if attention is paid to the building of their organizations.
- iii. **Rights and entitlements:** Work with the community must aim at securing the rights and entitlements to sections who are deprived of them.
- iv. **Power structures:** It has been found to be helpful if work with the community includes, as far as possible, coordination with existing power structure and official machinery including Panchayati Raj institutions.

► **Creation of people's organizations:** In many a situation creation of people's organizations becomes a goal/objective in itself. In the proposed project we view creation of organizations as an important strategy for achievement of the objectives. We envisage two types of people's organizations:

- i. women's groups at the village level and their collective at the block level (although only a beginning may be possible in a project of 2 year duration);
- ii. adolescents/youth forums in villages and, over a period of time, a union at the block level. These organizations, the membership of which would not be confined to one community, would work towards ensuring that injustice is not perpetrated on women and 'dalits' and people receive the benefit of their rights and entitlements.

► **Strengthening of Panchayati Raj\* institutions (PRIs):** Proper delivery of government services depends a great deal on effective functioning of PRIs. Long term sustainability of programmes like education is also dependent on PRIs becoming partners in the programme. Besides, strengthening of PRIs would nurture the roots of Indian democracy - in that sense it is a goal worth pursuing.

► **Gender inclusive approach:** Given the fact that women's exclusion from practically all spheres of life is a common phenomenon, it requires special attention. The inclusion of gender has numerous dimensions. These include women being able to participate in work force without discrimination and receiving equal remuneration; access to education and health care as a right. This can be achieved not only when women are aware of their rights but the larger society also understands the necessity of their participation in the process of social development.

► **Residential education and training:** We give the greatest importance to the process of education becoming a means for young people to accept equality of persons of different religions and castes. Moreover, since the Doosra Dashak approach is that through education young persons are not only to learn and understand certain things, but they must absorb and adopt in their conduct what they learn.\* These things, which involve change in behaviour, become much more feasible through residential education. The new curriculum on which much work has been done in 2005 will prove useful in the implementation of this strategy.

► **Institutionalizing the praxis of learning, action, review and learning:** For improving the efficiency of management and relevance of the educational process it is important to reinforce the cyclical process which envisages

► **Initiating a process of life long learning:** A corollary of the above referred praxis is that learning of the workers of Doosra Dashak and the adolescent persons who are inducted into the programme has to be an ongoing process. Indeed, with time new learning needs will emerge and there will be need for strengthening the system of staff training and continuing education of 'the participants'.

## Operational methods and action

**Formation of women's groups:** An attempt has been made to revive women's groups set up under Lok Jumbish. Where they did not exist, DD field workers have worked towards their formation. Creating women's organisations has been an important part of the operational strategy and over a period of time village level groups have been consolidated in the form of block level organisations which are called Jagrat Mahila Sanghathan (JMS, an organization of empowered women) in DD.

**Trainings:** Gender comprises an indispensable part of practically all training programmes. It is treated in a cross-cutting sense in the new curriculum which implies that it has a distinct place in all subjects.

**Management:** Nearly 50 percent of all management personnel, as well as adolescent participants, are women. Almost all Review and Planning Meetings (RPMs) are conducted as sessions in gender sensitivity and methods are employed to ensure that this sensitivity becomes a part of the entire DD culture.

**Gender in all DD activities:** The emphasis on creation of JMS, developing an understanding and doing some concrete work about maternal health, confronting every case of sexual harassment, emphasis on understanding of human body and its process, in the curriculum, are examples of the emphasis given to women's development.

## Gender and Sexuality Education

- ◆ **Indispensability of gender in development:** In our country no programme, which has its focus on human development, can achieve success without bringing about a change in the perception of the community regarding the place of women in society.
- ◆ **Gender as an all pervasive concern:** Concern for gender equity and women's empowerment is seen to extend to the processes of learning, the conduct of various actors as well as project management.
- ◆ **Its normative relevance:** In addition to other appropriate criteria, this is viewed as one of the criteria for the assessment of the success of the project.
- ◆ **Place of sexuality:** Understanding about sexuality is found to enhance equity in social relations.
- ◆ **Sexual harassment:** Mechanisms for addressing grievances have been set in motion.

## Health Education

- ◆ **An intrinsic part of adolescent development:** This approach recognises that physical development brings with it several health related issues which must be addressed as a part of the growing up of adolescent persons.
- ◆ **An integrated perspective:** Health is viewed in a broad perspective to include physical, psychological and emotional health.
- ◆ **Related to all stages of an individual's development:** DD concerns itself with issues of childhood, the stage of primary schooling, adolescence, early adulthood and as a member of a family.
- ◆ **As part of most DD work:** Health is part of the curriculum, as also of all aspects of DD work.

## Integrated Development of Knowledge

**Integrated approach to education:** Integration is viewed as a process of linking learning with the experience of the learners and their social and ecological environment. As a consequence, an articulation between various areas of study such as language, mathematics, health, study of society and life skills is seen to be a requirement.

**Taking a holistic view:** The purpose of education is viewed not only as the imparting of knowledge; but the development of the personality of the adolescent learners, meeting their learning needs and equipping them for their future.

**Stress on value inculcation:** Education, whatever the approach adopted, needs to address the decline of values in society. The Preamble of the Constitution refers to the basic values of equality, social justice, secularism and democracy which are an essential part of the DD education programme.

**Learning and its application:** In keeping with Gandhian thought, learning needs to influence the thought, behaviour and work of learners. DD visualizes the translation of the training programmes into the personal behaviour of the learners and efforts to transmit learning to others in the vicinity.

## Field Location Visited: Bap Block



Situated in the midst of the Thar desert people in this block live under constant shadow of drought. The largest sections of population are Muslims and Meghwals (the latter a SC community). Along with Kishanganj, Bap block was first to start DD project. By the end of December 2005 work was being done in 57 villages situated in 10 panchayats. ***Muslims have a large presence in Bap block and nearly half the villages covered have a majority of Muslim population.*** Muslim community in this block, as in several other areas of north India, feels isolated and denied of the benefits of development. Therefore, it required sensitive and sustained work, often living with Muslim community for extended periods of a time, for the DD personnel to win the trust and confidence of Muslim community. As noticed in during the field visit DD is well-respect in all these villages. ***An indication of this is that***

*while there were only 5 Muslim girls in the first long-term residential programme (2002), their number kept increasing each year and was 28 in 2005. Indeed there are many more candidates from Muslim families than there are places in the residential camps.*

The Bap block of Jodhpur district is completely rural and is bounded by Jodhpur, Jaisalmer and Bikaner districts in western Rajasthan. Located in the heart of the Thar desert, ***Bap gives the impression of endless desolation with scattered habitations.*** Most of the houses in the villages are made with clay, twigs and straw. The population is sparse, but people are sturdy, hardened by adversity. The task of fetching water, fuel and fodder is borne by women. Drought and scarcity are a recurrent phenomenon, resulting in large-scale migration to other areas.

Bap has a very small percentage of ST persons, but a sizeable SC population. Some of the poorest communities in this region are the Meghwals SC, Bhil ST, Bhavari ST, Dholi ST, Lohar OBC, Langas OBC, ***Mirasi Muslims*** and Odh Beldars. The proportion of females to 1000 males is 885, as against Rajasthan's 921. Bap illustrates the deterioration in the male-female ratio which is affecting most parts of the country, but has alarming manifestations in Rajasthan. The main occupation of the people is animal husbandry; agriculture being mostly a non-irrigated activity. There is widespread addiction to alcohol and opium. It is not uncommon to find youth and older men getting incapacitated due to these addictions.

### Educational Situation



Practically all educational indicators for Bap block are weak. The total literacy rate of 46.46%, 26.75% for females, is much lower than that for Rajasthan. Although the number of primary schools is fairly large, 69 of the 88 have two teachers or less and all the 67 Rajiv Gandhi Pathshalas have one under-qualified and untrained teacher. Participation rates in elementary

education for girl children is extremely low with about half of them out of school.

## The Status of Women and Adolescent Girls in Bap Block

“Whichever house we entered, the parents with unconcealed pride and enthusiasm would place a pile of the things embroidered and prepared by their girls and ceaselessly talk about their unparalleled and intricate skill. This is the only evidence of their expertise — in these articles for their dowry, which they start accumulating from an early age. From behind half-closed doors, clinging to the safety of the tired yellowed walls of their homes, these girls watch us with eager eyes. This sequence of events went on for long. Then, gradually they crossed the distance from the door, abandoning the safety of the yellow walls and moved closer to us. But the only difference on covering this distance was that the same items of dowry that would be shown to us by their family, now they themselves had taken on the responsibility to show. Their voices were still unheard, unfamiliar, unknown to us. ***The minute education was mentioned tears of helplessness would swim in their mothers’ eyes and the sad smiles on the girls’ faces would question us.*** -You know that nothing is in our hands, then why this question?” says Preeti Rathod, a very strong and effective communicator.

As the team started working in Bap, almost in every village they were confronted with the same situations — women enduring a strange kind of a repression and suffocation, accepting the tremendous responsibility of getting their dowry ready as the only goal of their life, and on this belief trying to get through one endless day after another; and the men, on the other hand, struggling unsuccessfully to disassociate themselves from the burden of ‘being a man’; a situation where sending a 16–17 year old girl far away from home to work at the mines was acceptable, but getting the permission to send her to study to a village just a few kilometres away was unacceptable. They would argue and these very arguments would upset the men, “ They would make fun of our efforts. The mothers were worse off because they knew that they were not in a position to take decisions. They would listen to us carefully, nod in consent, sometimes even express their opinions, but then their final words would be, we cannot do anything, you speak to the grandfather, father, uncle, brother”.

As in the rest of Rajasthan, the status of women in the Bap area is poor. Not only is their life physically arduous and characterized by strenuous chores, hardly any attention is paid to their medical and health needs. This is exacerbated by the widespread prevalence of child marriage which begins to narrow the options available to adolescent girls and young women. Even if they continue to stay in their father’s house, they begin to be treated as ‘paraya dhan’ (other’s property) and their schooling gets discontinued. The vital indicators concerning health and reproductive health are comparable with the state averages, except that Infant Mortality Rate (IMR) and life expectancy are better, but the fertility rate is exceptionally high

### DD leadership

The DD leadership in Bap block has been very sensitive to the needs of the local community. There was an outbreak of malaria in the entire block within weeks after commencement of work. The block personnel decided to give an absolute priority to this challenge and they made contribution in detecting cases and treating them. *The local health authorities take the help of DD to persuade the Muslim community to get their children vaccinated.* Since the pulse polio campaign was, for the first time, successful in Bap block, the contribution of DD staff was acknowledged by local administration. Another thing which has attracted attention of DD is high incidence of maternal morbidity and mortality. By utilising village level women’s groups DD has been able to get regular examination done of pregnant women and encourage families to send appropriate cases for delivery in hospitals and PHCs. Eleven villages have thus been covered.



### ***Sahabhagi***

Another characteristics of Bap block is the sustained work DD team is doing with the trained participants - who have received long duration training as well as the educated and school going ones who were provided short duration programmes. More than 100 such participants are treated as partners ( *Sahabhagi*) in management and are given challenging responsibilities. As a result, much of the arrangement for training programmes, convening of the meetings with village community and follow up of participants who have entered school is taken care of by the older participants. As a result of the positive attitude of village community towards the adolescent participants 75 of them got elected as panches or sarpanches in the last elections to panchayati raj bodies.

### **Workshop and Trainings**

- Camcorder based training was organized by Gyan Vigyan Kendra, Bap on 20th May 2006. The training had 16 participants. It was conducted by persons having long expertise of working in the field of media. The purpose of the basic training was to learn, apply and share basic principles and practices especially in relation to ***camera and videography***; enhance scientific and communicative awareness and sensitivity within the context of modern technology ;capacity building to empower adolescent girls by understanding and acquiring ***skills to use camera as medium of learning and expression*** ;and enhance creativity, exploration, chance and space to fairly express themselves.



► Training of adolescents and community members on the issues of ***water and drugs*** was a major event in Bap Block. The training programme apprised the participants about the various perspective of water such as importance of clean water and water born diseases. Furthermore, the impact of drugs, ranging from diseases to economic and social aspect, impact of drugs on lives in its various angles were also discussed. Amongst the 223 participants, there were 29 girls, 30 boys and 164 men.

► Another important workshop organized on 17-18th August was about the ***indigenous system of medicine***. Emphasis was laid on how a common man takes local treatment. Whole session was designed on experimental basis. An interesting thing noticed about this workshop was large participation, 35 girls, 45 boys and 55 other community members.

► As in case of ***women*** of rural communities the health activities has been on organizing one day ***health training*** to enhance the understanding about menstrual cycle, venereal diseases, methods of family planning and child vaccination. It was noteworthy that female nursing staff along with community women's took part in the discussion.

► **Rocket Model and Health Workshop held in June 2007** was indeed a very innovative approach to development of scientific temper and for fighting superstitions and removing misconceptions.



## Sanchar Team

A very interesting and effective intervention is formation of Sanchar teams of young people who not only do advocacy and spread awareness but work on the principle of Right to Information and give all information on the rights of people and the numerous development schemes and programmes of different departments such as Education, Health, Employment and other entitlements of rural and urban masses. *As a strategy, a very well tarined Sanchar Team visited Lakshmangarh Block in District Alwar for launching the DD project by taking out processions, rallies and meeting parents and the community leaders convincing them about the benefits they had received from DD education and development programmes.*



**Comics Workshop** held in June 2007 was another feather in DD Bap team. This workshop attempted to develop story writing and illustration skills using the medium of Comics to sensitize and raise discussion on major social issues.

Like in Kishanganj block, the major activity of GVK/VK in Bap block was the participation of adolescents in National Children's Science Congress 2006. After interaction with Department of Science & Technology officials, large number of adolescents & school students, GVK incharge took the initiative for preparation of projects. Projects were made on different issues like:

- Past and present diversity of crops in villages.
- Natural calamities and its impact
- Biodiversity of waste material

After initial screening, 9 projects were finalized and they were presented at Jodhpur State Level Children's Congress on 24th November. The project on "Diversity of crops in past and present" prepared by adolescent scientist Shri Mukesh Suthar was selected for state level presentation at Jaipur. It was noticed that 45 adolescents, 21 of them girls participated in the science congress. State Level Science Congress gave a letter of appreciation to GVK.

## Gyan Vigyan Chetna Yatras



A very interesting thing was noted in Bap that GVK is actively taking part in dissemination of message of science by initiating Gyan Vigyan Chetna Yatras. These yatras culminated in the form of village level science fairs. The purpose behind this yatra was indeed to create an space, both physical and intellectual where adolescents and community members can be sensitized to the wonders of science and mysteries of our environment.

As a part of science fairs, models and charts of various system of the body and health were displayed. Discussion with adolescents and community members were the highlighting features. Moreover, models of electric generator, water turbine, diesel engine, steam engine

and microscopes were also kept and their principles were explained. In Sanguri and Akhadna village, labourers who were working in famine affected areas also participated and decided to get rid of narcotics. A brief description of Gyan Vigyan Chetna rallies organized in different villages is given below:

Table 5.1 : Report of activities held in Bap Block related to GVK/VK in 2007

S. No.	Village	Date	Adolescent Boys from DD	Adolescent Girls from DD	Male Community members	Female Community members
1	Surpura	2nd March	80	130	45	60
2	Ridmal Nagar	5th March	150	100	400	350
3	Nanau	11th March	55	15	7	20
4	Jaimla	12th March	35	20	8	12
5	Sanguri	14th March	16	37	7	5
6	Akhadna	15th March	35	24	30	27
7	Jagariya	17th March	40	25	18	35
8	Nure Ka Burj	18th March	35	18	15	25
9	Raneri	21th March	10	15	40	17
		<b>Total</b>	<b>456</b>	<b>384</b>	<b>570</b>	<b>551</b>

## Reaching out to new areas / persons

Communication plays a key role in creating awareness and spreading the message to newer areas and persons. Various modern as well as traditional communication tools ranging from the use of DTH, puppetry show, theatre, television & films are widely utilizing by GVK / VK in delivering the message to adolescent persons and community members. As per the requirements, a communication team consisting of adolescent girls and boys has been formed which is trying to put different kinds of communication strategy. By installing DTH in GVK, adolescents are now being able to watch more than 100 channels, especially discovery, national geographic, animal planet & many more. It could be helpful in building their scientific awareness about the nature, environment health etc. Organizing puppetry show and theatre are really noteworthy in reference to overcome the problem of unscientific beliefs, superstitions, issues of water, health & sanitation etc.

Table 5.2 : Brief description of participants

Activity	No. of Villages covered	Total Shows organized	Participation of community members	Adolescent Boys	Adolescent Girls
Theatre	19	35	570	162	97
Puppetry Show	5	5	233	97	59
Film Show	4	8	70	85	47

## Exposure visits

By organizing exposure visits, it was tried to inculcate a sense of curiosity and inquisitiveness to know about local flora & fauna. As a part of exposure visit organized on 18th May, 2006 girls collected a lot of information regarding local floras and prepared the list of medicinal plants. Medicinal importance of plants in reference to Kair, Ber, Sangri, Neem, Aak and Tulsi were discussed. Girls also showed their interest to know about their local fauna. In this exposure trip, 13 adolescent girls & two teachers participated. Adolescents also visited central Arid Zone Research Institute, Jodhpur where they learned various methods of enhancing availability of organic manure.



## Awareness generation among Voters During Panchayat Elections

DD took an interesting initiative in sensitizing the voters to exercise their judgement in voting and selecting the right candidate in Panchayat elections ,who would in turn represent them and work for the welfare of the people. They created awareness regarding reservations for women ,SC,ST ,OBC and for strengthening the position of women in PanchayatRaj.

### *Yuva Shakti Sangathan*

DD is organizing the youth for participation in Panchayats at the village, Gram Panchayat and in Block Samitis and working for overall development of the villages.

### *Kishori Sanchar Team*

Adolescent girls are given an opportunity to acquire self confidence, communication and leadership skills as a means for self development and for generating general awareness in the community.

## Fighting Stereotypes



A resident of *Degawadi* village in *Charnai* panchayat of Bap block, 13-year-old Kayma at first sight seems a sincere girl. Reading is her favourite pastime and when she talks one has no option except to listen and see the gestures of her face changing with every next sentence. Kayma has passed class V in the residential camp of Lok Jumbish, staying in the camp mode for almost seven months. She has five siblings in her family, three brothers and two sisters, of whom two brothers and one sister are already married. Before joining the DD camp, she was attending a madarsa regularly where she learnt the Quran. After the Camp, Kayma joined the primary school in face of severe opposition from her in laws who live across her parental home in her village. She completed Class V and is now enrolled in a school in Class VII. Her grit and determination is laudable. She and her younger brother and

sister cycle 9 kilometres one way to reach the school. This does not deter her from running a DD Resource Centre (Prerana Kendra) for small children in her family courtyard. Kayma had the unique distinction to win a UN contest on photography which won her a lot of admiration and now she is shaping up as a youth leader and a role model in DD.

### Notes from 'Knock on the Closed Doors'

Preeti Rathod, *trainer*

Today is the last day of the camp. Decorated with tents and resplendent in colourful clothes, the site where the residential camp was held for three and a half months bears a festive look. With *mehndi* on their hands, the girls and their teachers are busy almost as if they were preparing for a marriage. With faces clouded by the pain of separation from one another and eyes full of pride and happiness at having 'learnt' something. With these mixed emotions the girls look at the prizes that they will be receiving.

The programme starts with a prayer. From songs, to the narration of sweet and sour experiences of the last three and a half months, enthusiastically getting themselves photographed and after the usual words of welcome to the guests, the programme is now in its final stages. Anupama, a teacher at the camp, bids farewell to the girls with the auspicious '*tilak*', curd and sweet - first Kamla, then Dhapu, Pinky, Reshma, Farhat, and so on. The atmosphere is getting heavy. The sounds of silent weeping of the girls has now reached a crescendo. Even the *didis* (teachers) are not able to control themselves. The parents sitting in front are at a loss, but no one attempts to intervene.

Just as the girls are ready to bid farewell after extracting a promise to be called again, they suddenly drop their prizes and belongings and run towards the main door of the camp. The reason, Lata is standing there. *Dalit* by caste, Lata along with her mother had looked after the cleanliness of the toilets of the camp. They caress her hair, hold her hands and break down. So does Lata.

I vividly recall even today, a week after commencement of the camp. One day Lata picked up a crying Chintu, my son, and started cajoling him. Lata was familiar with Chintu because she assisted in my work. After finishing her work she would spend time playing with Chintu and this had become a part of her daily routine. Chintu and Lata were both happy.

It was as if the sky had fallen on these girls. They came screaming to me : "Preeti didi, come out fast. Lata has picked up Chintu!" Contrary to their expectations my careless reply was, "Really?" This answer did not satisfy the girls. An untouchable girl had touched a higher caste Rajput boy and it made no difference to me? With anger they continued, "But Didi Lata, is a bhangan (an untouchable)". "So what? She always plays with Chintu like this," I said. "Then we will not play with him", was the arrogant reply from the girls. "Your choice," I said casually and returned to work.

Today these girls are freely hugging and shedding tears for Lata unbothered by the presence of their parents. They are inviting her to their homes, leaving their addresses behind for her.

### Miles to go still....

She continues

Where do I begin? To tell the truth, there is so much to say that it is difficult to decide what to say and what to leave out. Just a few days after my marriage marked a new phase in my life that I had not even imagined. Circumstances suddenly changed and I was selected as the Head Teacher for a six month girls' camp organised at Abu Road by *Lok Jumbish*. Today I think back with disbelief at how I got through those six months. I felt I had forgotten what sound, undisturbed sleep was like. When I slept I would invariably wake up with a shock. I lived under constant fear that there are so many girls,

even if one runs away or if anything untoward happened how would I face their parents. Free-spirited and used to an open environment those *Garasia* tribal girls would take flight at the slightest opportunity. And they

were so swift, some one bred and brought up in a city could never keep pace with them. If eight escaped we would manage to round up and get back only five. Having spent there lives in jungles and hills the moment they were made to sit for study they would start screaming: we can't sit still like statues, please let us go.

I remember for the initial two months the only reason I ventured out of the camp was to either retrieve a runaway girl or take a sick girl to the hospital. In the hospital I was christened Mother Teresa. There was a time when these seemingly dry and uncaring girls viewed us with apathy and suspicion. But somewhere along the way - in between taking out lice from their hair and fighting with them - we all got used to each other. When their families came to meet them these girls would hide behind us in much the same manner as they used to hide behind their parents out of fear that we might take them away.

It was like I was born again. For the first time I came in touch with the girl within myself who was capable of establishing bonds and relationships, who could win people's confidence and become the 'need' of a place. I started getting offers from many organisations and life took another pace and direction.

And just then a new turn came. Lalji, Project Director of the Bap field unit in Doosra Dashak, got in touch with me and asked me to join him as a field worker. I had known Lalji in *Lok Jumbish*. A simple, straight forward, happy-go-lucky person, his persona for me and other girls like me was very reassuring and comforting amidst all the worries connected with our responsibilities. He was the person who took me to see the camps at Bali and Desuri. Slowly and surely, bonds of mutual respect and trust grew.

In the field, in Doosra Dashak, I was engaged in the process of establishing contact and initiating dialogue in Shekhasar *Panchayat*. The population in Shekhasar is a mix of castes. But I noticed that by virtue of the presence of a considerable number of Rajputs within the panchayat, whether the girl was a *Meghwal*, *Bhil* or from any other caste, for them a *Rajput* girl was like a role model, someone to be emulated. The mind-set was such that if the *Rajputs* did not send their girls out then how can we? I wanted to change this attitude. I myself belong to Rajput community. I started befriending the so-called 'lower caste' families. Obstacles were bound to come. And I faced many. The fact that the doors to my house were open for everyone, was disliked by many. Yet I continued this practise and persisted with my efforts to mingle with people. Using the older women of the household to put my message across I succeeded in reaching practically all homes.

Securing permission for the girls' education, and that too at a place away from homes for such a long period of time seemed a colossal task. We got the same reply from every house, "you come here and teach them. We will take the responsibility for your food and accommodation". How were we to explain to them that those girls who do not even raise their heads in the presence of men, were aware that all their limitations were linked to their being a girl; these girls who accept each decision taken on their behalf by others as a way of life, how essential it was to get them out of this atmosphere to an environment where breathing, listening and speaking fearlessly would be a reality for them.



So many people laughed at us, taunted us that we roamed from village to village for our petty jobs. Some even spread rumours: “they will sell the girls”. And yet, there were a substantial number of people who without actually expressing it in words were our supporters. Among them were old men and women and also young boys. And it was because of them that a time came when people openly helped us. Eventually from Shekhasar panchayat alone 29 girls came in the first residential camp

and stayed with us for three and a half months, regardless of the obstacles and rumours. There were girls from all castes - *Meghwal, Koli, Dholi, Rajput...*



Now when I look back it seems as though we have come a long way but still there is a road ahead to reach the destination. As a person I myself have gone through a long journey - beginning from a shy, delicate Rajput girl to a teacher, to field worker and community mobiliser and above all a person trusted for her capabilities. There is a sense of fulfilment. But there are still miles to go.

## The Story of a Handicapped Girl

Chauthi became a disabled person due to a severe attack of polio. A 19-year old, she is the resident of Kanasar village in the Bap block. Third in the line of 6 siblings of a family of a poor landless labourer, she got married at 16, when she was barely able to walk by herself. However, this relationship could not last. Very soon, her husband and in-laws, blaming her for her physical handicap, abandoned Chauthi. Her husband got married again. Absolutely unaware of the legal provisions, Chauthi couldn't even get maintenance from him. With a sense of rejection and despair, she returned to her parent's place.

When her village was selected under the Project, she came in contact with the field staff. After initial hesitation, she joined a three-month residential camp, which turned out to be a turning point in her life. She not only learnt reading and writing but everything which had meaning for her life. Guidance, care and affection of the teachers and a sense of togetherness with girls of her age helped in grooming her personality. Chauthi emerged as a leader of girls – helping them study, coming out of their shell and making a resolution for a new life. She herself achieved the level of grade III and learnt traditional embroidery in a two-month training programme organised by the Project. Now, earning Rs. 42 (about one dollar) for making a small cushion, Chauthi is an earning member of her family.

*She has taken initiative and formed a collective of adolescent boys and girls of her village.* When the water pond of her village went dry, Chauthi and her peers took charge and cleaned it up. She has also been active in securing Muslim girl's participation in the residential camps, interacting with the parents and community members. One can see Chauthi in the forefront of any struggle for social justice, leading a group of peers with a tremendous sense of confidence in her voice and gestures. She still walks with difficulty, but the confidence of her voice helps her overcome her physical handicap. For her, life has begun anew.

Informed of the legal provisions for an abandoned married woman, she is now all set to fight a case against her husband for maintenance and getting back the small amount of money given by her parents as dowry. From a lonely, fragile figure, Chauthi is now a 'peer educator', a role model!

### Majeed



17 year old Majeed is an old participant of Doosra Dashak. Second in a family of 4 siblings Majeed is a student of residential open middle school in Bari Dhani village of Bap block. He joined Doosra Dashak in its second residential camp of 3 months organised in Khichan, a village near Phalodi town of Bap block. When asked about his educational status he smartly lied that he had never been to any kind of schooling ever before. His abilities to read & write and identify number were also quite bad. In the bench- mark conducted in the beginning of the camp, he could hardly do simple addition and barely read a small paragraph with easy words from a children's book. Later, it was revealed that he had gone to a govt. school of his village for quite some time but learnt nothing. He passed grade 3 studying in residential camp in three and a half months. Govt. teacher took his exam with other children and announced him qualified for enrollment in grade V. However, his age was a barrier. It was absolutely impossible for a 16 year old to study with much younger boys and girls in the same class.

When DD decided to initiate OMS with the funding assistance from IGSSS Majeed was the first one to enrol. Son of a truck driver, Majeed has his own solid logic for this decision- "I believe there is no 'meaning' to life without knowing about the 'world'. Education has turned me from a Muslim to a human being. In OMS our schedule is very tight. We keep busy from early morning till late evening but find it really energising. What gives me satisfaction is that I have 'learnt' and 'grown'. I am preparing for class 5th will appear for an exam in July. I am sure I would succeed as my mind has started 'working'." He proposes to complete the 8th class course in one year thereafter.

A fair number of boys, approximately in the same age group as Majeed, are studying in OMS in the hope that they would ultimately catch the bus, which they had missed. Majeed, apart from a student of OMS, is a peer educator, a communication person and a community mobiliser. When he eats with his *Meghwal*, *Bhil* and *Dholi* (all scheduled castes) friends in his house, his eyes twinkle with bright colour. And he proudly says: "I have changed a lot, let me complete my middle school, I will open a school for the persons of my age not just to learn language - mathematics or science but to learn about life".

### **Muravvat, a Girl from the Muslim Community**

A girl with a sweet face and an innocent smile, Muravvat is the only participant from *Nure Ki Burj* village. Initially there were two more girls with her, but for some reason they left within a few days of the start of the camp. Muravvat remained behind. Muravvat's father, Laldin, drives a tractor in Orissa and spends most of the year away from his home and children. Her mother labours close by in a salt mine. Very rarely does anybody come to visit Muravvat at the camp. But this does not keep her spirits down. In many ways, this girl is an example even for the teachers in the camp. It was at a meeting organised between the girls and their parents that her mother and maternal uncle came to meet her for the very first time.

Anupama tells us that Muravvat is probably the only girl at the camp who had not had any visitors so far. The conditions at home are of extreme poverty. Her mother is not even able to pay the meagre fare to and from the camp. Despite this, they have never seen this girl sad or miserable. "To tell the truth, I have drawn immense strength from her. Despite having spent so much time in numerous camps, in the initial days I missed my children terribly whom I had left behind at home. Very often I used to feel miserable. But when I saw this girl, without a single scratch of sadness on her face when the other girls' parents used to come, I felt ashamed of myself. At such a tender age, if she can keep

her emotions in control, then why can't we? Even she must be missing her home, her parents, her brothers and sisters.”

Extremely bright in her studies, Muravvat is a part of the *Neem* group —which is more or less of the class III standard. During the *Holi* festival when Muravvat went home like the rest of the girls, she suddenly fell ill. Her mother decided not to send her back. Whatever she had

managed to learn so far was enough as far as she was concerned. But Muravvat explained to her and convinced her to send her back to the camp.

Today, pride and satisfaction are writ large on their faces as Muravvat sits within her group and, in the presence of her mother and uncle, rattles off mathematical calculations or reads from a book confidently. Muravvat's uncle is excited, and especially when the parents are divided into groups to evaluate the education of the girls, his enthusiasm is at its peak. Himself an illiterate person, watching the girls solve questions on the board makes him immensely happy. He poses questions on every subject that has been taught to the girls during the camp. This is probably the first knock on a closed door.

*Doubtless, the strength behind Muravvat is her mother.* She speaks very little. Her religion is totally different from that of the majority of the participants and so are the ways of praying to God. When she came to the camp she was a 'Muslim girl', but today she is simply Muravvat. One night during the camp, we were relaxing in the courtyard outside the rooms and having an informal chat with the girls. Spontaneously, some girls started singing *Madan Mohan Gopal saavre aa ja na* [a popular song in honour of the Hindu deity Krishna]. Suddenly, on *Mooli's* signal our eyes turned to Muravvat behind us who was dancing to the song, totally oblivious of her surroundings — unmindful of the restrictions imposed by community and religion. — DD, Knock on Closed Doors, 2003



We started the camp with questions and even today, at the end of the camp, we have been left behind with just questions. Will it be possible for them to redefine their new relationship with that old environment? Will the family, the community, even though in nascent stages of critical awareness, accept them with the realisation of this new identity? Will new paths be uncovered for the other girls to be able to look at their lives anew? Will they be able to sustain this new identity which is far removed from that of caste and religion? Or will they again slip into that same identity that they had so far been living? With the return of these girls, will the windows of some other houses also open up? All these questions are related to the realisation of success. Three months is a very short

time to open up these dilemmas, to challenge these boundaries and limitations that they have got so used to living within; and this will be our biggest challenge.

**Habib Khan**

My name is Habib Khan. I belong to a muslim family of Nure ki Bhuj village. I have 6 brothers and 2 sisters. My parents are farmers, mother is illiterate and father has studied till class III. I am studying in B.A. final year and my younger siblings are in school. To begin with, I attended six days DD Health workshop held in July 2001. Participants were from different communities. This was a shock for me and for 15 other participants from my village. Their way of dressing was also different from us. With lungi and kurta we used to stand out in the group. It was very embarrassing for us. Observing DD workers who belong to higher castes and were working very comfortably with other participants we realised that we should not discriminate among people due to caste, class or way of dressing, etc. So we became friendly with them. We met them again at Panchayat Raj Training. We did not discriminate among our fellow members during the workshop. As the workshop was over, we again maintained a distance with them. With repetitive interactions with DD workers brought a major change in my attitude towards other caste people. Now I consider them as my fellow members and respect them as equals. I also encourage others to bring about change in their attitude and learn to give due respect to all people. When our blood is same then why should we discriminate?. Now I have joined DD team and encouraged 25 young boys and 5 girls from my village to join the same. We are able to make a strong and committed cadre team. Initially we had difficulty in encouraging young boys and girls to join the residential camps. Parents were not even sending their boys to the camps. I and my team members had to face strong rejection and opposition from the community members. We did not lose our heart and continued to meet them and convince them about the benefits of the programmes. We were able to get few boys in the camp but were not able to get girls for the training. *I decided to get my own cousin sister.* She stayed in the camp for ten days. Then I managed to get a few more muslim girls who stayed in the camp for three months. *Seeing the change in these girls convinced the villagers about the benefits of the DD programmes. Now I am a strong person and work to make others strong and convincing individuals. Now I have my own identity in my village. I am able to develop leadership skills and became role model for others.*

**Murthy: The Indomitable Spirit of DD**

My name is Murti Bishnoi. I am a resident of Village Moriya. I belong to Bishnoi community. I have 4 brothers and 2 sisters. My father is a farmer. My father and mother are illiterate. One of my brother is doing service in Army and other brothers and sisters are illiterate.

In my younger age I could not start my education, only I was doing work in my home. I was illiterate. I was married at the age of 14. There are Father-in-law, Mother-in-law, three sisters-in-law and one brother-in-law in my in laws' house. My brother in-law is 8<sup>th</sup> pass. My husband is a teacher in a school for last 16 years. After two years of my marriage, I gave birth to a child. Again, I gave birth to a girl child and after two years gap a boy. . My husband was working in another village and I was minding the fields.

One day I was working in the field. A female worker of Lokjumbish Organization and Mr. Umrao Jain came to me and asked to me "Will you like to go with us for an education camp, we have come to take with us". I told them that I have 3 small children, where do I leave them. Then Mr. Umrao Jee told me, "Leave two children with your Mother-in-law and take one child with you". I was willing to go and felt very excited. My family did not object. I went with them to "Jalore Mahila Sikshyana Vihar". Girls of all religions were reading there. I could not adjust myself there and ran away to my village after five days. After some days again the workers of the same organization came to me and said, "Please come with us, this time you will adjust there". After two months again I joined the Camp and this time I was determined not to leave.

Forgetting all my worries, I continued my education. After studying for 3 years at Jalore, I passed Class 8. Again I returned to my village. In my village some women criticized me and ridiculed, “Can you get a job after your education”. I felt sorry for I had no answer. My father in law said I could go to Phalodi and continue my education there. So I came here. During the rainy season, again I had to go to field to feed the cows. I took my books along and read there regularly. In the process I passed Class-X. I had no job and was willing to do social work.

One day I met a girl who was studying with me at Jalore in the market and that Anil Bordia Jee has made an organization called Doosra Dasak and I am working for them. I wondered why have I not been called. I met Preeti and Lal Jee and he said, “if you want you can start work from today”. I started my job from June 2002 in three Village panchayats as Field Assistant for four years. Now for the last one year I am working in four Gram Panchayats as a ‘Sankul Prabhari’ successfully.

Slowly-slowly I learnt Hindi and now can speak Hindi with every body. Earlier I did not know a thing and now I am trained and am now giving training to others in

- 1) Natak : Doing and teaching
- 2) Operating Kathputli.
- 3) Riding Cycle.

I arranged first cycle rally of 12 girls. I have also trained 60-70 girls of Cycle riding and helping to do IGP *Kashidakari* work. I also travelled to many places. I have received a Certificate from the President of India at Chennai in recognition of my work. I was also selected by ‘Daak Duniya Kai Kahaniya, Delhi’. Three persons were selected from Doosra Dashak.





## Society for All Round Development (SARD)

Established in 1996, the Society for All Round Development (SARD) is a non-profit organization, dedicated to increasing the participation of India's most disadvantaged communities in mainstream development processes and helping them realize their full human potential.

**Beginning its work with one of the most marginalized "Meo-Muslim" communities in the Mewat region in Rajasthan, SARD has been replicating its innovations and experiences with due value additions to address the specific needs of different target groups.**

**SARD takes a culturally sensitive, holistic and area-intensive approach to all of its programmes and ensures their sustainability by increasing access to resources necessary for communities to undertake their own development initiatives. The strength of the organization is its ability to build networks and develop platforms for collaboration between various stakeholders and bring them together in partnership for devising and enacting solutions to pressing local problems. In this manner, SARD has developed strong and meaningful partnerships with many bilateral and multilateral organizations, as well as with a number of India's leading corporate houses.**

## Vision

- ◆ **A society that provides equal opportunity to all its members by ensuring that they have equal access to the services and goods necessary for realizing their full human potential.**

SARD's goal is to empower society's most marginalized groups by improving their access to quality education, health services and livelihood options while building their organizational and leadership capacities. This is done through a culturally sensitive, holistic and integrated approach to development that favours the sustainability of its programmes by providing people access to the tools, training and structures they need to maintain and customize the programmes initiated by SARD.



## Geographical Coverage

SARD is working primarily in North India with a specific focus in Rajasthan, Haryana, Delhi, Jammu & Kashmir and NCR region.

## Socio Economic Background

### Mewat context

SARD primarily works with Meo-Muslims, a community of farmers and agricultural labourers, living in some of the remotest areas of the Deeg, Nagar and Kaman blocks of Bharatpur district (Mewat region) of Rajasthan, since 1998. Meo Muslims were originally Rajputs who converted to Islam between the 11<sup>th</sup> and 16<sup>th</sup> centuries AD. Situated in the midst of the Aravalli hills, the geographical terrain of Mewat is harsh, the soil is hard and rocky and not suited for agriculture. Means of livelihood are limited to agriculture, agricultural labour and livestock rearing. Lack of access to resources and basic services leads to abject poverty and alienates these communities from the process of so called 'modern development.'



As far as education of children is concerned, poor institutional set up, lack of schools, apathy of local educational administration coupled with inadequate training of teachers and lack of a committed teaching workforce, has further aggravated the already abysmal educational situation of this community in terms of access, retention and completion of the primary schooling cycle, especially for girls. As a result, large numbers of children especially girls drop out of school in the early stages, or cannot access the process of schooling.

Further, the existing community forums meant for children's education give very little attention to the representation of parents' views and concerns. These forums include the Panchayats and School Development and Management Committees (SDMC), the Mother-Teachers Associations (MTA), which are mandated structures in the Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan (Education for All) program of the government, have not been nurtured into a position of strength to influence the functioning of the formal government run schools. In most cases, community forums are very nearly defunct. This

arises out of lack of awareness of roles and functions and lack of commitment, particularly at the ground level, for change.

The contextual reality of Mewat region necessitates the development efforts to be undertaken at a pace that is easily acceptable to those it is meant for in this rather difficult part of

Northern India. The area of operation on education includes a direct intervention in 14 villages of Deeg, and Kaman blocks of Bharatpur district, where it has its 'Taleem Ghar', also known as the 'Quality Education Center' (QEC). However, SARD **concentrated on five villages (consolidation) where intensive interventions were carried out.**

The community in consolidation villages is largely characterized by Meo population with as high as 100% belonging to the same. An approximate break up of Meo population in consolidated villages is given below:

Village Toda	-	70-80% Meo
Village Gadi Mewat	-	100% Meo (with one Harijan family)
Village Hingota	-	60-70% Meo followed by Jatab and Kumhar
Village Padla	-	80% Meo followed by Jatab
Village Rundkho	-	100% Meo

## Programme Design

SARD has a new team of dynamic, young professionals with expertise and enthusiasm. The management is decentralized and this young team is being given space and support to develop innovative and effective interventions in both education and in the community. In the Delhi office there is a strong concentration on resource mobilisation and monitoring the programme. A wide ranging MIS system has been developed, which it is intended to put onto competent software as soon as AKF I and PESLE have negotiated the integration of the PESLE MIS. Although this system is currently manually created, it is already generating monthly information that is feeding back into programme planning and adjustment.

Before approaching the community, SARD initiated a baseline survey in three selected villages namely Gadi Mewat, Padla and Toda. One of the major objective of the baseline survey was to study the problems of the existing mainstream education systems for Muslim girls/women and institutions and also to look at the need for a relevant curriculum that would provide effective quality education for the Meo-Muslim community, particularly the girl children.

SARD'S experience and close interaction with the Meo-Muslim minority community made it realise the requirement of a sustainable long term educational program that will address the specific needs of this community ensuring that they do not remain cut off from the mainstream.

The Bharatpur region of Rajasthan severely lacks basic infrastructure facilities. There is an absence of proper roads, schools, wells etc. The Government runs NFE (Non Formal Education) Centres to provide basic literacy to Meo-Muslim, but has failed to show any results. Moreover, the Meo-Muslim communities are also isolated due to their specific religious customs. The Meo-Muslim is originally converted from Hinduism to Islam. However, both Hindus and Muslims have not accepted them. This 'ostracism' has been one of the primary reasons for their isolation and underdevelopment.

The formal education system within the area of SARD operation was found to be ineffectual and uninspiring for the actual and potential student community. There was a serious problem of irregularity of the schoolteachers and teacher student ratio was over 100:1. The children had to commute 3-5 Km everyday to reach the nearest school. The girl children were seldom sent to school on account of social reservations and distance. Female literacy was below 2 percent. The girl's children were mostly confined to Madrasa system of education.

The Madrasa system, a very old way of imparting education, basically provides for religious education. It does not encourage the use of modern scientific methods of teaching. The religious instructors popularly called, 'Moulavis' do not allow the use of illustrated learning. Moreover, the Madrasas within the region do not even have a uniform curriculum. Therefore, it was

felt that the inadequacy of the present mainstream educational systems and institutions along with the various governmental educational initiatives to educate the Meo- Muslim community should be carefully examined. The project in the first phase laid emphasis on understanding the various intricacies involved in planning educational inputs for minority community along with capacitybuilding of SARD'S staff at the planning and field levels. *The action research inquiry was helpful in developing a long-term strategy for effective educational plans for Meo minority community in this region, particularly the girl children.*

**Understanding the Position of Women in the Community:** The position of women was defined traditionally, placing emphasis on their home-making, childbearing and childrearing functions. Educating girls was thus not a priority. The prevailing attitude in the community towards female education had been one that patronized religious education. The popularly held belief in the context of girls was that religious instruction received in the Madrasas was adequate preparation in 'education' since the tasks ahead for them would be to work at home after marriage. Religious education would help them learn properly the way women should carry them in a Muslim society. This would in turn make their marriages happen faster. However, the perception of education as a means to upward occupational and social mobility did not exist particularly for girls. Most of them either never attended any schools, or had dropped out for some reason or the other at an early stage from schools.

Disaggregated data shows that literacy rate amongst females above 18 years was abysmally low, which in a sense reflected the low status of women in the Meo-Muslim society. Thus the entire region of Mewat seems to be stuck in 18<sup>th</sup> century, where women's boundless energy was still limited to the kitchen and fields. Thus women in these areas were not partners in the development process; rather they were just like a group of distant onlookers who were nothing more than passive objects to the process of development. This partly explains the lack of development in Mewat region.

### **PESLE Partnerships**

SARD partners most closely with Bodh which is providing training and academic support. CEMD (Centre for Educational Management and Development) has contributed to the leadership and management training. SARD has now matured to the point where it too has a lot to contribute to the core partners in terms of community negotiation, working with minority community, cross fertilization with health initiatives and most particularly in the efforts that it concentrates on ensuring that mainstreaming is a prime focus of its work.

### **Institutional Linkages**

SARD's approach to institutional linkages is to draw in expertise from academic institutions, to debate new challenges, to help them to improve methodology and to offer collaborative partnerships including student access for research, exposure visits and school experience placements. SARD has the support and collaboration of a surprising number of institutions including CIE, Delhi University, Jamia Milia University, NIEPA, NCERT, Jesus and Mary College (for the Bachelor in Elementary Education students) and CEMD for management training. Gandhi Medical College regularly interacts with the health team and is planning an annual health camp for primary school children in order to attend to physical disability and other health problems.

The pressure from parents and the community for girls to continue their education post Class VIII, in their own villages, has resulted in an accreditation with *the National Open School* to allow them to study up to Class 10 examinations and for vocational training in computers. The NOS make a 50% contribution to the training of teachers to support this programme. This initiative will help to increase the pool of educated girls who will be able to work in welfare or educational programmes. The initial 2% female literacy rate has made it almost impossible to find local female workers or teachers. At present only 2 female teachers who have married into the community work in the area.

### **Liaison with Government and the Community**

One of SARD's big achievements is to have institutionalised strategies for leadership and democratic processes throughout the community and in the wider political community. For example they have put education onto the Panchayat agenda and now have effective community representation at these meetings.

SARD has set up consistent and effective relationships with the Director of Education and the Director and Resource staff of DPEP and now works regularly doing teacher training at the Block Resource Centres. The training of private school teachers is also included so that all the possible educational institutions that the community chooses to use in an area have some SARD intervention. In every school or QEC the community have raised funds through grain contributions and cash, and also contributed labour and building materials. These buildings are fresh and clean looking, decorated and full of children's work and stand out in a general environment that is very poor. The community has become vibrant and effective owners of the school and the education of their children and have participated in Panchayat meetings and have access to officials up to Zillah level. The plans for developing education in these nine villages were collaboratively developed by government, community, teachers and SARD workers at a one-week retreat in Shimla. Three Board members of SARD also attended. It was decided that the current Board would become advisors and local community and political leaders would become the active Board.

### **Programme Interventions**

SARD has three elements to its programme; *education is the central component* but a health programme also works in the villages and supports the educational work of SARD by an innovative

programme working with women, youth, newly married couples and local private doctors to improve the health, population control and general nutrition and hygiene of families in the area. This programme is run in partnership with CARE and Pathfinders There is also a small income generation programme which has potential to contribute to the curriculum development work for the upper primary schools vocational education.

**SARD entered the development scenario through the education sector but , they kept moulding and adapting their strategies and programmes to the needs of the communities they were working with. They are therefore also engaged very actively in the areas of health and livelihoods. Besides, SARD has always placed the greatest emphasis on community involvement. Their communities think with them, design and implement interventions with them and closely monitor the same and provide input for course correction.**

**Health issues which SARD focuses on:** Reproductive/Child Health/Family Planning, Silicosis, Silica-tuberculosis and Tuberculosis, Reproductive Tract Infection/Sexually Transmitted Infection, HIV/AIDS and Rehabilitation of the disabled (Especially children and landmine survivors).

**SARD has conducted vocational Training on:** Livestock management including goatery, poultry and sheep rearing; Kitchen gardening and organic farming; Dress designing/embroidery/patchwork; Promotion of handicrafts skills such as jute (macramé), textile designing, papier-mache, hand made basket weaving; Training on technical trades including: Automobile Mechanics, Mobile Repairing, Plumbing, and Electrical Training etc.

SARD also conducts various skill enhancement courses in its programme areas, ensuring that the vocations chosen are well suited towards the needs, culture and economy of the local community. After community members are trained in a particular trade SARD's work is not finished, as the trainers work with these beneficiaries to develop their entrepreneurial and marketing skills in order to give them the best chance of becoming economically self-sufficient in the future.

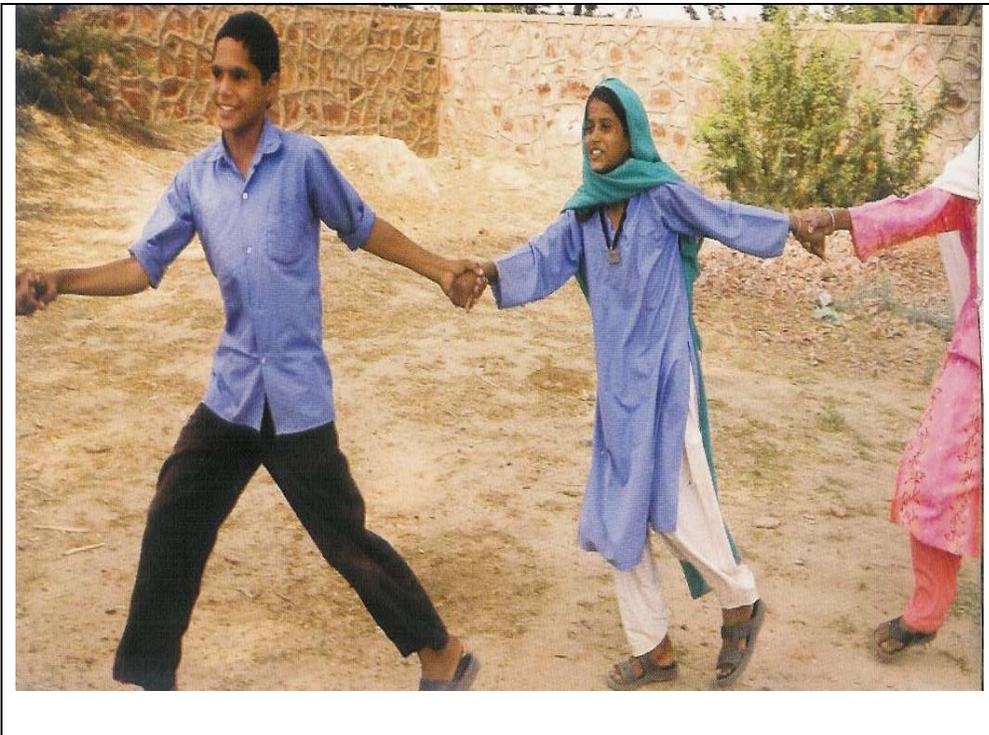
***SARD began its education intervention in 1997*** on a very small scale by establishing balwadis and Non-Formal Education (NFE) centers in three villages in Deeg Block Kalyanpur, Digcholi and Goddarwas), SARD operated these centers until 2000 when it joined Aga Khan Foundation (AKF's) Programme for Enrichment of School Level Education, PESLE. As one of the PESLE partners, SARD transformed its balwadis and NFEs into Quality Education Centres (***QECs***) on the basis of findings from the baseline survey and needs assessment study conducted in the project area. These QECs fulfilled two different

functions. On the one hand, they acted as bridge schools that prepared non-starter and dropout children for entrance to mainstream schools. On the other hand, they functioned as laboratories where innovations in minority education were developed and tested before these children were mainstreamed in local government schools.

SARD opened the first of three QECs in January of 2001. Since then, it has added around 10 more QECs which students call “Hamara Talim Ghar”. These centres represent the product of a fruitful community/NGO partnership. Not only has a community provided buildings in which to house the schools, but it has also raised money through grain banks’ to build/renovate schools infrastructure. Since their opening in 2001, these schools have enrolled thousands of children aged 3-14 years old who either had never been to school or who had dropped out of mainstream educational institutions. SARD’s success in attracting and retaining these children has been partly due to the involvement of the community in the establishment and operation of the QECs. Not only has the community built and renovated school buildings with resources it generated through grain banks, but also it monitors the schools and plays an important role in making decisions concerning the development and management of the QECs. Many of these decisions are made within the framework of village Community Based Organization (CBOs) and school Parent Teacher Committees, both of which are independent of, albeit closely affiliated with SARD.

The success of the QECs derives from SARD’s recruitment of teachers from and with the local community. These local teachers played a critical role in gaining community support for and retaining students in the QECs since local teachers are sensitive to community values and are invested socially as well as professionally in the community. SARD designed the QECs to be friendly places in which children are encouraged to participate at their own

pace in the teaching learning process. QEC Teachers employ a variety of methods (e.g. demonstrations, question-answer sessions, teaching aids, songs, games, etc.) to make learning both useful (i.e. practical) as well as fun.



The QEC curriculum is modelled on the District Primary Education Programme (DPEP) curriculum, which SARD has elaborated to reflect the culture, lifestyle and environment of Meo Muslim students. This is particularly important, since one of the main purposes of the QECs is to prepare students for entry into the mainstream education system. In order to ensure that these students remain in mainstream schools, SARD follows their progress, provides local school teachers with technical inputs and empowers the community to pressurize local government and panchayat officials to rectify persistent problems such as teacher absenteeism and high student teacher ratios.

### Features of Quality Education Center (QECs)

- QECs are mainly for 3-14 years children, with a focus on girl child.
- Teachers are trained in pedagogy and other management related issues. Children learn besides language, simple arithmetic and about their own environment.
- Teachers are on rotation basis, based on their skills in a cluster of schools.
- Teacher student ratio is optimal (1:30).
- Community provided the space, contributed in varying degree to construct building and basic infrastructure.
- QECs have succeeded in sending students to continue their education in formal schools.
- An atmosphere conducive to thorough and joyful learning.
- Flexibility in syllabus, activities based on the child learning.
- Monitoring on a day-to-day performance basis, by teachers and community stakeholders.
- Panchayat and local leaders of the community joined the movement to bring all children to school.

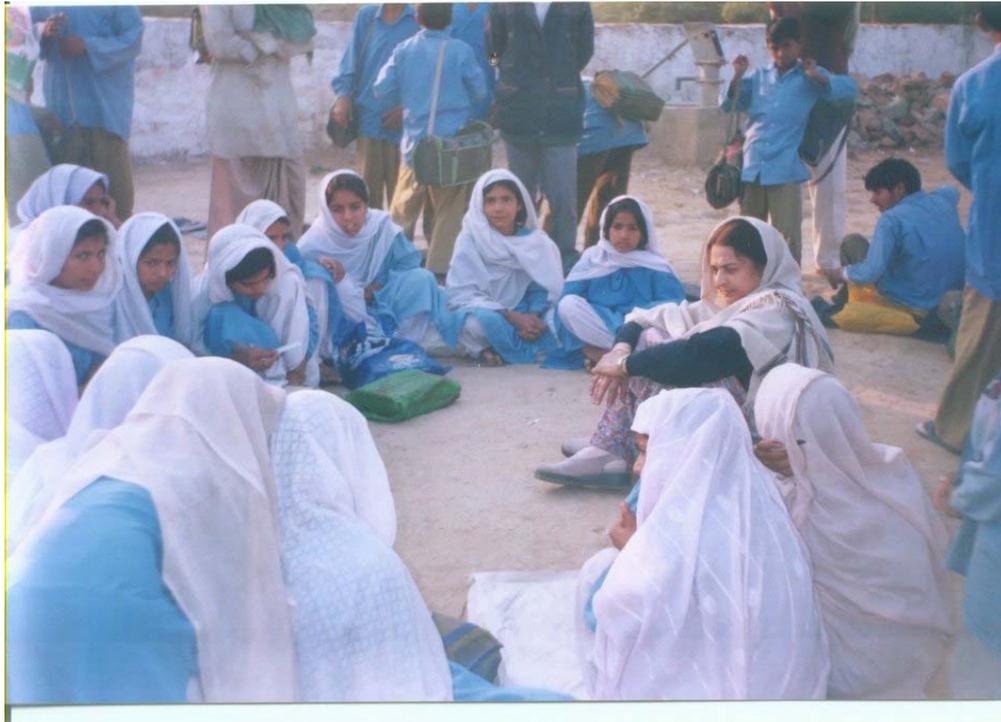


The QEC caters to children in the age group of 3-14 years, and includes a pre-school component. Children, who do not have access to school education, those who have dropped out and/or have never been exposed to it, are encouraged to participate in the QEC program. Till June 2005 SARD was running 17 QECs across 14 villages. In an effort to reactivate the government school and bringing about systemic change, three QECs have been merged with the government schools in this academic year. Through its 'Outreach program', SARD works directly with 9 government schools, and provides academic support to 72 government schools.

Finally, the accomplishments of the QECs can be attributed to SARD's close relationship with local government officials and politicians through interface meetings, exposure visits and trainings. These authorities have not only supported the QECs, they hold a positive thinking about these QECs which has resulted in them providing tangible support to the QECs, among other things, as under:

**Achievements:**

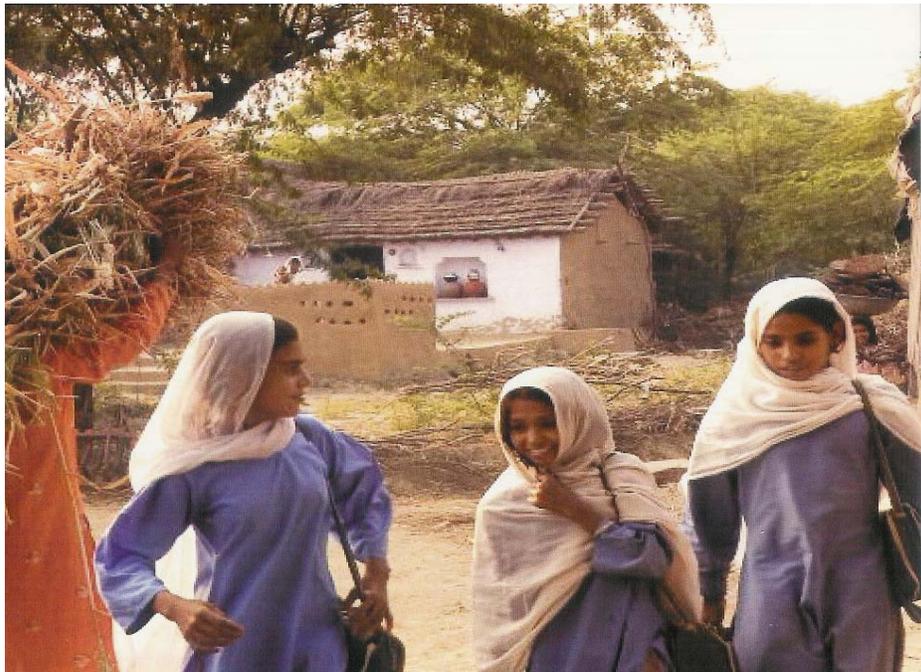
- Since 2001, SARD has enrolled 70% of all out-of-school children in the project area of which approx 66% are female and 95% are meo-muslim.
- More than 500 children have been mainstreamed to local government school in Classes I through V.
- SARD negotiated with local Maulvis to reschedule their study timings so that they do not clash with QEC timings.
- The community supported the education initiatives not only by enrolling their children in SARD's QECs, but also by raising resources through grain banks and contributed through labour support in constructing the QEC building.
- At the request of block education officials, SARD resource teachers provided training to government teachers in development of teaching learning material.
- SARD initiated and undertook the first health screening camps of school children in its project area.
- The PTCs and SDMCs have been adequately strengthened through sensitization, capacity building measures with a view to take forward the interventions beyond the project periods.

**SARD's Innovation in Primary Education:**

- Development of culture and gender sensitive curriculum and teacher manual with respect to minority of Bharatpur district in Rajasthan.
- Development of context specific Teaching Learning Material with the locally available things and material.
- Develop many innovative pedagogical activities for providing actual and direct experiences to children.
- Involving community inside the schools for academic and monitoring purposes. Community members are invited to tell stories in the QECs as part of language and

environment teaching Children learn a lot about their village and surroundings through the discussion with elderly people.

- Community members are also involved in the day to day functioning of QECs. They come and sit in QEC and observe the teaching learning process. They feel a kind of ownership towards QECs.
- Joint classes – for follow up of the mainstreamed children are organized in a month to assess the performance of SARD run QECs, government and private schools. This helps in comparative analysis if QECs students and mainstream students.
- Mobile system of teachers, rotation of teachers (subject expert) from one center to another.
- Libraries in QECs for both children and community.
- Integration of health and education activities especially life skills education for adolescent girls.



### Girls Education

Within PESLE the mandate has been to reach out to the most disadvantaged groups of children, providing them quality education through an inclusive approach. The PESLE partners reach out to diverse social groups in varied geographical locations across the country addressing the issue of basic education. During the initial years of implementation, the experience within the programme was that of a widespread gap in aspiration levels between boys and girls. The partner observed such a gap across all geographical locations and diverse social groups with whom it started working. Experience of working with girl children has established ‘access’ as a fundamental challenge. Access was coupled with the difficulties faced by girls in the project areas with regard to facilities such as school infrastructure, sensitivity and attitude at large within and outside school. Over the years, the PESLE partners have realised that activism and participation of communities, other students (boys and girls), teachers and girl children themselves can result in overcoming obstacles that prevent girls from accessing education and educational facilities.

The strategies thus evolved to address the issue of girls’ education emanates from dealing with the challenges. Thus the most important component of the fieldwork includes discussions with teachers, students, community members, NGO partners, field staff, religious leaders and local elected

members. The objective was to help them reconstruct some of their experiences. The following section will take up each partner separately, trying to understand how they arrived at working with girl children and how their strategies (if any) have evolved gradually.

### **SARD Approach**

**Identifying the Systemic Issues (Particularly for Girls’):** The baseline survey brought out some interesting facets, which to some extent explained the low status of education among girls and women in the region. The issue of access was identified as a major factor that prevented girls from getting enrolled in the government schools. In this scenario and background, even though there were some government primary schools, however, most of them were dysfunctional. The schools, which were functional, their ability to retain students, particularly girls were very poor. Some of the government schools were located far off from the villages. This made the situation ever worse for girls as the families resisted their travelling all alone to reach these schools. Even in villages, which had separate school for girls, it was observed that the very purpose of having such school got defeated due to the absence of any female teacher and also the fact that a large number of students were handled by one teacher, who was also the teacher of the adjoining boys schools and more often used to combine the two schools and teach the unwieldy size of students. To complicate the matter further, the government school showed very high teacher absenteeism, low number of female teachers, very low motivation level among the government schoolteachers, who were often insensitive towards the problems faced by girls and finally ineffective teaching methods. All this had led to total disinterest among children and their families in the region. They’ve found in Madrasas an alternative source of education for their children particularly girls. About 25% of girls were out of school at the time of the survey and it was not clear how many girls were going only to the Madrasas.

**Efforts towards Community Mobilisation (Creating Forums):** During the initial days, SARD approached the issue of education in a manner as if it was the organisation’s need to educate the community especially its women. However, this perception changed gradually as the community showed responsibility and started taking the onus of educating their children. However, there were a lot of other barriers that SARD had to overcome to move closer to its goal. The task was complicated given the aim of education of girls in particular from the Muslim community. SARD realised that mobilization had to done at the family level, at the community level and finally among the religious leaders to make them seriously think on educating girls from the villages.

**Family Level:** Most parents (mothers no less than fathers) expressed a much stronger interest in their son’s education than in their daughter’s. Consequently, they have much higher expectations for their sons than for their daughters. In the entire area, parents tend to think of a daughter’s upbringing mainly from the point of view of marriage. In the case of sons, the situation was very different, since male children remained closed to their parents after marriage and often look after them in old age.



Another crucial contrast is that the employment opportunities of adult women were much more limited than those of adult men. A major consequence of this outlook was that some parents were quite indifferent to their daughter's education. The sentiment of indifference expressed itself in many of the comments, e.g. "We marry daughters at a young age anyway, what's the use? She is not going out to for work", "We do not educate girls in our community", and "She should learn to do what she will have to do when she grows up like keep house". Even among those who wanted their daughters to be educated, the desired level of education was quite low. For daughters, it is only upto grade 8 that the parents expected them to complete. A substantial proportion of minorities did not even expect their daughter to study beyond primary level. One specific reason for this is that parents were often reluctant to let their daughters study outside the village. The situation is similar even in case of relatively better-off families. The case of Hakki Bano clearly brings out the above point.

*Hakki Bano is a 16 years old girl from a well-to-do family in Padla village. She has 5 brothers and 2 sisters. Though her family had money to spend on her education but still she had to dropout in the 9<sup>th</sup> grade as there were no schools in the vicinity of her village, where she could have continued her education. She used to travel for two hours to reach school and another two hours to get back home. Though her parents had resisted initially, but she managed to travel for one year and completed her 9<sup>th</sup> grade from a Radhaswami Private College in Nagar. While she managed to convince her family to spend 5000 per year for grade 9, the costs of education for grade 10 was very high, 14,000 per year including hostel. The high costs also contributed to her family's decision not to let her continue studies beyond grade 9. The absence of any government school in the nearby villages also made matters worse for her. She became a little uncomfortable when asked if she wants to complete her 10<sup>th</sup> grade now so as to get the state board certificate. She was not sure whether she would be able to go back to studies as 3 years has gone since she left her education midway. But she has one hope that one day she would be able to teach young girls from her village. She has already shown her interest to manage one adolescent group on behalf of SARD if she gets a chance.*

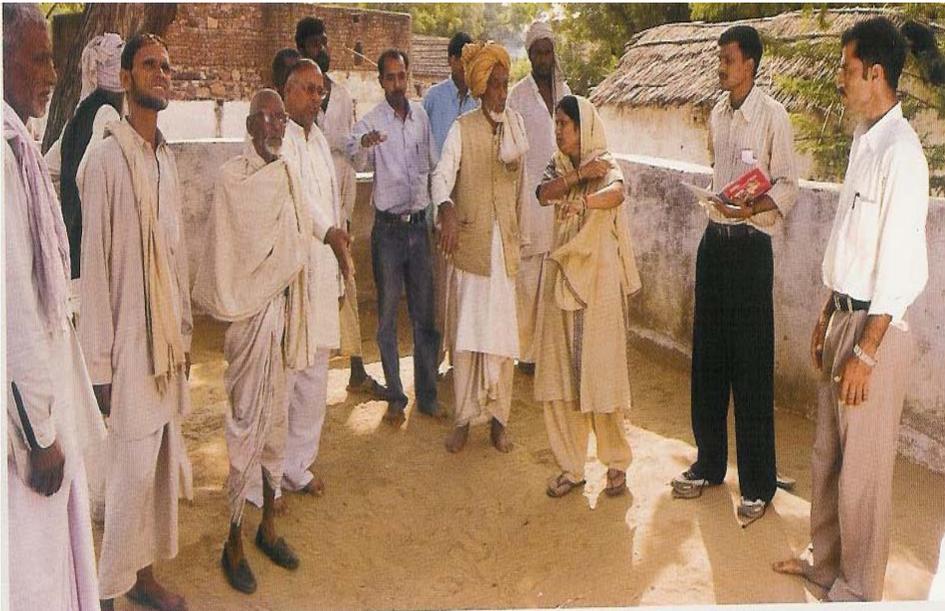
In order to mobilize families, they decided to focus on elder women from the villages, as they needed to be empowered in terms of thinking about their daughter's education and also to enhance their opportunities for self-development in a male dominated society. Towards this the partner decided to create a forum where women from the villages would come and discuss various issues related to education. Thus the Parent Teacher Association (PTCs) was formed in each of the nine QECs to solicit the participation of women. The objective was also to motivate the parents to re-enroll their

children in schools. The PTCs combined 10-12 mothers per village. Apart from creating forums like this, the partner also undertook household visits in every village to convince the parents about their daughter's educational needs. The SARD Community Level Workers (CLWs) were assigned the task of visiting the households. The PTC meetings have now become a popular forum for women to interact with the teachers and ask about their children, which they had never done before. The same is the case with Banno.

Banno resides in Padla village and runs a small shop. Initially she was not convinced about the pedagogy followed by SARD. However, impressed by the progress made by her daughters due to innovative ways of teaching in QEC classrooms, she has now become a strong proponent of girls' education in her village. She started attending all Parent-Teachers meetings organized by the partner. She also actively started mobilising other women from her own village and other nearby villages to participate in the PTC meetings. Now that she has become aware about the benefits of education, she has asked for certificates from SARD for her daughters so that given the chance, her daughters could teach sometime in the future.

Community Leaders: **SARD realised very quickly during its initial interactions with the community that apart from parents being indifferent towards educating their children, it is the local level elected Panchayat members who were equally indifferent to such issues. The members used to neglect the schools and held the view that Panchayat members only need to participate in school meetings and monitor the functioning of the school. They showed more interest in undertaking passive activities, such as school monitoring. None of them were interested in the development of village schools. Moreover, the panchs were not concerned about female education in their villages. SARD decided to undertake four important steps to empower the community. The first task identified in this regard was to make them aware, which in turn would generate greater involvement, leading to higher participation and finally more empowerment. Towards this end, from the very beginning, SARD started providing them regular information about government programmes, schemes and rights to children by organizing monthly CBOs (Community based Organisations) and PTC (Parent Teacher Committee) meetings. Apart from providing information, the partner also started involving the community leaders in their work. Involvement was encouraged to identify educational needs of children, particularly girls living in the project area. SARD also ensured their active participation in all meetings and undertook exposure visits for them to other project areas. Earlier in their meetings, education matters were never discussed or**

debated. At SARD's initiative, these local bodies started meeting frequently and took up education issues for the first time. Further, since education was given preference in the meetings, issues like universal education, increased attendance and increased enrolment were discussed in detail for the first time. Gradually through these platforms, people increasingly started accepting the idea of education of female children.



**Religious Leaders:** SARD also initiated regular dialogue with the religious leaders, commonly known as the Moulvis with respect to its efforts to increase the spread of formal education in the region, particularly among girls. Religious leaders took interest in motivating girls to receive formal as well as religious education. There was a marked shift from their initial perception that religious education was sufficient for girls.

### **Intervention with Girls at Three Levels: Pre schools, QECs and Adolescent Girls Groups**

**Initiation of Balwadis/Pre Schools:** Prior to their joining the PESLE programme, SARD initiated its intervention by establishing balwadis (pre-school centres) and non-formal education centres in

order to increase the exposure of children, girls in particular, to primary education in the year 1999. To ensure the success of these centres, SARD created a child-friendly learning environment by adopting a child-centered pedagogical approach and took care to ensure the age and cultural appropriateness of the teaching materials. Furthermore, SARD made every effort to identify and respond to community concerns and values regarding the learning environment. Later SARD established Quality Education Centers

(QECs) in order to provide meaningful education, which is sensitive to the context and needs of disadvantaged children, particularly for the girls in the region.

**Introducing Play way Methods and Nutritional support in Balwadis: For two years it was only the Balwadis or pre schools through which SARD tried to engage children, particularly girls from the villages. They did not start teaching these girls at the very beginning. The idea was to engage them through play materials and conducting other fun activities as the partner knew that girls' who had never been to school would find it extremely out-of the place if suddenly they were put into a totally different text bookish kind of learning environment in the balwadis. The partner realised that it would defeat the very purpose of reaching out to the children, who had never thought of what education is all about. Further in order to make these Balwadis popular among the children and their parents, the partner started providing food items, books, play materials from their own funds. Even the teaching space had to be arranged by the partner initially as the task of convincing the community was yet to accomplished. The Balwadi centres in some villages started receiving support from the community in the form of grain bank, however the acceptance varied widely across villages. In some villages like Toda, the villagers themselves reconstructed a hall for the running of the Balwadi. SARD started providing nutritional support to children coming to these Balwadis at the beginning. However, the partner started moving out once the community came forward and took up the expenses on their own. Gradually in some villages like Gadi Mewat, the village community contributed 60% of the total expenditure for the building of the boundary wall in some these the Balwadi centres.**

**Emergence of Quality Education Centres or QECs:** The concept of QECs came up when the partner thought that its aim of making the community aware on education issues was achieved to a large extent through the pre schools. The QECs were set up to provide meaningful education to young adolescent girls who had never been to school and/or unlikely to join the formal system of education. In this respect the QECs also function as an alternative system of education to the regular formal system in SARD's project area. The QECs were set up initially focusing on girls' as dropout among girls at the primary level itself was much higher than that of boys. However, with increasing demand from the local CBOs, boys were later on included for studying in the QECs. The idea was to mobilize the community and enroll as many girls as possible in the QECs and later mainstream them to government school depending on their learning levels. In order to avoid distance being the major factor for not educating girls, most of these QECs were purposefully set up within each of the nine villages in the project area. The huge proportion of girls enrolled in various QECs showed that many of the out-of-school girls or dropouts from the government schools had found a 'place' where they could make a new beginning. Even many of the older girls who had been denied schooling on account of social constraints, now had a space where they could make a late, yet meaningful beginning and substantial progress if they wished, or showed promise. This would also enable them to lead a more aware and enlightened lives. Some girls have been empowered from studying in the QECs and are now successfully taking up domestic responsibilities like budgeting and maintaining household accounts. It must be mentioned here that four adolescent girls in the Padla school who could read and write competently shared as a matter of great pride, their ability to 'read books', do 'hisab-kitab' (Budgeting) and teach younger children of their village. One could see that they had already begun to feel competent, useful and more empowered than the other adult women in their village.

*Rajmeena and Ajmeena are two sisters who live in Gadi Mewat village in SARD's project area. Both these sisters were denied education due to the prevalent negative thinking among the community as regards girls' education, who believe that girls just have to run the household of their in-laws and for this purpose only religious education would*

*suffice. For them conventional education or formal education is not necessary. Concerted efforts on the part of SARD field workers bore fruit and now these girls are receiving regular education. SARD Community Level Workers (CLW) persuaded their families after much effort to send both these sisters to school. Now, these girls happen to maintain all household budgets and accounts. They also help their neighbours in reading letters.*

**Retaining Girls in QECs:** In order to retain girls in its QECs, SARD focused on the content and process of education. The aim was to make the curriculum relevant yet joyful. The curriculum was designed in a manner, so as to remove the existing gender stereotypes and biasedness. At the same time the partner moulded itself whenever they felt the community was finding something difficult to accept given their socio-cultural background. An example could be the singing and dancing lessons for girls in the QECs. SARD understood their inhibitions and decided to focus on other activities like arts and crafts, story telling etc. In order to reduce the community's initial inhibitions, QEC teacher's encouraged students to recite Nazms, which they were learning in Madrasas. Earlier, in order to ensure that maximum number of girls benefit from this system, the timings followed by QECs varied in accordance with climatic conditions and harvest seasons. Care is also taken that girls obtain Din-e-Talim in the village Madrasa along with their education, thereby respecting the wishes of the community.

**Hiring Female Teachers from Community:** SARD placed considerable emphasis on recruitment of teachers. Recruitment has always been done from the local community (at the moment 88% of the teachers are Meo Muslims). Given the partners focus on girls, initially the strategy was to recruit as many educated women from the Meo community as possible. However, given the limited availability of educated women from the community the partner started recruiting male teachers as well for the QECs from the same community. This decision was critical in getting community support in the beginning. The local teachers were sensitive to community values and the social and cultural constraints, which existed in their community. Recruiting female teachers from the community helped the partner to build significant amount of trust and confidence. The girl's enrollment as well as participation also improved as a result of this strategy.

Ashuvi a teacher from Padla village who has been working for SARD since the beginning agrees that enrollment has indeed improved during the initial period due to female teachers in the QECs. She was approached by SARD to join the Taalim Ghar at Padla. She consequently received trainings on various occasions thereafter. However, she also pointed out that as the numbers were less, the partner had to recruit male teachers for running some of the QECs. She is currently working at the QEC in Hingota.

**Imparting Gender sensitive curriculum in QECs:** The QECs have children of varying age groups, sitting together. Even though, majority of the learners are girls, however, the partner deliberately encourages boys and girls to sit together and interact with each other in the class. Emphasis has been placed on employing innovations in the teaching-learning processes including addressing deep-rooted reservations in the community about girls' education. Using play way methods and teaching-learning materials, the partner tries to help the children overcome their own prejudices, stereotypes and rigidities. The curriculum developed by the partner shows how they've addressed the issues of gender sensitivity in classroom teaching. This is done using charts, pictures or by just discussing examples of women, who work in offices, factories and also bring water from wells in the villages,

prepares food for the family etc. Thus given the very young group of children that the Taalimghars caters to, the partner has restricted itself to illustrations and characterisation of women in non-feminine roles using charts and pictures.

**Developing Skills Among Girls:** As most of the girls come from a background, which doesn't permit them to express their opinion, the partner considered making the school environment fear-free so that girls could freely exchange their ideas with the teacher and her classmates. Thus the learning tasks undertaken in QECs are aimed at promoting both individualized self-learning and peer-group collaborative learning. Efforts are made to develop both oral and written skills of the students. The oral skills are developed through story telling, poem recitation and short discussions based on children's own experience. Girls are also taught how to read and write Urdu. Interactive sessions are undertaken so as to encourage the participation of a child in a group. Balika Shivirs (girls assemblies) are organized every first and third week of the month to develop leadership ability and to provide an opportunity to develop their oratorical skills and creativity through writing and story telling activities. Exposure visits for girls have been undertaken on a regular basis to provide them with the opportunity to observe and experience things that are not available to them in the village. For example, many girls have missed out on normal childhood experiences, such as visiting places of historical importance and participating in local fairs and festivals. The partner feels that such activities make learning and schooling a happy experience for them.

**Creating Adolescent Groups (Kishori Samoohs):** It is very clear that different social, religious and cultural constraints exist with respect to adolescent girls. SARD realised this from its experience of working in Bharatpur. Most of the children who dropped out from mainstream schools were young adolescent girls. To meet the needs of adolescent girls who have either never been to formal school or are unable to enroll in a QEC due to certain household responsibilities that they are expected to undertake, SARD has formed groups for adolescent girls (Kishori Samooh) in nine villages. Here the girls are given formal education and some basic skills education in the areas of health and nutrition. An attempt has also been made to strengthen the vocational component in education. Apart from that the adolescent girls are regularly informed about various health issues be it benefits of keeping themselves clean or making their children follow certain basic cleanliness in their daily life. Further, given the early marriages, the reproductive age of the women is much longer and the number of children per household is thus quite large. Realising this, forums like Kishori Samoohs are increasingly being used by the partner to make young girls more conscious about reproductive health issues and also to make them understand the importance of using birth control measures.

**A Day in Taalimghar (QEC):** The day starts as early as 8.30 in the morning. One finds children coming from long distances by foot. The children spend around four and a half hours at the QEC. Their day starts with the cleaning up and setting up activities, which they do in groups. This involves, sweeping, dusting of mats, putting up charts, pictures etc. stacking the teaching learning material and filling up water. This is followed by a whole group task called 'Vatavaran Nirman' also called 'environment building'. For another half an hour, wherein children are engaged in a variety of activities like singing Nazms, reciting poems, engaging in group discussions on general issues etc. The purpose of this activity is two-fold-firstly, to enable them to psychologically settle down for the day in school and also

**to provide them some basic understanding of issues vital to improving the quality of their life. The next hour is spent in subjects based learning, which is conducted in multi-groups. The subject may be either language or mathematics or environmental science depending on which Mobile Teacher is visiting the center. Once a week on Saturdays in the last hours, there is a ‘children’s assembly’ where activities are often conducted through a competitive mode. Children are given various activities so as to enhance their skill sets. The teaching learning process is activity based and transacted by both the Mobile and Associate Teachers. Children are provided with appropriate teaching learning materials. The word ‘appropriate’ is used to reflect content specific, competency-based material suited to the learning level acquired and the learning pace of the child.**

## Work with Madrassas

**SARD is working in an area where religious culture and practice is all pervasive. The area has**



**142 0** madrassas, many of which are small schools with just a maulvi teaching. The curriculum is often only Urdu and religious studies. Many of the poorest children, particularly girls, only go to these schools. In the past the Mewat community has shown resistance to any other form of education, particularly for girls, and there were previously no educated women or older girls in most of the Mewat villages. SARD has dealt with this issue with sensitivity and perceptiveness. They have worked with the whole community of the village where they have set up Balwadis or QECs including the religious community. Maulvis have been involved in all community discussions, attended the OD planning retreat in Simla along with other members of the community and have been fully involved in consultations. The 142 madrassas are under the control of a large central madrassa, Mewat Ka Madrassa. Members of this madrassa have visited SARD schools at SARD's invitation and as a result have endorsed the SARD method of working in the villages and instructed their local maulvis to co-operate with SARD programme. The team visited the central

**madrassa and had a meeting with the leader who expressed his satisfaction with SARD and offered his thanks to the team for the support of EC in this enterprise.**

## Research

**The newly formed research team has conducted some effective case studies in Hindi and has a refreshingly open and wide ranging view of what constitutes participatory research and evaluation. The highly qualified team should be able to produce useful and generalisable documents and studies that will inform PESLE partners and the wider education community. A Hindi newsletter, including some case study reports, photographs and community news has been started and the response and interest from institutions and organisations and the community is considerable.**

## Policy and Practice Impact on Education for girls

SARD is working on designing appropriate responses to the educational needs of girls. The strategies that will influence practice and approaches within the block and which will provide some universal lessons include:

- ◆ Developing mechanisms and approaches for getting parental, community and religious leader agreement on girls entry into school and retention beyond Class 5
- ◆ Contextual development of curriculum content for girls – particularly in relation to health
- ◆ Fast tracking the generation of girls as teachers in minority Muslim villages like

## The Ripple Effect

As mentioned earlier, it has been *a journey of ups and downs and great learning* as far as children's education is concerned at SARD. But there also have been moments when the organisation has been confronted with harsh reality and it was expected to address the situation. One such occasion was when the community came up with the problems of employment for the youth and how to impart some skills to them so that they can earn a living. A quick mapping in the villages and the organisation learnt that the youth is interested in skill training of some kind. Several agencies were contacted and finally the collaboration was struck with Hero Honda Company. Around 20 youth drawn from different villages were provided a 15-day training on Motor mechanics and related stuff. Today, each of them is earning a living either in the village itself or in the nearby towns.

For girls, it is not as smooth as this. There are too many adversities at family, community and school level. In the last few years they have been able to brave through some of these obstacles. For example, most of the girls in the villages are able to study mostly up to 5<sup>th</sup> standard. There are also cases where parents are gathering up their courage to send their daughters to nearby areas for higher studies. This is the phase when they need the maximum support. And girls in some villages are trying to create some space for themselves.

The adolescent girls have formed groups which are called as Kishori Samooh who meet in Talim Ghar and discuss many issues. There are girls in these groups who have studied up to MA. On many occasions, it is seen that these girls are acting *as effective change agents* at the family level. The girls feel that the Kishori Samooh needs to be strengthened so that all the girls of the village can

participate. This being a fairly new initiative, is yet to gather momentum and there is apprehension among the adults about this group.

The needs of adolescents are recognized by the organization and the camps organized in association with DPEP helped to encourage the girls to attend schools. These camps were organised in places where the girls' education is extremely poor such as Padla, Gadhi Mewat and kaban ka Vas. These camps attracted many girls and their parents and helped in clearing doubts about school education.

The women in villages are perhaps the ones who faced the impact the most, both good and bad. Good in the sense that their confidence level has increased and bad in the manner their changed status is not welcomed by the elders and men-folk so well. Nonetheless, they are bracing through the odds as they have realized the power of collective action and their dreams.

Earlier, women never figured in CBOs. There were no representations of women's issues and needs. Realizing that mothers play a vital role in children's education the concept of forming a PTC came up. And PTCs were formed in the village with the mothers of children coming to Talim Ghar. As the PTC started meeting with the leadership of the teacher, problems cropped up once again. People had apprehension about the teacher (usually a male) talking to women. On the other hand, women also had problems as they observed Purdah in front of the teacher. Anyways, all these problems were momentary and soon PTC became a regular feature in the village.

Women, in their spaces, could share many things. It almost became a point where they could give vent to their feelings and ideas. SARD also made efforts to engage a woman employee to this group. Initial hesitation of sending girls to Talim Ghar and to government schools was overcome by the women taking the mantle and deciding for it. The introduction of Mother Teacher concept, although very recently, is welcomed by people in the village. This is another step of building a cadre of social change agents among women and a sure path for sustainable process.

While talking to a group of PTC members, like others they also shared the difficult times SARD faced in the community and this is what they had to narrate about the process of coherence building between the Maulvi and the organisation – “The introduction of Talim Ghar in our villages threatened the existence of Maulvi as attendance in his classes reduced drastically. And moreover, in Masjid children are taught *Deen-e-Talim* and that needed to continue. So the negotiation took place and timings were adjusted in such a manner that children could attend both the classes ensuring co-existence of different forces. Now, it has become almost a part of life where there is no need for any more negotiations. The adjustments are done automatically paving the way for each other to continue the education process.”

Their involvement in the QECs is visible from their passionate involvement in the process. They may not be regular in meetings but they are informed about whatever is discussed in the meeting and also respect the decision taken therein. This is seen in their engagement in the decision taken on the utilization of revenue collected through grain bank.

### **Drops make an ocean!**

The concept of Grain Bank has proved to be an effective strategy for the organisation in villages. In this each household contributes a portion of the grain production (community is largely agriculture dependent) to a kitty. The collected grain is kept under the supervision of a CBO member. This is sold and the money collected through this is spent towards improvement of QECs. The benefits could be seen in the form of renovation of QECs in more than one way. The help has also gone towards meeting the expenses of the teachers' salary in case of emergency. Apart from instilling a sense of belongingness to the QEC, this has also showed some paths towards self-sustaining procedures for years to come. It is not without any reason that the CBO members say that the QECs will run even if SARD runs out of funds.





This effort has made many women come out of hesitation to talk to people. They have been able to put forth their view points in meetings without compromising their sense of religious security. “With the association in PTC, we have been able to shed off our hesitation and some of us have also become Mother Teacher in SARD’s Talim Ghar. It feels nice when we are able to talk to the officials with confidence” say a group of proud PTC members.

They now give examples of how they have motivated stubborn parents to send their daughters to schools. One such story is presented below.

### **Story of Sanjida**

Two sisters Sanjida and Afsina used to go to the school in the Masjid and their brother was studying in a private school. Sahab Khanji, SARD teacher, tried motivating the parents to send their daughters to Talim Ghar. Their father, Majlis, refuted this and said that there is no need for the girls to study hindi. Sahab Singhji explained about the importance of studying in Talim Ghar citing examples of how Noor Jahan used to attend PTC meetings without telling her husband and sent her daughters to Talim Ghar much to the dislike of her husband. This resulted in keeping the accounts of milk selling in a proper manner and not by drawing lines on the wall by Sanjida. This made Majlis understand the importance & utility of learning and thought to himself that his son who has been in a private school is not even able to read properly.

Changes may have occurred at individual levels for many, but one of the most remarkable one has been that of a sea change in the lives of Gadhi Mewat. This is a village where people earned a living through thievery. The shift from agriculture as their main source of earning to this profession had happened long back. And till recently each house had one or more members engaged in this trade. And there was a general decline towards agriculture given the fact thievery fetched good and quick money. They had perfected the skill of stealing so well that even the police could do nothing to catch them. Many stories take the rounds about how people have fooled the police in the past. And five years down the line, there is a complete change in the community. The first indicator is that there is a complete shift towards agriculture and people want to lead a respectful life. “Now there is hardly anybody who is into stealing, the children are going to school and the adults have also learnt the importance of self-respect”, says a parent in the village who sends both his daughters to school, something unheard of earlier.

### **The Silent Crusaders**

A peep into the lives of some of the members of SARD who have tried to draw some meaning through the work they have put in so far was very rewarding. One could understand the processes and persons, both. The description given below is a combination of experiences shared by few of the teachers of QEC.

Knowing about SARD was not a problem for Gulab Chand, but what was perhaps difficult for him was to understand the concept of an NGO. His life was earlier revolving around the private nursing home he was working. He heard about SARD from the fellow-villagers and got to know that the organization works for the development of people in the villages and brings the resources meant for them. Then one day he decided to join the organisation.

Soon, he was the mobile teacher catering to three QECs. Life continued peacefully in the Talim Ghar. And one fine day, “the organization faced a challenge it perhaps never comprehended – it was branded as a unit of Qadiyani system which converts people. The name of ‘European Commission’ on the sign board in Talim Ghar had made this doubt brew in the villages for sometime.” This rumour was not a small thing in a region like Mewat which always faced repression and fearful towards conversion. This was a very disturbed phase for SARD. He also reiterated what others had

said. After much effort and an investigation by Maulana Mir Qasim of Meel ka Madarsa, the palpable situation calmed down. The organization had to do a lot of rebuilding as this episode had done a lot of damage to the standing of the organization in villages.

SARD braced through such big and small difficulties and kept strengthening its education programme. It followed one principle i.e., take the problem to the public domain and let the community take the decision. This has always helped in making the entire community take responsibility.

And like Gulab Chand, there are many such workers who are silently making a change happen in an area which looked impossible just a few years ago. Presented below is an excerpt of what one teacher had to say when requested to write about his life in SARD –

### **Wheeling into the lives of children...**

- As told by Khemchand

It almost looks impossible that we have been able to work in this kind of a community for five long years. As a teacher, I have had both good and bad experiences. In these many years, many a times the thought of leaving the organization crossed my mind. Especially, when one cycles down 12 kms. in search of new methods for children only to encounter an apathetic community. Villagers do not seem to show any concern that the organization is making efforts to improve their children's education. All this frustrates me to no end at times. And invariably I take out my frustration on my family members as I get angry at the slightest instance at home. I repent for all this later. But I do not know how five years have passed by.

This organization has faced some of the most adverse conditions and one such phase was when funding was withdrawn and there were no resources to pay the teacher's salary. We all had to face two-pronged problems: one was how to achieve the goals we set for ourselves and the other how to meet the family needs. However, we all stood by each other and the community support pulled us through this difficult times. It was this community which once doubted our presence and had attempted to drive us away. This time they showed much resolve to let the QECs continue to run.

When one looks back at this community for whom children's education only meant Islamic teachings, the transition has been satisfactory. Now almost all the children in the village go to school whether it is QEC or the government school. And the most heartening thing is that the number of girls opting for higher education is increasing every year and there is a need to meet the demand in villages. The government has to make provision for this.

Apart from the field of education, changes are visible in other arenas as well. For example, in a conservative society like this it was unthinkable that women would be allowed to go out and talk. The mantle of the household is now vested on women and the difference is visible in the form of their living pattern. There is more cleanliness in the house and women are also becoming more aware about their reproductive health.

I also would like to mention here that the domination of older generation thoughts are not letting the young mind flourish in the area. There is a need to let these young minds take over and the day it takes over, there will be no need for organizations like SARD in the area. The youth is our treasure and we need to nurture them.

“Mainstreaming children have not been a very good experience as the government schools do not generally provide the environment children are exposed to in QECs. The chances of dropping out are always more. Very often, the community held the organization responsible for this as it was SARD who made people to dream.” This reality made SARD to devise some methods to intervene in

the school teaching process. Thus, the interventions went much beyond just infrastructure inputs. It involved continuous interactions and capacity building with the principals, the teachers and so on. Attaching a CRCF in a cluster from SARD bore fruits in the methods of teaching.

## Experiences and Challenges of Programming for Girls Education: Common Goals and Varying Strategies

As noted by us earlier, the four NGO experiments selected for field based analysis, was not only educative but also almost humbling. So much was done with so little by a very few self motivated individuals whose life goal was to work for the less fortunate amongst us whether be in desert, slums or remote rural locations. From small beginnings, these NGOs have gone on and on to create confidence and capacity in the communities to educate their children especially the girls.

There are any numbers of NGOs who are doing good work in various parts of the country. The reason for selecting these four organizations was a prolonged period of interaction with them ever since their inception. All four NGOs are 7 to 10 years old and one has seen them facing teething troubles and maturing into significant entities.

- ◆ All four organizations have been working in the area of education of *out of school children* and adolescents with *a strong gender focus* and *empowerment of communities specially women* in the area of health, legal literacy and on resolution of problems of social development through mobilization and participation of the concerned communities.
- ◆ As we have noticed all of these organizations have adopted the *Rights based approach to Human Development* among the deprived and disadvantaged sections in remote rural areas and/or urban slums and have strong *livelihood programmes* to make them self sufficient and self reliant.
- ◆ All of these organizations are *working with the system* and the effort is to *mainstream* as many girls and boys as possible in the existing state schools. Older age groups are also linked with the common system through the modalities of educational camps, learning centers which act as bridges to attainment of formal educational levels equivalent to primary, middle and matric in some cases through the state open schools, or national open schools/distance education programmes.
- ◆ They have commonness of purpose, show a high degree of commitment and *a highly professional secular approach*. The organizations do have a structure and central core teams and offices but their operations at the grass roots are highly decentralized and democratic. The nucleuses of programmes operation are the concerned communities and parents as also the young beneficiaries themselves.
- ◆ All of these organizations display *collegial* management styles as between the Head Office and field locations unlike the vertical hierarchical fiat based administration of the government programmes. In all organizations even though a programme design exists, there is immense flexibility in working out strategies according to specific local contexts.
- ◆ All four organizations have professional credentials and approaches, which have helped them to gain the confidence of the Muslim community. All four organizations have created *community based structures* for advocacy and education participation of children and adolescent.

- ◆ The **Front Line workers** are selected from and by the local community sometimes with lower educational qualifications. A concerted effort is made to train them in house and by giving them exposure visits and inviting experts. **Capacity building** of workers and the community members is a continuous process and is consciously done.
- ◆ A striking feature of all four organizations is not only empowerment of communities and parents but the fact they have taken care to inculcate **collective leadership, self confidence and self reliance amongst the children and young adolescents** in their respective areas. Communication skills, inter personal skills, working in collectives and respect for sensibilities and feelings of others are strongly ingrained both in the faculties and amongst the children/adolescents in the processes and programmes.
- ◆ These NGO's have the freedom and possibility to offer **an integrated and holistic model of social development** as against highly compartmentalized operations by functionaries of different ministries and departments. They all have chosen education as the central input but were very clear that education cannot be a stand alone system but is inextricably linked with other need like food, shelter, health, hygiene, employment and leisure, all which are vital elements of the quality of life of individuals and communities.
- ◆ With great ingenuity they are able to tap multiple agencies and departments for sustained funding and support. The Government ministries and departments look at human development in compartments making inputs through their respective line departments. At the receiving point, all these inputs are meant for an individual/ household but they come in different bags through different functionaries with little evidence of inter departmental coordination. These NGOs offer a **SYNERGY Model** where small inputs from various departments, agencies, and individuals are optimally and skillfully utilized to benefit the deserving.
- ◆ **Transparency of operations** instills confidence in the communities and donors. They involve community leaders to include the religious leaders as well as elected representatives for achieving a shared vision and commonness of goals and purposes with the communities with whom they work.

In case of **Mahita** their main work is in the closed alleys of the Old city of Hyderabad with predominantly Muslim population who are petty traders, craftsmen, rickshaw pullers, doing piece wage work in household industries and economically not very well off. Further, the locations served by Mahita are difficult ones considering the all pervasive influence and control of the leading Muslim Party.

**Doosra Dashak** is working on several locations in Rajasthan. However their intervention in a Muslim dominated far flung block of District Jodhpur is a little over five years and the results are remarkable not from the point of the numbers but the fact of piercing the almost hostile stance of the Muslim community and finally gaining their full confidence and cooperation. For instance, one noticed the BAP Core team who had their initiation in Lok Jumbish. They were all upper castes Hindus (Brahmin, Rajput, Bishnoi) who initially faced severe opposition but gradually became a part and parcel of the daily lives of these villagers, eating together and at times even making night halts in village households. A singular achievement of the BAP experiment is the breaking down of caste and religion barriers and promoting secular values and novel ideas acceptable to the local community. In five years, the Doosra Dashak team now comprises Hindus and Muslims both and offer a unique

example of communal harmony and cooperation. The success of the BAP experiment has encouraged Doosra Dashak to make a foray into yet another difficult area, the Mewat region of Rajasthan inhabited by a large number of Meo Muslims for whom any freedom for females is taboo including education. The ***Sanchar Team*** comprising young boys and girls, both Hindu and Muslims from BAP Block stayed in Lakshmangarh Block of District Alwar for ten days to carry out a well planned Advocacy Campaign. They walked the streets, sat and talked to the people convincing them about the importance of educating their children especially girls.

It took real hard work on the part of ***SARD*** to break the ice with the extremely traditional Meo Muslim community in District Alwar in Rajasthan. It was for quite some time that they

struggled to get a foothold and on account of their humility and persistence succeeded in aligning the community to the idea of encouraging school age boys and girls to join schools. It was quite an effort to attract the community to enroll their children in the Quality Education Centers set up by SARD from where after a year or so, these children were mainstreamed in regular schools with a strong follow up programme. SARD even placed one of their own teachers in the regular primary school to these children continue. SARD not only succeeded in setting up community based originations (CBO) comprising males which became instrumental in the enrolment and the retention of out of school children, majority of whom were girls. A special programme has been designed for the older out of school girls who may not join formal school but can receive informal education and skill training as also formal levels through distance education.

While Doosra Dashak selected BAP Block for working with the Muslim populations in the desert region of Rajasthan; Mahita has worked with Muslims in urban slums of Hyderabad in Andhra Pradesh; SARD deliberately chose the Meo Muslim dominated Deeg Block of District Alwar being fully aware of tough resistance they were likely to face to get Muslim girls to school, *the BETI Foundation* is working with the education of girls and women across the state of Uttar Pradesh in several districts, they are not specifically identifying Muslim dominated blocks which happen to fall into their ambit being low female literacy blocks. However, the challenges faced by them with conservative Muslims and Hindus are substantial. With the Muslim community insistence on Girls receiving *Dini Taleem* in Maktabas is so prominent that the working hours of their education centers are arranged to receive these girls when they are released from the compulsory attendance of the Maktabas.

All four organizations have *visionaries* as leaders who are secular and democratic in their approach and further are determined to work for promoting education of children and adolescents making friends and allies out of the parents and the communities. Their philosophy and world view is to follow the lead star which spells out empowering communities, fighting injustices, ending moribund practices and releasing communities from rigid ideological beliefs, in sum, transforming lives of the disempowered and awakening them to their entitlements.

## Chapter VI

# Summative Analysis

The present study was commissioned by the Ministry of Women and Child Development, Department of Women and Child Development (DWCD), in the wake of Census 2001 which made available religion wise data for the first time on a number of indicators critical for understanding the social, economic, demographic, occupational and educational status of minorities in comparison to the majority population and even for making comparisons among minorities. The absence of gender disaggregated data by religion, particularly in respect of literacy rate, enrolment rates at different stages of education, dropout rates etc., at national, states, districts levels was a formidable bottleneck in the planning and development of strategies and programmes for education of Muslim girls. ***For the first time we have hard data on which to base policy interventions for educationally backward minorities, the largest chunk being the Muslims.***

The Study is a step towards the preparation of ***a National Plan of Action for Advancement of Muslim Women's Education in India*** for enhancing their participation in elementary and secondary education and in higher education especially in professional and technical education. Specifically, the Study has analysed the present literacy and educational status of situation of Muslim Girls and Women in India, the social, cultural and educational factors and forces hindering their educational participation against the backdrop of existing Policies, Programmes and Schemes to promote education of Girls and Women in general and those belonging to educationally backward minorities and other socially and economically disadvantaged sections of our society.

Muslims constitute India's largest minority as well as the second largest Muslim population in the world after Indonesia. Educationally, Muslims constitute one of the most backward communities in the country causing concern. ***Muslim girls and women lag behind their male counterparts and women of all other communities.***

Any discussion on the present situation of ***education of Muslim women*** would need looking at the situation of women in general in India and specifically among minorities and the disadvantaged sections of population. It goes without saying that in the last 60 years after independence, the Women's question has received a lot of attention as reflected in the national policies, plans, programmes and schemes resulting in advancement of women in all fields. Besides, special committees and commissions on women have been set up from time to time resulting in policy changes and setting up of institutional structures for implementing programmes and schemes. Women in India have made significant strides during the six decades entering every field of education and taking on the challenges of various professions. However, masses of women still remain restricted by the vicious circles of family expectations, gender-role discrimination, social stereotypes and stigma.

***Women from different socio-economic strata have a great deal of disparity in their life situations. There are also significant differences in women's specific status across regions, caste and class, communities and religions.***

### **Women and Religion**

Religion acts as an important cultural factor, which reinforces the traditional perception of women as subordinate to males and under male control. The unequal position of women in the family is determined and reinforced by the dictates of the organized religion. *None of the major religions – Hinduism, Buddhism, Islam and Christianity ever conceded complete equality to women and have in fact institutionalised the secondary position of women versus men through written word and oral*

*interpretations by the male clergy. The ideal of womanhood is still modelled on the Brahmanical tradition and linked to a strongly patriarchal culture assigning a secondary position to women.* Buddhism and Christianity offer a relatively more egalitarian existence to women but within the patriarchal mode. Caring for the husband and the children and other members of the family is clearly enjoined on women as a 'first duty' and no laxity on this score on the part of women is tolerated. In popular Buddhism and Islam, women are not allowed to participate in certain religious ceremonies along with men. This is largely due to the myth of pollution. In the Hindu mythology, male female equality and complementarities are visible and the concept of *Ardhnarishwar* (Half male, Half female God) exists, but even Hinduism gives women a *Dwayam* (second) position. All the *major prophetic religions* assert male superiority and lay down *prescriptions and proscriptions* for females barring the B'hai faith which gives complete equality and respect to women as men and see them as the two wings of a bird.

*Women in India share certain features of social and economic discrimination, whichever religious community they belong to.* Patriarchal family is the norm in India, with a few exceptions. Father as 'head of the household' is a common stereotype even when proportion of women headed households is on the rise especially in rural areas. Men are placed in positions of power vis-à-vis women, irrespective of their religious allegiances. However, there are some specific features marking out the daily life practices, educational and work status etc of women in different religious groups. Within each of the religious groups, there is no homogeneity as regards women's status.

Women belonging to the same religion might yet have very different conditions of life, which are influenced by their earning capacity, employment, rural-urban set up, educational level, and so on. Within every minority groups, some women subsist below the poverty line (BPL), while others enjoy a higher standard of living. Caste divisions also influence the status of women, not only in the Hindu religion but also in other (minority) religions. We need to identify factors that account for differential impact of common constitutional and legal provisions, common policies, programmes and schemes on women from different communities especially the minorities and the disadvantaged sections of our population. There are a vast array of welfare measures aimed at the poor, the backward, the disadvantaged to include minorities, SC, ST, OBC, BPL families, among others. *We need to identify factors that account for differential impact of common constitutional and legal provisions, common policies, programmes and schemes on women from different communities especially the minorities.*

#### Education Lag of Muslim Girls

Muslim girls and women are lagging behind their male counterparts and as compared to other religious minorities except those listed under "Others" in the Census 2001. However, education of Muslim girls and women cannot be seen in isolation from the overall situation of female lag in education in India, the rural urban, regional and inter group disparities and the poverty of the households. *Need was felt to examine the present educational status of Muslim women and girls in a comparative framework, across communities, across regions in the wake of The First Religion Report, 2001.*

Earlier, educational and social situation of Muslims could be gauged only on the basis of small studies and sample surveys, the largest being the National Family Health Surveys (I & II), National Sample Surveys and some very large sample studies by Aizazuddin Ahmed and Zoya Hasan & Ritu Menon and various works of Abusaleh Shariff. The findings of these studies showed that Muslims are comparatively educationally backward minority community as compared to the majority community and other minority communities at the aggregate level but regional variations were found to be extremely large as between the northern and southern states. As such there is need to see educational backwardness of any group in the larger framework of over all development. Also educational backwardness of Muslim females cannot be assigned solely to religion or minority status and that poverty and location in backward regions was a major explanatory factor.

**It may also be stated that educational or economic backwardness is not confined to one community but cuts across religion, regional and caste boundaries. Our society is highly stratified and we find**

**extreme disparities in education and economic development among all the sections of our society Muslims have to be seen as a part of our social structure rather than studying them in isolation.** *Also, Muslims cannot be viewed merely from the point of view of a religious entity but also as a society consisting of several socio-economic groups and very wide dispersal across the states and regions.*

### **Constitutional Position of Women and Minorities**

The Constitution of India not only grants equality to women but empowers the State to take special measures for protecting and advancing their interests in all walks of life and making necessary legal provisions to this effect. The State has taken protective discrimination/ affirmative action for removing the cumulative disadvantage of women. The State and has also has ***played a very pro active role in organizing women for action***, major examples being, *Mahila Samakhyas*, *National Literacy Mission*, *Swayam Siddha*, *Swa Shakti*, *Rashtriya Mahila Kosh*, and a large number of Self Help Groups of Ministry of Rural development, and other micro credit initiatives. Further, India is a signatory to all principal international covenants and conventions such as the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (1948) and the CEDAW (1979); the UN Declaration of the Rights of the Child (1959) and the Convention on the Rights of the Child (1989).

The Constitution of India grants ***Muslims and other Minorities*** equality of status and opportunities with other citizens to accelerate the process of educational and socio-economic justice. The Constitution grants the rights to Equality and Right to Freedom of Religion and Protection of Interest of Minorities in regard to educational rights.

### **Policy Measures**

The Government of India, since independence, has been formulating various ***policies and programmes*** for the development of the religious minorities. Muslims, Christians, Sikhs, Buddhists and Zoroastrians (Parsis) are five notified national minorities and together constitute about 18 percent of India's population, Muslims alone accounting for 13.4%. The endeavour is to ensure conditions in which the minorities are assured of their constitutional and legal rights, and educationally and economically they are at par with the national mainstream. Apart from the National Commission of Minorities, the Government of India from time to time have been setting up various Commissions and other institutions such as National Commission for Religious and Linguistic Minorities, National Minorities Development & Finance Corporation etc. to ensure that the minorities are given further opportunities for their integrated social, cultural, health, economic and educational development. During the last six decades, the trend of upward mobility is noticed among Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes because of special treatment given to them through reservations, provisions for various incentive schemes, opening of residential schools and more access to government jobs etc but certain minorities feel that they are deprived of such advantages and are lagging behind in all aspects of life as compared to the majority group.

Mus ***Muslims and Neo Buddhists have been identified as educationally backward communities at the national level*** by the High Power Panel on minorities, SC/ST and other weaker sections headed by Dr. Gopal Singh. Subsequently, the Government extended to neo Buddhists all the benefits available to Scheduled Castes. The Committee recommended need for special efforts to bring the educationally backward minorities on par with the rest of the society and to make them participate fully in the national development activities. In May 1983, former Prime

Minister Indira Gandhi issued a 15-Point Directive on welfare of minorities. The National Policy on Education, 1986 and its Programme of Action (Revised in 1992) Programme of Action, 1992, first took note of the existing programmes for the Muslim Minorities and suggested a large number of short term, medium term and long-term measures to promote education of minorities and led to the led to formulation of major programmes like the Area Intensive Educational Development and Modernization of Madrasas as Central Government Schemes of the MHRD. However, ***the implementation of this 15 point programme was far from satisfactory*** and the commitments contained in National Policy Resolutions on education have not brought the desired result. Often the recommendations and suggestions contained in these documents remain on paper only.

A Prime Minister's high Level Committee (Sachar Committee) was appointed in 2005 to look into the socio economic condition of Muslims. Need was felt to review and recast the 15-point programme for Minorities, in order to sharply focus action on issues intimately linked to the social, educational and economic uplift of the minorities. While points relating to prevention of communal riots and provision of relief to riot victims continue to have an important place in the revised programme, there are additional points more closely linked with the development of backward minorities, relating specifically to employment, education and improved living conditions.

The ***New 15-point programme*** was felt to be necessary because of the gaps in the previous programme with regard to amelioration of socio-economic conditions and enhancement of socio-economic status of the minority groups. With a view to removing this lacuna and having a more comprehensive programme for minorities, ***the Prime Minister's new 15-point Programme for Welfare of Minorities was formulated, and approved by the Cabinet on 22 June 2006.***

**The 15-point Programme further provides that care shall be taken to ensure that wherever applicable, there is separate earmarking of the physical and financial targets for the minority communities under each programme/scheme, preferably in the ratio of the all-India population of each minority community. Thereafter, these targets shall be further split State-wise for each minority community in the ratio of the population of the minority community in that State. This will ensure that the benefits necessarily reach the target group in the proportion of the population of the group in each State. Budgetary provisions have been made during 2007-08 for specific inputs.**

### **Data Gaps**

***Census 2001 has filled in a major data gap by providing literacy and other population indicators by religion up to the village level.*** This data has confirmed the earlier studies and sample surveys that had brought out the educational backwardness of Muslim population, who had been granted the national minority status along with the Neo Buddhists. Regional disparities have emerged as a paramount explanatory variable. Gender disparities are prominent and rural urban disparities are the sharpest, even among women themselves.

The Study has attempted to build ***an extensive data and information base*** on education of Muslim women and girls to facilitate the work of policy makers, planners and researchers and for generating better understanding of their present situation and specific needs, if any. The study has collated, analyzed and interpreted existing data on all relevant indicators available from primary and secondary sources, official documents, reports and earlier studies on education of Muslim girls and women. Recording of Case studies of some successful experiments and innovations carried out in this area have helped increase our understanding of issues, both general and specific.

Considerable effort was made to access and analyse data on social and educational status of Muslim women and girls from the Census of India, 2001. Annual Reports of MHRD and other concerned ministries, NSSO, NFHS and some prominent earlier studies, and Action Projects on the ground and most importantly, ***the Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan***, that can lay the foundation for Equality in Education. At present, there is no disaggregated data available on educational participation of Muslim girls at any level. The publication and release of the Seventh All India Educational Survey, NCERT, is awaited as data on Muslim minority students and institutions has been generated, including information on Madrasas.

## Demographic Features

As per Census 2001:

- ◆ Muslims account for 13.4% of the total population and form the largest minority community in India. The proportion of Muslims among the states is concerned it was found varying between 97 percent for Jammu & Kashmir to 1.6 percent for Punjab.
- ◆ There are 50 districts which have Muslim population ranging from 30% to 99% spread over Jammu and Kashmir (10), Lakshadweep (1), Assam (10), Kerala (3), Bihar (4), West Bengal (5), Uttar Pradesh (10), Andhra Pradesh (1), Uttrakhand (1), Jharkhand (2), Pondicherry (1), Haryana (1) and Delhi (1).
- ◆ Cumulatively speaking 41% of Muslim population are found in 50 districts spread over Jammu and Kashmir (4), Uttar Pradesh (13), Bihar (8), Gujarat (1), Maharashtra(3), West Bengal (12), Kerala (4), Karnataka(1), Assam (3), Andhra Pradesh(1).
- ◆ Muslims are *more urbanized* than Hindus and Sikhs., Jains being the most urbanized.
- ◆ Among the different religious communities, the Christians have shown highest *sex ratio* (1009 females per thousand males), followed by “Others’ (992), Buddhists (953), Jains (940), **Muslims (936)**, and Hindus( 931) . The lowest value was found for the Sikhs (893).
- ◆ As against *child sex ratio* of 927 for all religions, it was 976 for ‘Others’ and 964 for Christians followed by 942 for Buddhists and **950 for Muslims**. However, child sex ratio was lower among Hindus (925) followed by Jains (870) and lowest among the Sikhs (786).
- ◆ **Younger Age Group (0-14 years):** Among all the religious communities the highest proportions of the younger age group (0-14), was observed for the **Muslims (45.1%)** and lowest among the Jains (25.2 percent).
- ◆ **Population in age group 15-59 years:** With regard to the population in *the working age group* by religious communities is concerned the highest value has been found for the Jains (60.6 percent) followed by Christians (61 percent) and **lowest among the Muslims nearly (53 percent)**. While in case of the Hindus, Sikhs and Buddhist the values were found varying between 57 to 59 percent.
- ◆ **Population of 60 years` and above:** It has been seen that proportion of **Muslims elderly is lowest** (5.75 percent) as against 7.45 percent of total population of the country.
- ◆ **Young dependency ratio is the highest among Muslims (778)** followed by Christians (499) and the lowest among Jains (390). However, the situation obverse in the case of Old dependency ratio.
- ◆ **Age at Marriage:** In 2001, the case of females who married below the legal age of marriage, was **highest among Muslims (43.2% )** followed by Hindus(37%), ‘Others’(36%); Jains (25%) and lowest among Buddhists (16.4%). The proportion of girl child marriages (less than 10 years of age) was 3 % of the total marriages. Further, among different religious communities, **the highest proportion of girl child marriages was found among Hindus (2.6%) and Muslims (2.2%) and the lowest among the Sikhs (1.1%)**.
- ◆ **Average Household Size:** The size of an average Indian household in 2001 was 5.3 for all religions; 5.2 for Hindus; **6.2 for Muslims**; 4.8 for Christians; 5.6 for Sikhs; 4.9 for Buddhist5s and 5.2 for Jains.
- ◆ **Child-Woman ratio:** A study of the Census of India 2001 data reveals that the child-women ratio for the age group 0-4 and 5-9 were the highest for Muslims (their values being 545 and 753, respectively) whereas it was the lowest for Jains (269 and 330, respectively).
- ◆ **Female Work Participation Rate:** Among the minorities, female WPR is highest among Buddhists (31.7%) and Christians (28.7%), followed by Sikhs (20.2%), and very low for **Muslims (14.1%)** and Jains (9.2%). Muslim women are largely engaged in self-employment activities like

small proprietary enterprises particularly in urban areas. The percentage of Muslim women workers undertaking work within their homes is much larger ( 70%) than all workers ( 51%). Employment of women in the rural unorganized sector is principally traced to nine employment systems. viz, agriculture, dairying, small animal husbandry, fisheries, social and agro-forestry, khadi and village industries, handlooms, handicrafts and sericulture. The women of religious minorities, ***especially Muslim women, have a big share in these very occupations. Most of the jobs in these sectors are low paid and performed by women.***

### **Poverty Scenario**

Most recent estimates place all India Poverty Head count at 22.7% based on 365 recall period 2004-05. In absolute numbers, this amounts to over to 252 million people spread cross India.. SCs/STs together are the most poor with a Head Count Ratio (HCR) of 35% followed by ***the Muslims who record the second highest incidence of poverty with 31% people below the poverty line. Incidence of poverty among Muslims in urban areas is the highest with HCR of 38.4%. In rural areas, the HCR of Muslims is 26.9% is also higher than that for All groups together.*** The Hindu (general) is the least poor category with an HCR of only 8.7% and the OBCs are at intermediary level HCR of 21% closed to the all India average.

***Income and Expenditure: Religious Community Wise:*** However, in the first ever exercise in mapping the economic contours of different religious communities in India, *the National Council of Applied Economic Research's (NCAER) National Survey of Household Income and Expenditure (2004-05)* comes out with some very striking findings. The Sikhs are the most prosperous lot in India, with highest household income, expenditure and ownership of cars, two wheelers, television and refrigeration. Christians and other smaller communities don't lag too far behind either. ***Hindus and Muslims are closer than one thought as far as average household income expenditure, savings and even ownership of select consumer goods are concerned. In fact , the gap between the two communities narrows appreciably, even reverses in some cases in favour of Muslims, in rural India.***

Hindus and Muslims, at a national level, run neck-and neck on average annual household income (AHI) of Rs.61,423 and Rs.58,420, respectively. In rural India, an average Hindu AHI is Rs.49,077 with Muslim close behind with AHI of Rs.47,805. ***An average Muslim household, at the national level, spends more than a Hindu one,*** with annual household routine expenditure (AHRE) at Rs.40,327 compared to Rs.40,009 for the latter. Sikh household AHRE is highest at Rs.60,475 with Christians at Rs.45,291. In rural India, Muslim AHRE (Rs.33,711) is higher than Hindu (Rs.32,555) and compares well with Christian (Rs.38,068).

### **Literacy of Population Aged 7+**

The findings of earlier research studies show that Muslims are comparatively educationally backward minority community as compared to other minority communities, which is borne out by the First Religion Report of Census 2001.

- ◆ ***Muslims have a literacy rate of 59.1%, which is lower than the national average literacy rate of 64.8%.*** Literacy rate among the Jains is the highest at 94.1 percent, followed by Christians (80.3 percent) and Buddhists (72.7 percent). Hindus (65.1 percent) and Sikhs (69.4 percent) have a marginally higher literacy rate than the national average of 64.8 percent. The lowest literacy has been recorded at 47 percent for 'Other Religions and Persuasions'. Literacy among Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes was abysmally low.

- ◆ At the state level the highest literacy rates among **Muslims** has been recorded in Andaman & Nicobar Islands at 89.8 % closely followed by Kerala at 89.4 per cent. **Although the national average Muslim literacy rate is low at 59.1 %, yet as many as 15 states and union territories recorded more than 70 per cent literacy among Muslims, including the major states of Tamil Nadu, Maharashtra, Chhattisgarh, Gujarat, Orissa, Madhya Pradesh and Karnataka.** Sixteen as many as 16 states and union territories have returned a lower figure than this. Haryana has recorded the lowest literacy rate of 40 % cent among Muslim population. This is closely preceded by the states of Bihar, Meghalaya, Jammu and Kashmir, Uttar Pradesh, Nagaland and Assam, all below 50 %.
- ◆ In 2001, **Female literacy rate of Muslim women was 50.1% compared to 53.7% for all communities; 53.2% for Hindu females and 39.5% for SC/ST.** For Muslim males, the literacy rate was 67.6%, in comparison to 75.3% for all communities; 76.2% for Hindu males and 64.2% for SC/ST. The literacy rates are much higher, if the SC/ST and Muslim population is excluded from the total population. It is as high as 81% for males and 59.8% for females. It is to be noted that the literacy rates are much higher amongst other minorities, Jains lead, followed by Christians, Sikhs and even Buddhists.
- ◆ **Gender Gap in Literacy:** Male female disparities in literacy rates is 22 percentage points for India as a whole. Among the six major religions at the national level, the maximum gap between male and female literacy is among Hindus (23 percent) followed by Buddhists (21.4 percent) and Muslims (17.5 percent points) and Sikhs 12.1). **The gender disparity in literacy rates among the Muslim population is about 9.67 percentage points in rural and 13.11 percentage points in urban areas.** Gender gap is only 6.8 percentage points among the Jains and 8.2 percentage points among Christians and **The highest gender gaps are found in Hindus and in 'Other religions' categories. This shows that the Muslim community, although exhibiting lower female and male literacy rates than the Hindu community, yet has significantly more gender parity in terms of this indicator**
- ◆ **Rural urban literacy** differentials are marked for all groups; the gap is the widest amongst Hindus and **lowest among the Muslims.** Intra female disparities as between rural and urban areas are the sharpest. The rural female literacy rate is just 29.52% for the 'Other Religions' category; **42.66% for Muslims;** 44.32% for 'Religion not Stated'; and 45.75% for Hindus. For urban females, literacy rates are better than rural rates for all the communities, but **among the minorities, it is lowest for the Muslim females (63.17%).** Similarly, Muslim males constitute lowest literate urban population (76.28%) among the minority groups.
- ◆ **Regional Variations** are tremendous making development a crucial variable. Muslims who constitute 13.4% of the country's population having substantial Muslim population in ten states, namely J&K, (67%); Assam (30.9%); West Bengal (25.2%); Kerala (24.7%); Uttar Pradesh (18.5%); Bihar ( 16.5% ); Jharkhand ( 13.8%); Karnataka ( 12.2% ); Uttranchal( 11.9% ) and Delhi ( 11.7%). **Regional disparities are maximum with the same community showing higher literacy, for example Muslims in the four southern states and both Hindus and Muslims having poor literacy performance in the northern states which also have poor social and economic development indicators**
- ◆ The **Muslim female literacy rate in at least 15 Indian states/union territories is significantly lower than the female literacy rates for all religious communities,** for instance, in Haryana, Himachal Pradesh , Punjab, Assam, Delh, Tripura, West Bengal, Uttaranchal, Chandigarh, Punjab, Jammu & Kashmir, Bihar, Uttar Pradesh, Rajasthan and Kerala, although in the last-named four states, the difference is not very large (0.6% for Bihar; 4.8% for Uttar Pradesh; 3.1% for Rajasthan; and 2.2% for Kerala).

- ◆ ***In ten states, Muslim female literacy rates are higher than the state average***, i.e. in Orissa, Jharkhand, Chattisgarh, Madhya Pradesh, Gujarat, Maharashtra, Andhra Pradesh, Karnataka, Tamil Nadu and Arunachal Pradesh. The difference is not much in Jharkhand (3.8%), Gujarat (5.7%) and Arunachal Pradesh (1.4%).
- ◆ ***In a number of states, the Muslim female literacy rate reflects the overall female literacy rate of the state/union territory in question.*** The data indicates that in a State like Kerala where female education is high (87.7%), Muslim females too have been positively impacted (85.5%). Similarly, in States like Rajasthan, Bihar, J&K and U.P. where female education is backward gets reflected among Muslim females also. For example, in Bihar the state female literacy rate is 33.1% and the Muslim female literacy rate is 31.5%. Similarly, Jharkhand and Arunachal Pradesh's low female literacy rates are reflected in the low Muslim female literacy rates; and Gujarat's relatively high female literacy rate is reflected in the Muslim case as well.
- ◆ However, this phenomenon of progress or backwardness of female literacy in a State impacting on Muslim female literacy of the same State is not discernable in quite a few States and U.Ts, notably Punjab, Haryana, Delhi, Chandigarh where their economic prosperity does not seem to have positively impacted the Muslim female literacy rate. In fact, Haryana has registered the

lowest Muslim female literacy rate among all the States and U.T.s of the country. *The abysmally low female literacy of the Meo-Muslims has brought down the Muslim female literacy rate of Haryana.*

### District wise Literacy

District wise Literacy Analysis further shows that majority status did not logically endow a better educational status to Hindus. For that matter, even minority status did not mean poor educational status. Jains are not predominant in any district and yet their literacy percentage is greater than 60% in as many as 528 districts. The number of districts where Hindu literacy is greater than 60 % is 230 as against 226 Muslim Predominant districts. This is despite the fact that Hindus are predominant in 81 percent of the districts. (Gupta, 2005-06)

### Case of 150 lowest Literacy Districts

Data for 150 low literacy districts as identified by the National Literacy Mission (NLM) were sorted by literacy levels for the different religions and then correlated with population data to determine whether low literacy districts were reflective of the minority-majority issue. It surfaced that most number of low literacy districts *across religions* fall in the states of *Bihar, Uttar Pradesh, Madhya Pradesh, Jharkhand, Rajasthan and Orissa* that are also the *most backward states in the country in terms of socio-economic indices*. Therefore, *educational levels of different religious groups in these states are correspondingly low and is not a definite reflection of either religion or its minority status*. This is further corroborated by the fact that the majority community of Hindus too has the maximum number of low literacy districts in these very states. (Ibid)

### Case of 50 lowest Literacy Districts

A similar trend is seen if we look at the bottom 50 Hindu literacy and Muslim literacy district

- ◆ ***For Hindus, 18 of the 33 low literacy districts in Bihar*** are in the bottom 50.
- ◆ ***For Muslims, 13 of the 23 low literacy districts in Bihar*** are in the bottom 50. Similarly, 9 of the 39 Hindu low literacy districts and 13 of the 40 Muslim low literacy districts in Uttar Pradesh fall in the bottom 50.
- ◆ ***Kishanganj in Bihar has the lowest literacy average in the country. Interestingly, two-thirds of its population is Muslim, and yet, Muslim, literacy here is one of the lowest at 20.7 percent despite its majority status.***
- ◆ ***Dantewada reports the lowest figure for Hindu literacy at 23.61, whereas all other religions are doing well. This is despite the fact that Hindus are predominant here with over 96 percent of the population.***
- ◆ Districts such as Malkangiri, Nabarangpur, Jhabua and Koprapt show higher literacy percentages in Muslim populations than Hindu literacy despite being Hindu majority districts. Out of the 20 lowest literacy districts, Hindus were predominant in 19 while Muslims were predominant in only 1 district, namely, Kishanganj.
- ◆ Out of the top 20 literacy districts, Hindus were predominant in 15, Muslims in 1 and Christians predominant in 4 districts. ( Ibid.).
- ◆ If the base of analysis is widened to the 50 lowest literacy districts, we find that ***average total literacy is lower among Hindus as compared to other religions***. Even rural literacy figures for Hindus are less than that for Muslims, for instance, and the trend is seen in both males and females. In urban areas, however, literacy among Hindus is relatively higher.
- ◆ ***In sum the educational status of religious minorities is not necessarily related to their minority status.***

*Education status is contingent on socio-economic status of the family/household in principal, area and region of residence. No community can succeed in educational advancement in case basic development needs of health, hygiene, adequate means of livelihood; shelter and food are not met.*

## Distribution of Literates by Educational Level

Literacy figures by themselves are not very effective predictors of the educational attainment of a person. Census definition of literacy connotes the ability to read and write and often just the ability to be able to sign one's name is declared by the respondents as being literate. Permanent literacy is a function of five years of schooling or its equivalent. Middle and general secondary education would enable a person to acquire functional language, mathematical and other skills for day to day living in present times. Higher Secondary is both a terminal stage and an entry requirement into higher technical education; it is therefore vital to see how women of different religious communities are situated at this level and at Graduate and above levels.

- ◆ The Jain community as well as Jain females have the highest educational achievements, followed by Christians, Sikhs, Hindus, Buddhists and ***the lowest amongst the Muslims***. Gender gap exists in every religious group but is considerably narrow amongst the Sikhs, Jains and Christians.
- ◆ ***Muslims display uniformly low educational indices.*** The highest proportion of literates without any formal educational attainment is found among the Muslims (4.5%). Another, 32% of Muslims have below primary level education, while 29% have completed primary level and another 15% have education up to Middle level; about 11% have completed high school and 4.5% have education up to higher secondary level. Only 0.1% complete Non technical Diploma level and 0.3% have technical diploma. Only 2.4% Muslim literates have education up to graduate and above. ***Percentage of women at Middle, Secondary and higher levels are lower than males among all the religious groups. Muslim females are the worst off especially the rural Muslim females.***

### Literate without Education and Below Primary

Of every 100 literates in the population 7+ in 2001, 29.4% are either literate without educational level or have reported incomplete primary education, this percentage being 31.8% per males and 38.7% of women. ***Muslims have reported the highest percentage of 36.4% in this category (34.3% males and 39.3% females).*** While Hindus and Buddhists approximate the national average, Jains report the lowest figures in this category i.e. 13.7% (12.1% males and 15.3% females). Even Christians and Sikhs have reported less than average for all communities.

### Completed Primary Level and Above

#### All Groups

- ◆ In all 26.2% of the literates have completed ***Primary level*** (24.8% males and 28.2% females);
- ◆ 16.1% have completed Middle level (16.6% males and 15.3% females);
- ◆ 14.1% have completed ***Matric/Secondary level*** (Males –15.2% and Females -12.5%);
- ◆ 6.7% literates have completed ***Higher Secondary / Intermediate*** level Education (Males-7.3% and Females- 5.9%).
- ◆ Only 0.8% have; completed ***non-technical/technical diploma*** or certificate non-equal to degree (Males – 1% and Females-0.4%).

- ◆ In all 6.7% have completed education **Graduate level and above** (Male-7.6% and Females-5.4%)
- ◆ **Rural literates** show high concentration at lower levels and much lower presence amongst Graduates and above. Only 3.4% are graduates and above compare to 12.8% in Urban areas. Amongst Males 4.3% have Graduate and above in Rural areas compare to 14.2% in Urban areas.
- ◆ **Females are lagging at every level** and only 5.4% females literates are Graduates and above. Less than 2% females literates in rural are graduates compared to more than 11% urban female literates.

### Indices by Religion

- ◆ **Hindu Urban males** report highest figures of 15.4% graduates and above and among Hindu female literates 11.9% are graduates and above.
- ◆ **Muslims show greater concentration at the Primary level and with receding presence at every successive higher level, more sharp decline is noticed after the Secondary level.** Only 3.6% Muslim literates are graduates and above compared to the national average of 6.7%.
- ◆ Amongst **Muslim male literates**, 4.4% are graduates and above compared to the national average of 7.6%.. Only **2.4% Muslim female literates** have completed graduate and above levels compared to 5.4% national average.
- ◆ The figures for **rural Muslim female literates** are far more dismal compared to their urban counterparts at every level. Only 2% rural Muslim literates have graduate and above education compared to 5.6% urban Muslim literates
- ◆ Amongst **rural literates Muslim males**, 2.7% have graduate and above education compared to 6.7% for their urban counterparts.
- ◆ **Rural Muslim females are at the bottom with less than 1%** reporting completed education graduate and above compared to **4.3% urban Muslim female literates**, with **all religious communities urban females literates at 11.1%**.
- ◆ Christians and Sikhs have higher than national average indicators of completed education at all levels. Jains who have literacy rates of 94% have less than 14% of its literates who have not completed even Primary level.. Amongst Jains 15.8% have completed Primary level, 12.3% completed Middle 22% are Matric pass, about 14% are Higher Secondary pass and 21.5% have education Graduates and above. However, the rural urban differences are prominent from Higher secondary onwards. Only 8.4% rural Jain literates are graduates and above compared to 25% amongst their urban counter parts. Rural Jain males literates report 10.7% graduates and above as against nearly 28% among urban Jain male literates. There are only 5.5% graduates and above among rural Jain literates compared to more than 22% among their urban counter parts
- ◆ We may note that Rural females are depressed in every religious group including educationally better off groups like Christians, Buddhist, Sikhs and Jains.

## Mean Years of Schooling

- ◆ Further, Mean Years of Schooling (MYS) by Socio Religious Communities estimated for 7-16 years age group of population in 2001, shows that a child goes to school only less than four years (3.9). ***The MYS of Muslims is the lowest (3.26 years)*** and that for SCs/STs is 3.67.
- ◆ The corresponding figures for urban males are 4.85 and urban females are 4.85; for rural male this figure is 4.0 and 3.34 for rural females.
- ◆ These figures are 4.02 for urban Muslim males and 4.03 for urban Muslim females; 4.4 for urban SC/ST males and 4.21 for urban SC/ST females, and, 3.53 for rural SC/ST males
- ◆ The lowest figures are 2.75 for rural SC/ST females (See Sachar Report, 2006, p259-260 for methodology Table at Appendix for inter state differentials).

## The Enrolment and Retention

**Improved Access:** During 1950-51 and 2003-04 the number of recognized educational institutions has seen a phenomenal rise. On account of intense efforts, India has achieved near universal access to primary schooling through formal and non formal / alternative schooling facilities. However, middle school facilities continue to be very limited especially in rural areas. Twelve years of formal schooling is required for entry into diplomas, technical and professional education courses or general higher education and rural girls are very disadvantaged

***More than 72% of our population lives in rural areas but according to the Seventh All India Education Survey of the total 43, 869 higher secondary schools, only 22,847 were in rural area as compared to 21,022 (52%) in urban areas. In 2003-04, for every 100 primary schools, there are 37 middle schools; 14 high schools and 7 higher secondary schools.*** There are a total of 5,86,986 villages in India. Of these 4,63,378 villages have a primary school; 1,84,348 have Upper Primary schools; 67,167 villages have secondary/high schools and only 19,649 villages have a higher secondary school according to Seventh All India Educational Survey.

**Enhanced Educational Participation of Girls:** During 1950-51 and 2003-04, India's total enrolments at various stages of education have gone up from 191.63 million to 222.03 million at all stages; from 113.8 million to 128.3 million children enrolled in the primary grades Classes I-V; from 42.8 million to 48.7 million at the middle stage (Classes VI-VIII); from 27.6 million to 35 million, at the higher / higher secondary stage (Classes IX-XII) and from 7.73 million to 10 million students enrolled in institutions of higher learning (MHRD, 2003-2004).

**Percentage Girls to Total:** During 1950-51 and 2003-04: the percentage of girls has gone up from 28.1% to 46.7% at the Primary stage; from 16.1% to 44.04% at the Middle Stage; *from 13.3% to 41.12% at the Secondary stage* and from 10% to nearly 40% in higher education.

**Enrolment Ratio: *Gender differentials are narrowing.*** At the ***primary stage*** gender differential is very small. Girls have GER of 95.58% compared to 100.63%. At the ***middle level***, 57.2% girls of relevant age group are enrolled compared to 66.75% boys. At the Secondary Stage, in 1950-51, only 17.7% girls of the relevant age group (14-18 yrs.) were in school. In 2003-04, this ratio has gone up to 34.26%. In 1950-51, enrolment of boys was 46.43%, 29.36% points ahead of girls. In 2003-04, the

gap has narrowed to 8.68 percentage points; the enrolment ratio of boys being 42.94% compared to 34.26% for girls.

**Drop Out Rate:** There is increased enrolment and improved retention. The dropout rate for the primary Classes (I-V) has gone down from 62% to 34 % for boys and from 71% to 29% for girls during the period 1960-61 to 2003-04. At the middle stage the dropout rate has come down from 75% to 52% for boys and from 85% to 53% for girls during the same period. The male female gaps in dropout rates are not very prominent as in the past, which augurs well for educational participation of girls. At the High/Higher Secondary level has dropped from 80% to 61% for boys between 1980-81-2003-04 and for girls from 87% to 65% during this period.

**Higher Education:** In higher education, girls from all categories form 35.23 % of the enrolments in Ph.D./D.Sc./D.Phil; 36.58% in M.A; 44.46% in M.Sc.; 37.71% in M.Com; 38.12% in B.A./B.A. (Hons); 37.47% in B.Sc./B.Sc. (Hons.); 35.45% in B.Com./B.Com. (Hons.); 22.31% in B.E./B.Sc.(Engg.)/B.Arch ; 42.81% in B.Ed./B.T. 40.56% in M.B.B.S. ; 14.23% in Tech. Indus., Arts & Crafts School; 20.26% in Polytechnic Institutes; 51.19% in Teacher Training Schools. *Participation of women in technical education, engineering, architecture, industrial trades is low and needs further attention*

## Some Recent Studies on Education of Muslim Girls

In 1980's, the participation of Muslim girls was low even in Muslim managed schools and colleges. The drop out was very high and performance of girls was found to be better than that of boys. The study concludes with suggestions for improving the performance of Muslim managed educational institutions, including *increased allocation of funds from, the state, Wakf Boards and the Muslim community for education, the setting up of teachers' training schools, especially for Muslim women, reservation for Muslims in institutions of higher education, increase in the number of Urdu-medium schools, technical training institutes and students' hostels in areas of Muslim concentration, better provision of Urdu textbooks and expansion of scholarship schemes, including from Zakat funds.* (Shamim Shah,1983).

**Sabiha Hussain (1990)** found that Muslims rank among the most marginalized communities in Bihar and she attributes this, in large measure; to the pre-conversion caste/class background of the vast majority of *non-Ashraf* Muslims in the state, being mainly converts from the 'low' caste Hindus. She also sees pre-Islamic customs, conservative interpretations of Islam and various economic and political factors as contributing to Muslim women's marginalization. Also in the wake of the Partition of India many Ashraf elites from Bihar migrated to Pakistan. Hence, the Muslim middle-class, which could have played a key role in promoting education of the community was greatly reduced. The author notes growing enthusiasm for modern education, particularly among economically more prosperous families. For such families, modern education for girls is seen to be in consonance with their understanding of Islam, thus *enabling girls to be better Muslims and to distinguish between 'right' and 'wrong'*. Support for girls' higher education is more evident among younger generation respondents, increasing numbers of whom, *see education not only as important for girls to be better housewives but also to enable them to be economically empowered by taking up employment outside the home*, usually as teachers.

The study notes an alarmingly high dropout rate of girls after secondary school owing to several factors including poverty, lack of separate girls' schools, early marriage and community resistance. Another major difficulty is the problem of finding appropriate husbands for highly educated Muslim girls. This is because relatively few Muslim boys go in for higher education because of poverty and the perception of discrimination in government employment, forcing many Muslim boys to discontinue their education take to some sort of private employment or self-employment in order to augment family's meager earnings. Considerable opposition to co-education exists, as parents feel this might lead girls astray. Many families tend to withdraw their girls from education after high school for fear of girls' safety, especially if colleges are located far from their homes. Only 12.5% of the respondents interviewed in this study are not opposed to their daughters studying in co-educational institutions.

*The study also puts forth a sharp criticism of the orthodox Ulema on the part of many educated Muslim women, who feel; these men equate patriarchy with Islam. These women argue for gender equality but within an Islamic paradigm, calling for reforms in Muslim personal law, critiquing the orthodox Ulema.*

**Abdul Hafiz Mabood (1993)** carried out a sample study of Muslim teachers in government and government-aided schools and Madrasas in the Azamgarh district in eastern Uttar Pradesh, also including parents of students studying in these institutions. The Study found almost all the **Madrasa teachers** surveyed believe in the importance of girls' education but stress *that the ideal education that Muslim girls should receive is religious, plus modicum of general subjects that can enable them to become good housewives and there should no distinction between boys and*

*girls*. Some of them favour school education for girls but in all girls' schools under female teachers till the attainment of puberty. These schools should be located within the locality where the girls live. All the *school teachers* stress the importance of girls' education and majority favoured *both religious as well as secular education for Muslim girls* and were not opposed to co-education. Among *the parents*, the study found that an overwhelming *majority believe that secular education for girls are not forbidden in Islam; and support education for girls but only till the age of puberty*. Many parents were in favour of sending their girls to good schools but were unable to do so *because of poverty and/or the lack of all girls' schools in the neighborhood. This and the desire on the part of most parents that their girls should have a basic grounding in Islam, explains the high proportion of girls studying in Maktabas in the district*. Many parents would also support sending their girls to higher-level Madrasas after they finish their basic Islamic education in Maktabas, but as the study notes, there are very few such institutions in the district, although there are numerous boys' Madrasas in Azamgarh. Some parents are also willing to send their girls to colleges outside their village but are unable to do so owing to the lack of proper girls' hostels in the towns in the region where such colleges are located. Hence, there is an urgent need for establishing more residential girls' Madrasas that teach religious subjects as well as impart a basic grounding in various secular disciplines.

**Rokaiya Begum (1998)** focuses on attitudes to Muslim women's education among rural Bengali Muslims. Muslim villagers generally perceive that modern education for girls is not an economic asset, since they believe that the proper place for women is the home. The lack of all girls' schools and the poor quality of teaching and infrastructure facilities in state schools are also major factors for the lack of enthusiasm for girls' education. The study finds that *many Muslim families are in favour of religious education for girls*. In the *Maktabas* in the two villages a large proportion of the students are girls. More than 60% of the females in the villages had received or were receiving some sort of religious education from such institutions. Generally this consists of basic Islamic knowledge, including the rules of prayer, ablutions and various supplications. *Only 16% of these females could, however, read the Qur'an*. Since the Maktabas attract a sizeable number of Muslim girls, they could be encouraged to include basic secular subjects as well. *The author suggests the need for reforms in the management of the Maktabas, given that attendance is very irregular and there is high drop-out rate, owing partly to the fact that education imparted there in is in Arabic and not in Bengali, the mother tongue of the villagers*.

**Hasan and Menon (2004)** point out that owing to several factors, not least, the deeply-rooted patriarchal traditions, Muslim women, on the whole, suffer from, various disabilities, some that are specific to them. Muslim women had very little awareness of government schemes, and like many of their Hindu sisters, had little power of decision-making in their homes. The authors point out that contrary to prevalent stereotypes about forces of conservatism being the cause for low levels of education among Muslim girls, financial constraints outweigh parental opposition as chief obstacle to girls continuing their studies. *In the north zone*, financial constraints are much more important for Muslims than they are for Hindus, underlining once again the poverty of Muslim households in this part of the country and this provides the most powerful explanation for the poor levels of Women's education in the north as a whole. *The south* presents a different picture. Girls belonging to lower socio economic classes have as good a prospect of continuing in school as girls from higher classes. *This is because of higher levels of state investment in education, a larger percentage of female teachers, extensive network of roads and good transport facilities that enable easy access to schools. This is a critical determining factor for both girls and female teachers. Even though Kerala is not a prosperous state, it is spending 6.3% of its gross domestic product on education. Uttar Pradesh's ratio is around 3.7%. Over 60 percent of teachers in Kerala and over 40% primary school teachers in the south zone are women, in contrast to 18 percent in Uttar Pradesh. Further, road transport is reliable and readily available in Kerala enabling female teachers to travel long distances to teach in rural schools*. While regional factors, poverty and the role of the State in providing resources are critical, the

impact of violent communal conflict as well as impact of *communalization of education* on Muslim girls is significant.

**Hasan and Menon (2005)** in another study looks at the condition of Muslim women's education in five cities in India, namely, Delhi, Aligarh, Hyderabad, Kolkata and Calicut (Kozhikode). *It is argued that given the poor condition of Muslim women's education there is a special need for the state to take a proactive role in this regard in order to promote social justice and empowerment of Muslim women and to remove the barriers that systematically reinforce their marginalization.* In India as a whole, the study found that only 16.1% of Muslim girls from poor families attend schools, while 70% of Muslim girls from economically better-off families do so, thus clearly suggesting that low levels of education of Muslim girls owes not to religion but to poverty. 98% of Muslim girls are said to study in government or private schools and only 2% in Madrasas, the majority being from poor families. North south divide is prominent. The average number of years that Muslim girls study is a dismal 2.7 years, as compared to 3.8 years in the case of Hindu girls. *The number of years that Muslim girls studies in north India is half that of her south Indian counterpart in other words, on the whole. Muslim girls are characterized by a very high drop-out rate from the formal schooling system. In Hyderabad, where Muslims form, almost 40% of the population, the study found that 84% of sample Muslim women are illiterate.* However, a growing number of girls from, economically better-off families are now enrolling in English-medium schools and in colleges. *Girls' education has witnessed a considerable degree of progress in recent years due to economic prosperity among some Muslim families because of remittances from relatives working in the Gulf. Reservation for girls and for Muslims in professional colleges and government jobs, state aid to Urdu schools and recognition of Urdu as the second official language of the state of Andhra Pradesh has had a positive impact.* The author noted a similar enthusiasm among some Muslims for girls' education in **Calicut and Aligarh** although for the same economic and social reasons mentioned above. Muslim girls' continue to be characterized by a high drop-out rate from schools. In addition, *it was also found that in recent years a number of Muslim-managed girls' schools have been set up that impart both modern as well as religious education which make them more culturally relevant and acceptable to many Muslim families.*

An interesting development in recent years in some parts of India is the emergence of higher-level Madrasas for specialized religious education for girls. *Asma Arif Ali's Study Hyderabad Ke Dini Madaris Mai Sunni Ladkiyon Ki Talim-o-Tarbiyat (2002)* documents girls' Madrasas in Hyderabad city. It begins with a brief overview of girls' religious education in Hyderabad city under the Nizams, showing how the Nizam and the Muslim nobility patronized Muslim schools located in mosques; Sufi lodges and Madrasas. It points out that the institution of girls' religious schools in Hyderabad is a novel one, the first such school, the *Madrassa Aisha ul-Niswan*, having been established as late as 1986.

**M. Akhtar Siddiqui's (2004)** shows how Muslims have sought to maintain and promote the tradition of Islamic education in the face of tremendous challenges through novel experiments. *For instance, in Uttar Pradesh, as a response to the marked Hinduisation of the government school syllabus and the numerous negative references to Islam and Muslim personages in government-prescribed textbooks, the Dini Talimi Council established a number of Maktabas combine religious and secular education as well as Urdu until the fifth grade and allow their*

**students to join government schools thereafter.** Siddiqui provides detailed information on the failure of various government-funded schemes ostensibly meant for minority education as well as the routine harassment that Muslim educational institutions seeking recognition and grants-in-aid are subjected to in many states. 'Even Schemes that were officially declared to be 'successful' were often a mere hog-wash' Other schemes also proved to be major flops. The scheme of providing Urdu teachers, Urdu Text Books and Urdu teachers training facilities, envisaged in the Revised Programme of Action, proved to be a non-starter. A good indication of the indifference with which the government greeted the scheme, Siddiqui says, is the fact that in Uttar Pradesh, home to the largest Urdu-speaking population in the country, there is only one Junior Basic Training Institute for Urdu-medium primary school teachers. *Likewise, the official three-language formula is far from adequately being followed in many states; with Urdu-speaking Muslim children denied their right to learn the language in state schools.*

The Scheme of the Area Intensive Educational Development programme ( AIED) was launched in 1993 by the Department of Education MHRD, GOI. The objective of the scheme is to promote education of children belonging to educationally backward minorities in areas of concentration of educationally backward minorities that do not have adequate provision for elementary and secondary education and also to promote participation of girls in science, commerce, humanities and vocational courses. *Anita Nuna ( 2003)* collected first hand information from, 8 states (Andhra Pradesh, Karnataka, Kerala, Tamil Nadu, Assam, West Bengal, Bihar & M.P.) and found that only in Kerala the programme was well implemented **through NGOs** who carried out a school mapping exercise and the schools were opened on the basis of demand and need of the community, thus, covering maximum number of beneficiaries. In Bihar and Assam, the Scheme had not taken off and the rest of the States used the grant for other activities like construction/reconstruction/upgrading, toilets, electricity connections, teacher's salaries etc. of existing schools which was not permissible under the scheme. The AIED thus had very little impact.

Another region-specific study of Muslim education is *Sekh Rabim Mondal(1997)*. The author argues that the educational backwardness of Muslims in India should be understood in the wider context of their overall socio-economic and political marginalisation. *Being a vulnerable minority, they feel their identity and lives as being under threat, which enhances the influence of the orthodox and conservative ulama, known for their lack of enthusiasm for 'modern' education.* Many Muslims are engaged in 'marginal' economic activities that do not require 'modern' education. *This in addition to widespread poverty among Muslims limits their low levels of educational aspiration.* To add to this is the fact that many Muslims are descendants of 'low' caste converts, retaining many of their pre-conversion beliefs and practices as well as remaining mired in poverty like most other 'low' caste people, which make higher education an unaffordable expense for many of them. Making the situation more complicated has been the mass migration of the north Indian middle class, who could have been expected to take a leading role in promoting modern education in community, to Pakistan in the wake of the Partition. *The study reveals that people preferred to send their children to regular schools (54.45%) as compared to those who preferred to send them to Madarsas.* However, even those who sent their children to regular schools made some arrangement for their religious education at home or in the village Maktab. *The vast majority of parents who sent their children to part-time Maktab wanted them to have basic religious knowledge and only 17.12% wanted them to go on to become religious specialists. This suggests, the author says, that they wanted secular education for 'routine requirements' and religious education for 'religious merit'.*

*Interestingly, the survey discovered that the majority of the students in the Maktab were girls.* Besides its religious worth, knowledge of Quran was seen as adding to the prestige of the girl and helping her in finding a good match in the future. *Only 22.89% of the Muslim females in the villages were found to be literate and these literate women could only read and write their names; 68.27% of them had studied till the primary level only, 27.63% till the secondary level, 3.35% till the high school level and only 0.75% till the graduation level.*

*The high drop-out rates and low levels of Muslim girls educational attainment owed to various factors, including poverty, withdrawal of girls from school to engage in household chores, opposition to co-education after puberty, opposition to girls' working out of the home, the belief that the right place for women is the home, for which higher education is not required, difficulty of finding a spouse for a highly educated girl and the fear that girls' studying out of their home after a certain age might be assaulted by males or by associating with boys might sully the family's name.*

**All of these studies have pointed out the relative educational backwardness of Muslims, especially, their female half. The reasons and perceptions range from perceived neglect and discrimination in access, to low economic status, restrictive and often apathetic attitude of the community and parents and the constant refrain of lack of women teachers, separate schools and Urdu medium. Noted scholars and leaders from the same community, however, see regional disparities and heterogeneity in levels of basic infrastructure of education, health, water, sanitation, roads, electricity, transport and communication as key variables reflected in unequal income and capacity of the parents to avail even the existing educational infrastructure, howsoever poor or deficient.**

### **Enrolment and Retention of Muslim Girls**

Data on Enrolment or Drop out of Muslim Girls is not available in Departmental Educational Statistics at the State or the Central Level as yet. The only comprehensive information on educational participation of Muslim girls has been collected by the NCERT for the Seventh All India Education Survey (2002) but is as yet not available/published.

We are basing our assessment of education of Muslim children on two recent large sample surveys, NSSO 61<sup>st</sup> round (in Sachar Committee Report, 2006) giving enrolment ratios for children age 6-14 years and a major study commissioned by MHRD, Department of Literacy and Elementary Education on Out Of School Children in age group 6-13 years in 2006. School data on Muslim minority is not available as yet.

*Stock variables of literacy and educational attainment by religion do indicate the educational backwardness of Muslims as per the First Religion Report of the Census 2001.*

However, proportion of children aged 6-14 years enrolled by Social and Religious Communities (SRCs) - 2004-05 indicates that at the All India level, Muslim children have enrolment ratio of 82% as compared to 85% for children of all groups together. The lowest are the SC/ST at 80%. In 2004-05, the Muslim enrolment rate was slightly higher than that of the OBCs but was somewhat lower than the average enrolment rate. *This is a positive trend consistent with the increasing focus of the Muslim community on education reflected in various interactions with the Committee ( See Chapter 2 of Sachar Committee Report).*

*A state wise analysis reveals reasonably high enrolment rates amongst Muslim children in many states.* In Kerala, Karnataka, Delhi, Maharashtra and some other states the enrolment rates among Muslims are higher than the state average. On the other hand, in states *like Uttar Pradesh, Bihar Jharkhand and Uttaranchal, enrolment rates are very low (below 70%).* In fact, in Uttar Pradesh, Jharkhand and Andhra Pradesh, enrolment rates for Muslim children are lower than all other SRCs.

The status of the students who are currently not attending schools has also been analysed from NSSO data. These students can be divided into two groups – those who have never attended any school at any time (never enrolled), and those who had enrolled but dropped out later (drop-outs). ***As many as 25% of Muslim children in the 6-14 year age group have either never attended school or have dropped out.*** This is higher than that of any other SRCs considered in this analysis. The incidence of drop-outs is also high among Muslims and only SC/STS have a marginally higher drop-out rate than Muslims.

***Overall, while the share of dropouts and children who have never attended school is still higher among Muslims than most other SRCs, enrolment rates have risen significantly in recent years.***

*In a recent study it was found that apart from the economic circumstance of the households, school enrolment for different communities is significantly affected by the local level of development (e.g. availability of schools and other infrastructure) and the educational status of the parents.* The study using 1993-94 data showed that higher levels of village development and parental education resulted in higher enrolment rates for all communities. Interestingly, once the children are placed in 'more favourable' circumstances (e.g. when parents, especially mothers are literate and infrastructure facilities are better), inter-community (Hindu/SC-ST/Muslims) differences in enrolment rates become insignificant. ***Moreover, differences in parental education were more important in explaining inter-community (especially Hindu-Muslim) difference in enrolment than regional development variables.*** (Borooah et.al, quoted in Sachar Committee Report).

In the light of these findings, the increase in enrolment rates in recent years is quite remarkable, as one cannot expect a significant increase in parental education between 1999-2000 and 2004-05. ***Muslims seem to be overcoming barriers to enrolment arising out of parental illiteracy and other socio-economic constraints. (Ibid.).***

### **Out of School Children (MHRD Study, 2006)**

The interventions under SSA and its predecessor DPEP have had a positive impact on school enrolments with substantially improved access and school environment. The number of out of schoolchildren was estimated at 42 million at the start of the Tenth Plan, has come down to 23 million in April 2003 and to 23 million in September 2004 according to Mid Term Review of the Tenth Plan (June, 2005).

The success of ***Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan*** is further evident as close to 93% children in age group 6-13 years are in school according to a recent study carried out by the Social and Rural Research Institute for MHRD in 2005. According to this study, there are a total of ***13.5 million children (6.94% in all, 7.92% female and 6.18% male)*** in the age group 6-13 years who are out of school; ***7.89% of rural children and 4.43% children in this age group in urban areas.*** Among ***SC children*** in this age group, 8.55% of rural children are out of school compared to 6.25% in urban areas. Among ***ST children*** in this age group, 10.11% of rural children are out of school compared to 4.21% in urban areas. Among ***OBC children*** in this age group, 7.73% of rural children are out of school compared to 3.83% in urban areas.

- ◆ ***Under SSA, a special data-base was set-up to track the Muslim children between 6-13 years. SRI-IMRB Survey 2005 included information on Muslim children – 9.97% of total 2.25 crores muslim children in 6-13 age group were estimated to be out of school, about 12 lakh boys and 10 lakh girls. 12% of the out of school children were in rural and 7% in urban areas.***
- ◆ ***Muslim girls form about 45% of the out of school Muslim children; 48% in rural areas and about 40% in urban areas. As above data indicates, the situation of Muslim girls is***

***better than all other communities which is a positive indicator of the impact of special efforts made under SSA to promote education of Muslim girls.***

Analysing by states/Union Territories, let us compare ***the percentage of Muslim out-of-school children who were in some of the states much above the national average.*** The national average percentage of ***Muslim children who were out-of-school was 9.97%.*** In this regard, the states/Union Territories that were worse than the national average were Bihar (28.34%), Daman & Diu (28%), Nagaland (16.16%), Uttar Pradesh (14.37%), West Bengal (11.33%) and Manipur (10.91%).

### **Percentage of Children enrolled in Schools in the Age group 6-13 by Social Groups**

MHRD Study on Out of School Children (6-13 years) carried out by the Department of Literacy and Elementary Education in the context of Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan is the only source which gives gender and community wise data for rural and urban areas. ***On the basis of this study, it is possible to derive the present enrolment of Muslim girls in age group 6-13 years in comparison with other groups.***

From Table 4.15, one can infer that in the age group 6-13, a little over 93% children are enrolled in schools. ***In the case of Muslims, about 88% are in school in this age group.*** Enrolment of SC, ST and OBC children is better than Muslim children. Considering these groups are also disadvantaged as Muslims, their better enrolment can probably be ***attributed to special incentives, schemes and facilities extended to these groups in the last 60 years.***

### **Interventions in SSA for Education of Minority (Muslim) Children**

- One of the thrust areas is to ensure availability of schools in all minority concentrated districts. During 2005-06, 4624 primary and Upper Primary schools, and about 31,702 EGS Centres were sanctioned in minority concentrated districts. During 2006-07, 6918 new primary and upper primary schools have been sanctioned in minority-dominated districts. 32,250 EGS centres with a total enrolment of 120.90 lakh children have been sanctioned for 2006-07.
- Sanction has been accorded for enrolment of 11.25 lakh children in Alternative & Innovative Education centres/AIE during 2006-07 in these districts.
- Madrasas/ Makhtabs have been covered under SSA. The Madarsas affiliated to the State Madarsa Boards and satisfying certain conditions are eligible for such assistance as is available to other regular schools under SSA. So far 8309 madarsas have been assisted.
- Taking note of the fact that a large number of children, especially girls, are found studying in other Madrasas the State have been advised that, an EGS centre or an AIE intervention may be started at such Madarsas by the local body concerned, whereby free textbooks and an additional teacher if required can be provided. 4867 makhtabs/madarsas have been taken up under EGS/AIE.
- Free textbooks are provided to all minority girls from classes I – VIII.
- Urdu textbooks are provided for Urdu medium schools & for Urdu as a subject..
- Based on the 1981 Census, 93 districts (now 99) in 16 states have been identified for focused attention. The major focus is on the states of Bihar, West Bengal, Uttar Pradesh and Assam.
- Out of the 1180 KGBVs, 210 schools have been sanctioned in minority blocks, 1430 minority girls have already been enrolled in KGBVs till 31.3.06.
- SSA has undertaken sensitization of States and UTs on the issue of providing a special focus in identified Muslim concentration districts. Additional resources have been provided to these districts for recruitment of teachers, construction of school buildings and classrooms. The strategy of providing AIE grants to Makhtabs/Madarsas for

introducing/strengthening the teaching of general subjects for children who are attending Maktab/Madarsas, but not going to regular schools is being followed in several States.

### **Education of Muslim Children in Madrasa - Maktab**

Maktab-Madarsas are autonomous institutions which form an integral part of Muslim cultural tradition and play an important role in the enculturation process of their children. The word which derives its origin from Al-Dars i.e. to teach or to learn has become synonymous with the traditional seats of Islamic learning today. At present, there are several thousand Islamic schools spread all across India. Most mosques have a primary religious school or *maktab* attached to them, where Muslim children learn the Qur'an and the basics of their faith. For children who desire to specialize in religious studies and train, as imams and *maulvis*, numerous large seminaries or *Madarsas* exist, with each Muslim sect having its own chain of such institutions. For many poor families, Madarsas are the only source of education for their children, since they charge no fees and provide free boarding and lodging to their students. In a vastly unequal social set-up, they provide a religious and cultural refuge to the poor Muslims by promising social security through bondage of religion in the Indian context.

**Types of Madrasas in India:** Madrasas in India are mainly of two kinds: Some madrasas are affiliated to state governments like and come under Minority Welfare Departments. Though small, these madrasas draw salaries and collect grants from their respective governments. Thus, the curricula of these madrasas are by and large similar to those of state sponsored schools or colleges in addition to Islamic subjects. The community based Muslim religious educational institutions are again of four types- (1) Maktab (2) Darul Qura'an (3) Madrasa and (4) Jamia which are institutions corresponding to schools, high schools, colleges and universities in English language. Common people call all these four types of Islamic educational institutions as madrasas. Therefore, our subject of discussion here is the second type of 'madrasa', which are funded and run by Muslims.

#### **Standard Class Level Equivalent to**

- ◆ *Tahtania* - Upto Class V; Primary Education
- ◆ Foqania - VI to VIII; Middle/Upper Primary
- ◆ Munshi/Moulvi - IX-X; Secondary/High School
- ◆ Aalim or Alia - XI-XII Intermediate/Sr. Secondary
- ◆ Kamil – Graduate
- ◆ Fazil – Post Graduate

**Curricula of Madrasas in India:** It is not possible to make any general statement about present curriculum of madrasa, as some Jamiaat follow their own pattern. So we will have a look at the curricula of a few famous Islamic institutions. Most of the remaining non-governmental madrasas in India are, some how or the other, affiliated with them or following their system and curricula.

**Although the exact number is not known, there are more than 3,00,000 madarasas, big and small, in India from where hundreds of students graduate every year (M. Shoeb Ansari z). A state-wise analysis shows that there are 721 madrasas catering to over 1,20,000 children in Assam, 1,825 madrasas catering to over 1,20,000 children in Gujarat, 961 for 84,864 children in Karnataka, 9,975 for 7,38,000 children in Kerala, 6,000 for over 4,00,000 children to Madhya Pradesh and some 1,780 catering to over 25,000 children in Rajasthan. In Uttar Pradesh, the number of Maktab is more than 15,000 and madrasas over 10,000 and there are 3,500 Madrasas in Bihar (MHA, GoI). At present there are official Boards of Madarsa Education in Assam, Bihar, West Bengal, Orissa and U.P. A large number of madarsas come within their jurisdiction and subsist on government funds.**

## The NGO Initiatives

The four NGO experiments selected for field based analysis, was not only educative but also almost humbling. So much was done with so little by a very few self motivated individuals whose life goal was to work for the less fortunate amongst us whether be in desert, slums or remote rural locations. From small beginnings, these NGOs have gone on and on to create confidence and capacity in the communities to educate their children especially the girls.

- ◆ All four organizations have been working in the area of education of *out of school children* and adolescents with *a strong gender focus* and *empowerment of communities specially women* in the area of health, legal literacy and on resolution of problems of social development through mobilization and participation of the concerned communities.
- ◆ As we have noticed all of these organizations have adopted the *Rights based approach to Human Development* among the deprived and disadvantaged sections in remote rural areas and/or urban slums and have strong *livelihood programmes* to make them self sufficient and self reliant.
- ◆ All of these organizations are *working with the system* and the effort is to *mainstream* as many girls and boys as possible in the existing state schools. Older age groups are also linked with the common system through the modalities of educational camps, learning centers which act as bridges to attainment of formal educational levels equivalent to primary, middle and matric in some cases through the state open schools, or national open schools/distance education programmes.
- ◆ They have commonness of purpose, show a high degree of commitment and *a highly professional secular approach*. The organizations do have a structure and central core teams and offices but their operations at the grass roots are highly decentralized and democratic. The nucleuses of programames operation are the concerned communities and parents as also the young beneficiaries themselves.
- ◆ All of these organizations display *collegial* management styles as between the Head Office and field locations unlike the vertical hierarchical fiat based administration of the government programmes. In all organizations even though a programme design exists, there is immense flexibility in working out strategies according to specific local contexts. All four organizations have professional credentials and approaches, which have helped them to gain the confidence of the Muslim community.
- ◆ All four organizations have created *community based structures* for advocacy and education participation of children and adolescent.
- ◆ The *Front Line workers* are selected from and by the local community sometimes with lower educational qualifications. A concerted effort is made to train them in house and by giving them exposure visits and inviting experts. *Capacity building* of workers and the community members is a continuous process and is consciously carried out.
- ◆ A striking feature of all four organizations is not only empowerment of communities and parents but the fact they have taken care to inculcate *collective leadership, self confidence and self reliance amongst the children and young adolescents* in their respective areas. Communication skills, inter personal skills, working in collectives and respect for sensibilities and feelings of others are strongly ingrained both in the faculties and amongst the children/adolescents in the processes and programmes.
- ◆ These NGO's have the freedom and possibility to offer *an integrated and holistic model of social development* as against highly compartmentalized operations by functionaries of different ministries and departments. They all have chosen education as the central input but were very clear that education cannot be a stand alone system but is inextricably linked

with other need like food, shelter, health, hygiene, employment and leisure, all which are vital elements of the quality of life of individuals and communities.

- ◆ With great ingenuity they are able to tap multiple agencies and departments for sustained funding and support. The Government ministries and departments look at human development in compartments making inputs through their respective line departments. At the receiving point, all these inputs are meant for an individual/ household but they come in different bags through different functionaries with little evidence of inter departmental coordination.
- ◆ These NGOs offer a ***SYNERGY Model*** where small inputs from various departments, agencies, and individuals are optimally and skillfully utilized to benefit the deserving. ***Transparency of operations*** instills confidence in the communities and donors. They involve community leaders to include the religious leaders as well as elected representatives for achieving a shared vision and commonness of goals and purposes with the communities with whom they work.
- ◆ All four organizations have *visionaries* as leaders who are secular and democratic in their approach and further are determined to work for promoting education of children and adolescents making friends and allies out of the parents and the communities. Their philosophy and world view is to follow the lead star which spells out empowering communities, fighting injustices, ending moribund practices and releasing communities from rigid ideological beliefs, in sum, transforming lives of the disempowered and awakening them to their entitlements.

## Some Major Observations and Conclusions

1. Our Study does confirm the overall educational backwardness of education of Muslims, more so of Muslim women and girls as noted by some previous large sample studies and surveys. Equally important is the finding that as usual national aggregate picture hides more than what it reveals as India really lives at many levels and what determines the access and success of female education is the overall social and economic development of a region and the rural urban divide in every region, within all communities, all social groups and among women themselves.
2. Minority-majority status does not really determine equitable access to education and the analysis of regional development/underdevelopment is a crucial caveat for understanding continued inequalities of. Gender, caste and class. Poverty and patriarchy pin women down. The polity is predominantly patriarchal and not truly democratic and desists all attempts for sharing space and power.
3. The Study confirms the unequal status of all women and takes note of the State-Civil society efforts to give *defacto* equality and dignity to women and dispels certain myths and prejudices through analysis of hard data and interaction with a few strategic individuals and organizations working for the advancement of education of Muslim females. No religion grants full equality to women and it is the male clergy, the male religious literati that lays down prescriptions and proscriptions, the Dos and the Don'ts for women of every group. Lives of women continue to be limited by the Personal laws that govern the private space of Indian family and actual and expected roles and norms for women, the under life structures. Women are creeping up the crevices to participate in overlie structures of the economy, the polity, decision making. Ironically, they have been accommodated at the grass roots and are making a space for themselves despite male domination and resistance and middle class

urban girls have shot into space, but the bulk remain poor, unlettered, pregnant and powerless, regardless of their religious affiliations.

4. The Study has noted the extensive policy measures (the intentions) for women and minorities, the institutional structures and dedicated National Programmes accompanied by budgetary allocations and official fiats. Time is perhaps ripe for the Civil Society, the Community leaders (males), women themselves to make use of the opportunities being afforded. In the case of Muslims particularly, the State is going flat out to enhance access (the Supply side) but the Demand lever is low and needs considerable effort for elevation.
5. The Study has attempted to build an extensive data and information base on education of Muslim women and girls to facilitate the work of policy makers, planners and researchers and for generating better understanding of their present situation and specific needs, if any. The study has collated, analyzed and interpreted existing data on all relevant indicators available from primary and secondary sources, official documents, reports and earlier studies on education of Muslim girls and women. Recording of Case studies of some successful experiments and innovations carried out in this area have helped increase our understanding of issues, both general and specific.
6. The study highlights that educational backwardness is not a factor of religion or demography, but a reflection of the socio-economic status of a community, in a certain region or state. Differences in educational indicators for children between social groups may be attributable to differences in income, parental education and development level of settlement between social groups, and not religion per se. This issue is particularly relevant for school enrolment. *The study calls for assessments of social development in various states to see why the disparity has narrowed in some states but not in others. Socio-economic backwardness and indicators thereof should be tabulated and considered before framing educational policy or providing subsidy, rather than basing it on religion. This would enhance the overall development effort currently gaining momentum in the country.*
7. The study brings to the fore the incongruence in educational status of minorities in India. Literacy data analysis does not support the proposition that religious minorities are educationally backward and are therefore in need of continued educational subsidies. With regard to Christians, Sikhs and Parsis, it is evident that their literacy levels are very good. ***With regard to Muslims, admittedly the Census data shows that Muslims fare below the national average. However, this conclusion obscures the fact there are pockets of low literacy that bring down the Muslim average.*** These pockets of low literacy are also seen in other religions and is especially evident among Hindus.
8. ***With regard to Muslims, admittedly the national literacy average as available from the Census data shows that Muslims fare below the national average. But this conclusion obscures the fact there are pockets of low literacy that bring down the Muslim average. These pockets of low literacy are also seen in other religions and is especially evident among Hindus. Another factor that leads us to conclude that the majority-minority debate in education has no basis is that analysis results for Hindus (in majority) and Muslims (in minority) are very similar and in some aspects, Muslims actually fare better. Since all minorities, with the exception of Muslims, display strong educational indices, it may be reasonable to conclude that factors other than religion are inhibiting forward movement in educational status of Muslims.***

9. There are regions in the country where all religions have a high literacy rate or low literacy rate. It appears that the overall regional milieu and state of low or high development may be contributing to improvement or stagnancy in literacy rates. The most number of low literacy districts across religions fall in the states of Bihar, Uttar Pradesh, Jharkhand, Rajasthan and Orissa. These five states constitute the most backward states in the country in terms of socio-economic indices. Therefore, education levels of different religious groups in these states are correspondingly low and is not a definite reflection of either the religion or its minority status. This assumption is further corroborated by the fact that the majority community of Hindus too has the maximum number of low literacy districts in these very states.
10. Certain discriminatory practices on the part of the state are also seen as reasons for the low status of Muslim education. The findings of some of the studies are poor schooling infrastructure, lack of women teachers and separate schools for girls, absence of Urdu medium schools and location of schools in far off places and shortage of hostel facilities for girls.
11. Growing enthusiasm for modern education, particularly among economically more prosperous families is noticed and who see modern education for girls to be in consonance with their understanding of Islam. Support for girls' higher education is more evident among younger generation respondents, increasing numbers of whom, *see education not only as important for girls to be better housewives but also to enable them to be economically empowered by taking up employment outside the home*, usually as teachers.
12. In the post NPE/1992 POA, we have seen ***a strong gender focus and proactive pro Girl Child*** policies and programmes like the DPEP and the SSA, which have definitely impacted positively on the compulsory education age group 6-14 years of all social groups with special focus on Muslim girls. The situation of Muslim girls is better than all other communities, which is a positive indicator of the impact of special efforts made under the SSA to promote education of Muslim girls. As, we have noted that less than 10% Muslim children in this age group were found to be out of school in 2006 as against the national average of about 7%. It is of interesting to see that Muslim girls form 45% of the total out of school Muslim children in the age group 6-13 years. More Muslim boys being out of school is a cause for concern and perhaps these boys are either employed in family business/trade or are attending Madrasas for religious education. Since Mid tenth Plan period, increased activity is noticed to promote education of Muslim minority culminating in the PM's 15 Point programme formulated after the recommendations of the Sachar Committee.
13. Partial data from the Seventh All India Education Survey (1992) shows that Muslim girls form nearly 47% of the Muslim children enrolled in Classes IX-X in urban areas (50- 58% in states like Andhra Pradesh, Karnataka, Kerala, Maharashtra, for instance) whereas this proportion ranges from 20-35% in rural areas in states like Rajasthan, Madyha Pradesh, Jharkhand, Hatyana, Gujarat, Bihar and Chattisgarh, Uttranchal and Uttar Pradesh .
14. The alarmingly high dropout rate of girls after secondary school owes to several factors including poverty, lack of separate girls' schools, early marriage and community resistance. Another major difficulty is the problem of finding appropriate husbands for highly educated Muslim girls. This is because relatively few Muslim boys go in for higher education because

of poverty and the perception of discrimination in government employment, forcing many Muslim boys to discontinue their education take to some sort of private employment or self-employment in order to augment family's meager earnings.

15. Considerable opposition to co-education exists, as parents feel this might lead girls astray. Many families tend to withdraw their girls from education after high school for fear of girls' safety, especially if colleges are located far from their homes. Only 12.5% of the respondents interviewed in this study were are not opposed to their daughters studying in co-educational institutions.
16. While all teachers and parents believe in the importance of girls' education but the Madrasa teachers stress that the ideal education that *Muslim girls should receive is religious, plus modicum of general subjects that can enable them to become good housewives and there should no distinction between boys and girls.* The **school teachers** favour *both religious as well as secular education for Muslim girls and were not opposed to co-education.* Majority among *the parents, believe that secular education for girls is not forbidden in Islam; and support education for girls but only till the age of puberty.* Many parents would like sending their girls to good schools but were unable to do so because of poverty and/or the *lack of all girls' schools in the neighborhood.* *This and the desire on the part of most parents that their girls should have a basic grounding in Islam, explains the high proportion of girls studying in Maktabas in the district.* Many parents would also support sending their girls to higher level Madrasas after they finish their basic Islamic education in Maktabas, but there are very few such institutions in the district, although there are numerous boys' Madrasas. Some parents are also willing to send their girls to colleges outside their village but are unable to do so owing to *the lack of proper girls' hostels* in the towns in the region where such colleges are located. They favour school education for girls but in all girls' schools under female teachers till the attainment of puberty. These schools should be located within the locality where the girls live. Most Parents *want secular education for 'routine requirements' and religious education for 'religious merit'.*
17. Muslim Girls for whom *Dini Talim* is seen a must are being sent from Hyderabad to Hamdard University in Delhi and even to some Madarsas in Rampur. Muslim Girls for whom *Dini Talim* is seen a must are being sent from Hyderabad to Hamdard University in Delhi and even to some Madarsas in Rampur. During our field visits we found that girls were confined to the mosques for any thing up to 4-5 hours for *Dini Talim* each day and the NGOs who were trying to give them general modern education for mainstreaming and certification, were finding it difficult to pack their teaching of school subjects for a duration of two hours or even less. When we look at large number of Muslim girls attending state schools, it appears that the compulsion to send them to the mosque for *Dini Talim* was not affecting all sections of Muslim population. *As noted on the ground the Muslim clergy have their stranglehold on the illiterate and poorer strata Muslims who are given dictats and injunctions on what a Muslim specially a Muslim female can do or not do.* The impact of the Muslim Clergy was visible in far off desert locations like the Baap Block of District-Jodhpur, in the Mewat region of Haryana and Rajasthan, in the villages and suburbs of Uttar Pradesh and in the Slums of Hyderabad. The common thread was poverty and poor means of income largely from subsistence agriculture in rural areas and in petty trades in urban areas among Muslims. *It is very evident that low literacy is class related and not caste related whether in rural areas or in urban slums.*
18. It is not as if, educated higher income people do not practice religion, a few may be areligious but not amoral. Majority develop religious/human values in their children in their homes and continue to celebrate many fine traditions of their respective religions but do not

wear religion on their sleeves. *The separation of State from Religion which is the hallmark of a Secular State is to be respected for which conscious interventions need to be made in content and processes of education regardless of the whichever group is managing the institution.*

19. There is disappointment, particularly among Muslims regarding the failure of various government-funded schemes ostensibly meant for minority education as well as the routine harassment that Muslim educational institutions seeking recognition and grants-in-aid are subjected to in many states. *'Even Schemes that were officially declared to be 'successful' were often a mere hog-wash'* The scheme of providing Urdu teachers, Urdu Text Books and Urdu teachers training facilities, envisaged in the Revised Programme of Action, proved to be a non-starter. Likewise, The Scheme of the Area Intensive Educational Development programme (AIED) was launched in 1993 by the Department of Education MHRD, GOI proved to be ineffective barring a few states as also the Madrasa Modernization Programme proposed under NPE Programme of Action 1992.
20. Our field works in the newly formed District Mewat of Haryana, which has 70% Muslim population and the lowest female literacy and educational participation in the country as a whole was revealing. During our meetings and discussions with parents, girls and *Maulavis* in several villages of Mewat and members of VECs, it surfaced that the situation of Muslim girls is worst. This is perhaps on account of the general backwardness of the area and the community and the often-quoted reason of conservativeness. Religious leaders do not see any use for giving formal education to girls and who feel that *Dini Taleem* is enough for girls. *However, strong hope is still left. The parents and village leaders, we met everywhere, were only asking for middle schools in every village, in some cases, separate schools for girls and women teachers, free uniforms, stationery and above all safe transport facilities if the girls have to go outside the village.*

**In most cases, parents are firm that girls can receive education up to any level but within the village. When secondary and higher education were discussed, their first reaction was, yes, if you provide safe transport and that too free of cost. Most villages we visited were those where weaker sections and BPL families, landless labourers resided and spending even on nominal incidental charges and non-tuition costs was beyond their capacity. What was most heartening was the response of mothers who wanted their daughters to be educated," We do not want them to be like us. We want them to do well in life and that can happen only if they get education". We came across dozens of girls aged 12 to 16-18, who are very keen to be educated. The guardians were firm that and all the facilities being provided to SC and ST children should be made available to all girls so that they are able to attend schools. Also, there was demand for upgraded primary schools and learning/vocational centres for**

grown up girls who have either not gone to school or have dropped out after Class V and even earlier.

#### ***Dini and Duniyavi Talim***

Several residential Madrasas where young boys were being given ***Dini Taleem only*** for their future role as Clergy were visited. The Heads of these Madrasas ruled out any need for ***Duniyavi Talim*** for they felt that religious education (***Deeni Talim***) was enough for them to live their life. However, it was a pleasure to visit a school run by the Royal Education Society combining both ***Dini and Duniyavi Talim*** successfully. This society is running an English medium school named Mariam Islamic Modern Madrasa at Chharora Village in Block Taoru. The school has Classes I-VIII and follows Haryana Board curriculum in addition to Dini Taleem given by a Maulvi before the start of the regular school. There are a total of 225 children on school rolls out of which 52 are girls. The school has eight teachers. The land has been donated by a family and the school is unaided. Some of the family members are either working free or at a low salary. The school is seeking recognition from the Haryana Board. Sixteen children have passed Class VIII from this school and have joined government schools. Six girls appeared for the entrance to the MDA Girls' hostel at Nuh and four were successful in gaining admission. The students comprise children of all communities.

21. We have noted above that the average size of Muslim household is the largest as compare to other groups, which increases the domestic care burden of girls. Field researches under DPEP and our recent experience showed that poor health of the mother is also a cause of irregular attendance and even withdrawal of girls from school. It was heartening to see several such adolescent girls being given intensive bridge courses to enable them to keep to mainstream education in a period of 1-2 years. All the girls we met in the Hyderabad Slums were in *Burqa* and were coming to the education/vocational training centres after attending the lessons for Dini Talim in the mosques. They were asked to comment on the need for Purdah and whether they felt it was a hindrance. The response was very unexpected. "As Purdah is the only condition our parents lay down for moving out of our homes for education or work, we see it as facilitator rather than an obstruction. With times things change. We hope for better times". It was amazing to see that several of these adolescent girls could be prepared through to two hour contact sessions daily for A.P. open school examination of Class VII and Class X. These girls were becoming adept at computer operations besides learning their traditional crafts of Zari Work, Zardozi and after helping parents in domestic work and household based industries.
22. Among the Muslims, the largest religious minority, there is a perceived sense of being discriminated against by the system. The fear that the secular State schools which do not impart any religious education, will pollute the minds of Muslim children is heightened by the Muslim Clergy who recommend only Islamic education for Muslim children to retain purity of thought and conduct. It is also a fact that majority of teachers and administrators of government schools being primarily Hindu, certain symbols and rituals are observed like hanging pictures /statues of Saraswati (A Hindu Goddess) and Saraswati Vandana etc. which is seen as violating Islam by Muslim clergy. The State Aided denominational schools/institutions make matters worse by allowing religious education to children of their own denomination as permitted by the Constitution under Freedom of Religion as a fundamental right of minorities. Have personally experienced exhortations like you are to become good ***Sikhnis*** and uphold the Khalsa edicts, ***Aryaputris*** born to give birth to sons and preserve

Vedic religion. Luckily, in Christian denominational unaided high fee institutions, good Christian values are imparted to all students without making Christians out of them. But then proselytisation, a major aim of Christian Missions who set up the first modern schools in the 19<sup>th</sup> century, remains an aim but the target group is the poverty sections. Like wise, it is mostly children of the poorest sections that are found in Maktabas and free residential Madrasas. All better off Muslims send their children to private high fee schools, some of the best among them being the Christian Mission schools.

To conclude, we may restate that education is affected by all other social sectors to include healthy, transport, communication, energy, all weather roads for better connectivity and mobility and above all livelihood concerns. Educational participation is contingent on the capacity of each household *to spare and support children* for education. Parental education, occupation and income are the defining variables in determining access to and success in education.

Underdevelopment of rural areas and certain regions are the principal factors for educational and social lag of these populations in general and of women and girls in particular. Girls and women belonging to socially and economically disadvantaged sections to include SC/ST/OBC and certain minorities are way behind their urban elite middle class counterparts. There are still wide inter and intra regional disparities in development per se. There are islands of affluence (Punjab, Haryana, Delhi) in the Indo Gangetic plains, which also account for bulk of the poor and the illiterate of the country (Uttar Pradesh, Bihar, Rajasthan, Madhya Pradesh, Chattisgarh, West Bengal). These islands of affluence also dot the western coastal areas, central India and the southern peninsula where industry is concentrated and new services are growing in the IT and other sectors. Bulk of the higher, technical and professional educational institutions are located in the south and the west, with Maharashtra, Karnataka, Andhra Pradesh and Tamil Nadu accounting for the majority of these institutions. This uneven distribution of resources and opportunities between different regions gets reflected in large inter and intra group disparities of gender, caste, ethnicity and religion between and among regions.

Educational backwardness among the Muslim population is chronic in the northern, and north-eastern states, while southern states of India fare better. Rapid inclusive growth for all minorities especially the educationally backward minorities in all spheres could be achieved by bringing about equity in access to various forms of educational opportunities taking into account wide disparities that exist in our society across social and religious groups and also regions of India.

*Regional Variations are tremendous making development a crucial variable.* Rural urban literacy differentials are marked for all groups; the gap is the widest amongst Hindus and lowest among the Muslims. Intra female disparities as between rural and urban areas are the sharpest. Regional disparities are maximum with the same community showing higher literacy, for example Muslims in the four states and both Hindus and Muslims have poor literacy performance in the northern states, which have poor social and economic development indicators.

## Chapter VII

# Recommendations for Development of a National Plan of Action on Education of Women and Girls

The Nation is committed to educational advancement and empowerment of all Indian women in pursuance of the Constitutional commitment of equality and life with dignity as reflected in our National Policy of Education 1986, and its Revised Programme of Action 1992. Further, we stand committed to *international covenants like the Declaration of Human Rights, CEDAW, Rights of the Child, ICPD, Millennium Development Goals (MDG) among others.*

Muslims constitute India's largest minority as well as the second largest Muslim population in the world after Indonesia. Educationally, Muslims constitute one of the most backward communities in the country causing concern. *Muslim girls and women lag behind their male counterparts and women of all other communities.*

The Constitution of India grants *Muslims and other Minorities* equality of status and opportunities with other citizens to accelerate the process of educational and socio-economic justice. The Constitution grants the rights to Equality and Right to Freedom of Religion and Protection of Interest of Minorities in regard to educational rights.

Some of the emerging concepts, such as Human Rights, Social Justice and Equity, and the active involvement of women's groups, community leaders, youth, the PRIs and mass media in their propagation have greatly influenced prospects of women's education. *Old social structures, obsolete customs and practices are being challenged.* The question of women has assumed great importance throughout the world today and among all the communities. *Change of status can be possible only through education and Muslim women cannot be isolated from the mainstream.* What is required is concerted and sincere efforts, both official and voluntary..

The National Policy on Education, 1986 and its Programme of Action (Revised in 1992) Programme of Action, 1992, first took note of the existing programmes for the Muslim Minorities and suggested a large number of short term, medium term and long-term measures to promote education of minorities and led to the led to formulation of major programmes like the Area Intensive Educational Development and Modernization of Madrasas as Central Government Schemes of the MHRD. However, *the implementation of this 15 point programme was far from satisfactory* and the commitments contained in National Policy Resolutions on education have not brought the desired result. *Often the recommendations and suggestions contained in these documents remain on paper only.*

The New 15-point programme was felt to be necessary because of the gaps in the previous programme with regard to amelioration of socio-economic conditions and enhancement of socio-economic status of the minority groups. With a view to removing this lacuna and having a more comprehensive programme for minorities, *the Prime Minister's new 15-point Programme for Welfare of Minorities was formulated, and approved by the Cabinet on 22 June 2006.*

The 15-point Programme further provides that care shall be taken to ensure that wherever applicable, there is separate earmarking of the physical and financial targets for the minority communities under each programme/scheme, preferably in the ratio of the all-India population of each minority community. Thereafter, these targets shall be further split State-wise for each minority community in the ratio of the population of the minority community in that State. This will ensure that the benefits necessarily reach the target group in the proportion of the population of the group in each State. Budgetary provisions have been made during 2007-08 for specific inputs.

#### **Vision for the 11th Five Year Plan (2007-12) : Towards Faster and More Inclusive Growth**

The Eleventh Five Year Plan (2007-2012) underlines inclusive growth and bridging of disparities of caste, class, religion or region. This Plan provides an opportunity to restructure policies to achieve new vision based on fast, more broad-based and inclusive growth. It is designed to reduce poverty and focus on bridging the various divides that continue to fragment our society. It must seek to reduce disparities across region and communities by ensuring access to basic physical infrastructure as well as health and education services to all. ***It must recognize gender as a cross cutting theme across all sectors and commit to respect and promote the rights of the common person.***

Special efforts have to be made ***to bring the educationally backward minorities at par*** with rest of the society for balanced and accelerated development.

Our study concludes that the educational backwardness of Muslim women and girls is systemic and not endemic to Muslim community. This problem is rooted in the overall educational lag of women and girls especially in northern regions of the country, which are marked by high poverty and underdevelopment. Therefore, we have given some points for consideration for the formulation of a National Plan of Action for Educational Advancement of Women in India with focus on disadvantaged sections- the SC/ST, the rural and urban poor and particularly Muslim girls and women.

## **Suggested Action points**

### **1. Policy Measures**

**All policies, programmes and schemes meant for education of girls in India apply uniformly to all social groups and areas. Looking at the lower literacy rates of Muslim females, low**

enrolment and high numbers out of school Muslim girls, the State needs to make special provisions over and above the normal, for drawing and retaining Muslim girls in school till Class VIII as a fundamental right, and, for improving their participation in secondary and higher technical and professional education.

1.1 Some countries have a separate policy on Education on Women. We have confluence of National Policies directed at education health, agriculture and population with women empowerment as core theme in each policy. India had its first national policy on education in 1968. It was only after 18 years in 1986 that a new national policy on education was formulated. There was a commitment that in view of the first changing needs of a modernizing India, the national policy on education must be reviews in every 5 years. This was duly done in 1992 and never after. ***It is the urgent need of the hour to carry out review national policy on education to make it more responsive and accountable to the nation.***

1.2 The National Policy 1986 was a land mark in the educational and social status of women as committed the entire system to remove their cumulative disadvantage of centuries by making education a major agent of women equality and empowerment. ***There is a need to put out a white paper on education of women at regular intervals to get a continuous feed back on the need to restructure policies and programmes, if required.***

1.3 Recognizing the fact that the educational backwardness of Muslim females is part of the overall educational lag of women in India especially those belonging to rural areas, backward regions, historically disadvantaged social groups like the SC, ST and the BPL households, what we need is an ***overall plan of action*** for bringing the female half at par with the males. There is adequate evidence thrown up by the Present Study about gender inequality and gender gaps in every religious group, only the degree varies.

1.4 A comprehensive and inclusive ***national programme of action for advancement of education of women*** (to include all level and types of education) with a sharp focus on removal of rural urban disparities in general and the continued ***educational backwardness of rural women of all castes and religions***. At the moment we have a national programme for education of girls at the elementary level (NPEGEL) in consonance with the goals of universalization of elementary education as a fundamental right of all children aged 6-14 years and a host of other innovative programmes aimed at ***mainstreaming*** the out of school children through Alternative Innovative Education (AIE) centers, residential and non residential bridge courses (RBCs and NRBCs), educational camps and funds for special innovations for girls, among others. The ***Sarv Shiksha Abhiyan*** is expected to achieve the goal of UEE by 2010 and has ***strong pro Girl Child components with added emphasis on the Muslim girls*** since Mid-Tenth Five Year Plan. The performance is uneven across states. While the quantitative targets are met to a great extent with 92% children in the relevant age group in school (90% among Muslims) in 2006, quality issues are still a cause for concern. The success of SSA is bound to throw up pressure and demand for more secondary school places. In view of the fact secondary education mission is been set up and the recent announcements spell out expansion of higher education with the enhanced budget. ***It may be practical to give up truncated***

*approach to educational planning and to look at the national system of education as a whole for effective transition of all groups to successive higher levels according to their aspirations.*

1.5 Our study has noted the rural urban and intra female disparities as among rural and urban women in all religious groups. The National Programme of Action for Education of Women and Girls, has to take into account the stark **rural urban and regional disparities** to reach out every girl child any where in the country and to enable her to cross the village barrier to secondary and higher education. We are aware that 12 years of general secondary education is a passport to higher technical and professional education at diploma and degree level even the job market.

1.6 As rural girls and among them SC, ST and Muslim Minorities worst off on every score from enrolment to retention to transition to higher levels, the National Programme for Education for Women **has to have a long term vision** and not a 5 year plan approach. **A girl from these groups who enters Class-I as of today needs to be supported by strong enabling measures to see her through school education and equipping her for a forceful entry into higher education and all sectors of polity and the economy at par with the urban girls.**

## 2. Data Banks for Educational Planning

There is a marked shift to be noticed in educational planning from a highly centralized macro aggregative approach to decentralized, participatory and people based planning. From the concept of educationally backward states, we moved to district as unit and later, the block as the unit of education planning and administration. grounded in peoples' participation. For **Sarv Shiksha Abhiyan** a village and its households are the basic units for planning and implementation. This augurs well as empowerment of communities, specially the women members is seen as key to all social development respecting the human rights framework.

2.1 We need **a Comprehensive and Continuous Data Base** on education of girls of all communities in India spanning all levels and all sectors of education for formulation of effective and relevant policies and programmes and their monitoring and evaluation. *At present, there is no disaggregated data available on educational participation of Muslim girls at any level.* The publication and release of the Seventh All India Educational Survey, NCERT is awaited as data on Muslim minority students and institutions has been generated including information on Madrasas. NUEPA's DISE. Data for 2005-06 has given Elementary Education data for 604 districts for 1.12 million schools giving data on gender, rural-urban residence, SC, ST and OBC *but has yet to include data on Muslim children.* Further, DISE as expected stops at the Elementary Stage. The MHRD Departmental statistics neither provide rural urban statistics nor any data on educationally backward groups except for the SC/ST. Data for Second level general and technical education for states is put out in the MHRD Annual Reports but not give rural urban break up nor any detail on Educationally backward minorities. UGC is expected to provide regular statistics for higher education which are also not easily accessible and in any case do not give rural urban break up *perhaps because of the largely urban nature of higher education.* Data for Second level general and technical education for states is put out in the MHRD Annual Reports but not give rural urban break up nor any detail on Educationally backward minorities.

**2.2** *Educational data by religion needs to be collected and made available on a continuous basis as part of the MHRD annual reports as also by rural urban distribution on the lines of DISE . This shall enable sound data based planning and regular monitoring and evaluation. The literacy and educational attainment data analyzed in the present study pertains to March, 2001. Much water has flowed under the bridges since then. The picture about literacy and educational status of Muslims and other groups is already seven years old and we are aware that several educational and other measures have been undertaken to bridge disparities of gender, caste, class and religion, especially through several Government of India's interventions. Enrolment data based on NSSO 61<sup>st</sup> Round shows that *Muslim children are catching up at the Elementary stage and the regional divide is sharper than inter religion differences in enrolment ratios with Southern states marching ahead and the Northern parts trailing behind. The only current data that can make a commentary on the success of the SSA , community wise at least in quantitative terms is the MHRD Sample Survey of Out of School Children ( 6-13 years) which puts the national average of out of school children in this age group at 7% and somewhat higher at 10% for Muslim children ( Muslim girls making up only 45% of these). NCERT Education Survey carried out in 2002 has data for Muslim minority but till date has not published these statistics.**

**2.3** It may be relevant to note that both the DISE data and the NCERT Education Survey Data are school based. While, we do get an indication of the proportion of out of school children based on Gross Enrolment Ratios( which include overage and under age children), we still have many unanswered questions. Which child, which boy, which girl, from which place/household is not in school and why. *We suggest that the Madhya Pradesh Model of collection of household based data on education through the Village Education Registers may perhaps be adopted to reach out to every child which is the Goal of SSA. The IIPMS of M.P. enables all stakeholders at all levels to review the progress of each child at any point of time at the click of a mouse.*

**2.4** As yet, there is no availability of official statistics on education, health or for social sectors/ programmes by religion. As the ball has been set rolling by the First Religion Report, Census 2001, it is time to systematize information base on various aspects of educational and social status of Muslim women for drawing up programmes and schemes for the advancement and empowerment of Muslim Women in India. NFHS III data has been released officially only in second week of October, 2007. *A comparative study of educational and health data as available from NFHS I, II and III can*

*give us a trend analysis of status of women no different religious groups till the next Census data becomes available.*

### 3. Bridging Disparities

3.1 ***Regional Variations are tremendous making development a crucial variable.*** Rural urban literacy differentials are marked for all groups; the gap is the widest amongst Hindus and lowest among the Muslims. Intra female disparities as between rural and urban areas are the sharpest. Educational backwardness among the Muslim population is chronic in the northern states, while southern states of India fare better. ***Rapid inclusive growth for all minorities especially the educationally backward minorities in all spheres could be achieved by bringing about equity in access to various forms of educational opportunities taking into account wide disparities that exist in our society across social and religious groups and also regions of India.***

3.2 The present educational system *is by no means inclusive. It is not even integrative but in fact is divisive.*

The State/aided School caters at best to the middle 50% of the population and is not much used by the top 25% (except in KVSs and the Navodayas). The system is certainly not designed for the lowest quarter of the population, which is known as BPL households in official parlance and is unable to access education for their children on account of poor means. In pursuance of the Official Whip, enrolment drives are religiously carried out and *School Bharo Abhiyans* are organized with Rath Yatras by the local deities (the Elected Leaders), The schools do get filled up and names enter school registers but the holding power of the schools is poor and poverty and unemployment of the parents forces these children to drop out on account of domestic compulsions and inadequate support from the family. Role of private sector in school education is increasing especially in urban areas. Currently, 52% of secondary schools are private unaided and are catering to 25% of the total population, whereas 48% secondary schools are government / government aided and cater to 75% of the school going population. *The National Programme of Action for Women's Education needs to take note of this.*

3.3 Against all India poverty head count ratio (HCR) of 22.7%, *Muslims have an HCR of 31%* (38.4% urban and 26.9% rural). SC/ST HCR of poverty is the highest at 35% and is 21% for

the OBC. On the one hand we have the poverty statistics showing Muslims with the largest proportion of below poverty line but an NCAER study shows that Muslims and Hindus are neck to neck as far as Annual Household Income is concerned, Sikhs being the most prosperous lot with Christians and other smaller communities not lagging far behind. In fact, the gap between the two communities narrows appreciably, even reverses in some cases in favour of Muslims, in rural India. Interestingly, an average Muslim household, at the national level, spends more than a Hindu one. *We recommend that children of all BPL households regardless of gender, caste/religious affiliations, need to be looked as a category for providing Cost Free Quality education by providing school uniforms, free text books and stationery, shoes and bags and above all a nutritious noon meal (on all days of the year if possible as children from these household perhaps do not get a square meal ever and need to survive).*

**3.4 Large family size is typical of BPL households. *This entails higher load of domestic work and sibling care on girls and higher incidence of child labour.*** We may need to take into the fact that on an average, Muslims have reported the largest family size according to Census 2001. The size of an average Indian household in 2001 was 5.3 for all religions; 5.2 for Hindus; 6.2 for Muslims; 4.8 for Christians; 5.6 for Sikhs; 4.9 for Buddhists and 5.2 for Jains. We may note that decline population growth is noticed in all religious groups including **Muslims.** *The success of national Rural Health Mission which has a strong component of RCH and family welfare programmes need to be promoted for population stabilization.*

## **4. Access, Equity and Quality**

4.1 Unattractive schools, poor quality of infrastructure, absentee teachers, lackadaisical classroom processes dissuade many a parents from sending their children to such institutions. Majority of the takers are girls and boys of disadvantaged groups, be it SC, ST, OBC or Minority. We have often talked of dualism and the hiatus between government and elite private schools. We now have State bred elitism and dualism where better opportunities and options are built for a privileged few, for instance, the Kendriya Vidyalayas that cater to Central Government employees. ***There is need to***

*upgrade every government school to the level of a Kendriya Vidyalaya in terms of infrastructure, facilities, quality of teaching and learning among others.*

4.2 The resolution of the government to open 6000 Navodaya Vidyalayas at the block level is a welcome step. ***Rural girls from all social groups should have an equal access with 50% seats reserved for them.***

4.3 The Centre Scheme of the Area Intensive Programme (now merged with Madarasa Modernization) to promote education of Muslim children in general and girls' participation in commerce, vocational, technical and professional courses in particular through opening of Multi – Stream Residential Higher Secondary Schools in Muslim concentrated areas should be adopted in all educationally backward districts and blocks. Under the SSA, EBBs are selected on the basis of low female literacy. ***We recommend that Area Intensive Education Approach should be applied to all educationally backward blocks be it SC, ST, OBC, Muslim Minority dominated.***

4.4 *There is need for expansion of secondary education especially for rural girls .Twelve years of formal schooling is required for entry into diplomas, technical and professional education courses or general higher education and rural girls are very disadvantaged Post DPEP and under SSA nearly all villages and habitations have been covered by regular primary schools and Junior Primary Schools/ Sections EGS/AIEs but paucity of middle schools is a major deterrent for all rural girls to access middle or secondary education, regardless of their religious or caste affiliations. The well to do villagers manage to send their daughters to middle and secondary schools even using shared private transport. The poor villagers can at best send their daughters to schools within the village that too time permitting as sibling care domestic chores fall on the shoulder of girls. More than 72% of our population lives in rural areas but according to the Seventh All India Education Survey of the total 43, 869 higher secondary schools, only 22,847 were in rural area as compared to 21,022 (52%) in urban areas. In 2003-04, for every 100 primary schools, there are 37 middle schools; 14 high schools and 7 higher secondary schools. There are a total of 5,86,986 villages in India. Of these 4,63,378 villages have a primary school; 1,84,348 have Upper Primary schools; 67,167 villages have secondary/high schools and only 19,649 villages have a higher secondary school according to Seventh All India Educational Survey.*

4.5 Expansion of Residential Facilities for Girls: A study under taken by the NCERT (Nayar 2001) as an input into education of girls in the 10<sup>th</sup> plan had proposed setting up hostels in each block close to a higher secondary school for 200 girls from villages without post primary schooling for completing Classes VI-XII. This recommendation found some reflection An evaluation of Central Government Scheme of Strengthening of Hostels (Class IX to XII) for girls from Rural areas and disadvantaged considered a persistent demand by parents to admit their daughters from Class VI onwards. This scheme has since been revised and now accommodates 50-100 girls in these hostels meant for Classes VI to XII. Besides, there are *Ashramshalas* (Girls Hostels) that are run by the Ministry of Tribal affairs, and hostels for girls under many state schemes. We have some concrete suggestions to make:

- i. To under take a quick study of all available residential facilities for girls pursuing Primary and post primary education under all departments and ministries and to see if a common model of girls' hostels, *wherever these are required*, emerges. It may be worth while to pool in resources to the advantage of girls from rural remote areas, SC/ST, Minority and BPL households.

- ii. Under the SSA Kasturba Vidyalas have been opened. They have a very limited intake and are often located in rented buildings. The recommendations made to the planning commission was to open girls' hostels (Baika Vidyapeeths) catering to 200 rural girls of Classes VI to XII.. *We maintain that the scheme of Kasturba Vidyalayas be studied to see if this could be converted to Kasturba Hostels for larger number of girls who could go to nearby regular middle and secondary schools. Cost benefit analysis of Kasturba Vidyalayas and girls' hostels needs to be done.* The money and efforts we spend on principals, teachers in addition those employed the nearby schools, can be saved and the invested into girls hostel with larger capacity. We may also note that Kasturba Vidyalas stop at Class VIII. Where would these girls go for secondary/higher secondary education.

*We therefore, propose that composite hostels for girls from classes VI-XII, using cumulative resources of various departments are multiplied with at least one such hostel in every Block of the country.*

**4.6 Rural Women Teachers Fellowship Programme:** As there appears to be persistent demand for all girls institutions at the post primary stage not forgetting the strong demand for female teachers in the rural communities, especially Muslims, *it is perhaps important to devise a rural women teacher fellowship programme in rural areas.*

**4.7 Road Connectivity and Free Transport:** As on date girls reach post primary and secondary schooling only where roads are running and the states buses plying at regular frequency. This is happened in states such Tamilnadu and Kerala but unfortunately not in Haryana., where every villages is connected with a Pucca road, but the State bus service is extremely poor. We spent over a week in District Mewat, which has 70% Muslim population and the lowest Muslim female literacy rate in the country. We were impressed by the good quality roads but during our travels we could not spot a Haryana Roadways bus sometimes for 4 hours and even more.

- i. In the 565 villages of Mewat we surveyed, primary schools have been opened in all villages and even *Dhanis* where but access to middle schools was highly inadequate. In terms of access due to lack of availability of public and private transport, the parent were not keen to send their daughters to the middle schools located 3 Km away. Those villages, which had middle school, the girls were now studying up to the middle level. Like wise ,all over Haryana, wherever composite Secondary/Higher Secondary schools were available within the village, girls were attending schools. *Once the girl child crosses the barrier of family resistance and reaches Class VI, they tend to complete their education till the end. In Haryana, fro instance, the parents and grandmothers were more worried about boys who were playing truant from school and falling into bad ways.*

ii. *Several States are providing free public transport facilities to enable girls to reach schools and colleges. A rich state like Haryana has announced that the girls will have to pay fare for five days per month. There is need to provide road connectivity and State transport free of cost to girls ensuring better frequency and regularity of services in consonance with school timings for rural areas especially.*

## 5. Need for a Long term Vision

In the new 15 point Prime Ministers' programme announced in 2006 several programmes and incentives are visualized for Minorities in higher education. Unless we assure quality completion of the elementary stage under SSA and sufficient enlargement of secondary education opportunities for girls from rural areas specially those belonging to SC, ST and minorities not forgetting the BPL households. ***Otherwise there will be not be many takers for these higher education facilities and incentives amongst the educationally backward minorities especially there female half.***

## 6. Out of School Girls and Adolescents

We have notice on the ground the girls are in Beedis making, Bangle making, gem cutting, weaving embroidery and zari/zardozi work for nominal income, even making paper bags and other packing boxes. Girls are taken away from the schools after the age of 9. It is believed that if a ten year old girl nibbles cotton, it will be of good quality. Any number of Muslim girls were seen running away from their classes to get daily wage work under the NREGP and other schemes of horticulture in several parts of the country. The four Case studies that we carried out clearly show that their success in reaching out to the hard core poor, regardless of caste, religion or gender affiliations, was due to their effort to target *out of school children and adolescents by making livelihood skills a critical component along with general education.*

6.1 Thus, if we have to reach out to the last quartile, be it girls or boys, *education must provide life skills, most prominently livelihood skills, to bring in and retain them in the mainstream.*

6.2 Gender discrimination runs across all religions, only the degree varies. Parents are not willing to spend money on girls' education, not even the examination fee for the Open School examination, as voiced by Muslim girls in Old Hyderabad city. This is when they were receiving education free of cost from an NGO. It was refreshing to listen to them as to how twenty of them went to the local MLA and demanded, he pays their examination fee

and he did oblige them. *This calls for developing strategies for empowerment of young adolescent out of school girls as done consciously by all four NGOs visited.*

**6.3 Our study of education of Muslim Girls in District Mewat of Haryana was revealing. Majority of the villages had anything from 30 to 100 Out of School. Girls/adolescents who had dropped out after completing primary stage or even earlier. . Attitudes of parents towards education of Muslims girls were found to be changing for the better as they expressed their desire to have a Middle School in every village. For overage girls, parents were demanding Learning centers to be opened in every village with a component of livelihood skills. *Otherwise*, Muslim parents were quite clear that primary education was enough for their daughters for they have to marry and not work outside. We need to adapt the NGO models studied by us for planning the opening of a Learning Centre in all villages of Mewat and everywhere else as per need.**

**6.4 The State Open Schools should waive off examination fee for girls as they are likely to be from lesser well off groups where means are low and girls get discriminated against.**

**6.5 Effective Management Strategies for Out of School Children and adolescents:** The NGOs studied are focusing on the area of education of *out of school children and adolescents* have a *sharp gender focus* and empowerment of communities specially women with *strong livelihood programmes* to make them self sufficient and self reliant. They have all adopted the *Rights based approach to Human Development* among the deprived and disadvantaged sections in remote rural areas and/or urban slums. *Right to Information* is an important element of their empowerment strategies. Further, they are **working with the system** and are attempting to **mainstream** as many girls and boys as possible in the existing state schools and linking older age groups to education through the modalities of **educational camps, learning centers which act as bridges for attaining formal educational levels equivalent to primary, middle and matric in some cases through the state open schools, or national open schools/distance education programmes.**

A high degree of commitment and **a highly professional secular approach** has helped them gain the confidence of the Muslim community. Their operations at the grass roots are highly decentralized, democratic and transparent and their management styles are **collegial** unlike the vertical hierarchical fiat based administration of the government programmes. Even though a programme design exists, there is immense **flexibility** in working out strategies according to specific local contexts. Professional credentials and approaches. They have created **community-based structures** for advocacy and education participation and empowerment of children and adolescent. **Front Line workers** are selected from and by the local community sometimes with lower educational qualifications and receive intensive and extensive training inputs. A striking feature of all four organizations is not only empowerment of communities and parents but also the fact they have taken care to inculcate **collective leadership, self confidence and self reliance amongst the children and young adolescents** in their respective areas. Communication skills, inter personal skills, working in collectives and respect for sensibilities and feelings of others are strongly ingrained both in the faculties and amongst the children/adolescents in the processes and programmes.

These NGOs offer a ***SYNERGY Model*** where small inputs from various departments, agencies, and individuals are optimally and skillfully utilized to benefit the deserving. They have the freedom and possibility to offer ***an integrated and holistic model of social development*** as against highly compartmentalized operations by functionaries of different ministries and departments. They all have chosen education as the central input but were very clear that ***education cannot be a stand alone system but is inextricably linked with other need like food, shelter, health, hygiene, employment and leisure, all which are vital elements of the quality of life of individuals and communities.***

*These NGOs offer practical and feasible management strategies for reaching out to the hard core poor and disadvantaged sections, especially girls belonging to relatively closed Muslim communities in different locations.*

## 7. Minority –majority Issue

As we have noticed in our study, although Muslims are educationally behind other minorities and the majority Hindus at an aggregate level for the country as a whole. Census 2001 and large sample surveys do not support the Religion factor theory and in fact perceive the educational backwardness of Muslims/Muslim females rooted in poverty and under development of regions/districts/blocks/ villages, especially with reference to infrastructure like road connectivity, transport & communication, electricity, water, sanitation and above all means of livelihood.

7.1 The Sachar Committee has identified 50 such districts which together account for 41% of the Muslim population, most of whom are located in the states of West Bengal, Uttar Pradesh, Assam, J & K, Bihar and a few in Kerala, Gujarat, Karnataka and Maharashtra. Among the other 50 districts where Muslim population ranges from, 30% to 99%, nearly all are located in J&K, Assam, Bihar, West Bengal, Jharkhand and Uttar Pradesh with a few in Kerala and one each in Haryana, Lakshadweep and Delhi. Like wise, the top 100 hundred districts by size of Muslim population bulk fall in the northern region to Assam, Bihar, West Bengal, Jharkhand and Uttar Pradesh. ***Development of District /Block/Village Plans for Education of Girls and Women in these minority concentration areas on a war footing not forgetting that the same approach would be required for other backward groups and regions as part of a National plan.***

7.2 Among the Muslims, the largest religious minority, there is a perceived sense of being discriminated against by the system. ***This needs to be dealt with some understanding and empathy.***

Majority- minority issue needs a more rational and compassionate analysis The inter communal divide of perceptions is a case of misplaced *Pride and Prejudice* –the stereotypes ingrained in us as we inhale our first breath and inferiority-superiority hang-ups bolstered in our socialization practices. We need studies and concerted action in this area. *Urgent action is*

*needed to promote communal harmony and peace, lack of which is a major road block to development. And, it understood that the most vulnerable are the women and children and many innocents.*

**7.3** The fear that the secular State schools which do not impart any religious education, will pollute the minds of Muslim children is heightened by the Muslim Clergy who recommend only Islamic education for Muslim children to retain purity of thought and conduct. It is also a fact that majority of teachers and administrators of government schools being primarily Hindu, certain symbols and rituals are observed like hanging pictures /statues of Saraswati (A Hindu Goddess) and Saraswati Vandana etc. which is seen as violating Islam by the Muslim clergy. A conscious effort needs to be made to allay such misapprehensions by sensitizing teachers, text book writers, school managements and principals on the need to handle minority-majority issues and references with due care to avoid any hurt or slight to any child. *Perhaps it is time to think of all educational processes in a gender sensitive multi cultural framework. All religions are humanistic and give messages of peace, harmony, and love on this earth and that all are equal in the eyes of God. These universal messages must reach every child to make Humanism an eternal eclectic faith.*

**7.4** Urdu is seen as a mark of Muslim cultural identity *The issue of Urdu language needs a debate and a clear consensus among all sections of Muslims.* When issues of girls' education were discussed with parents in several locations all over India, there was a persistent demand for Urdu medium education or at least teaching of Urdu as a language. It has to be understood that if *Dini Talim* is a must for Muslim Children they should be taught Arabic as Urdu does not help them to read Quran. Also Urdu as a medium of instruction does not help these students to compete on equal terms with English educated who are preferred in the new job openings in the economy where private/corporate sector is playing a major role and command over English is preferred over the national languages. The result can be visible in the fact that several states have now started teaching English as a language from Class-I even in Government and Government aided schools.

## 8. *Dini and Duniyavi Talim*

Education of Muslim girls is seen as necessary for making them into Good Muslim wives and mothers who will reproduce *Good Muslims* by certain sections, prominently by the Muslim Clergy who have a hold on less well off/poor members of Muslim community both in rural and in urban areas. *Dini Talim* is seen as a must especially for girls who will bring forth/beget Good Muslims. The other school of thought, represented by many erudite

modern educated Muslim scholars/social scientists/activists, does not see religion as an obstacle to girls receiving modern education. According to them Islam does not forbid education of women nor does it limit it to only religious education. In fact, Islam sees illiteracy as a sin and exhorts every Muslim to seek knowledge, even if one has to go to distant lands.

*8.1 The outmoded beliefs of Muslim clergy that for Muslim females only Dini Talim is required needs to be countered by systematic dissemination of the actual quotations from the Holy Quran which grant educations, intellectual and spiritual equality to Muslim women. Education, Media and Intelligentsia can have a role.( See Annexure 1)*

**8.2 Kerala and Lakshweep offer a new model of combining *Dini & Duniyavi Talim*. Nearly all Muslim Children go to the mosque for *Dini Talim* in the morning before reaching the school. This model needs to be replicated in other locations in the country. The system of Islamic education in Kerala presents a considerable contrast to its counterparts elsewhere in India. Although some madarsas of the ‘traditional’ type do exist in Kerala, they have been overtaken by a large and expanding network of reformed madarsas that have incorporated ‘modern’ subjects and teaching methods to varying degrees. Comparisons of ‘reformed’ madarsas in Kerala with ‘traditional’ madarsas in north India highlights the diversity within the madarsa system of education in India as a whole. Kerala’s system of higher Arabic education is the most well organised in the country today. So, too, is its system of madarsa education. Full-time madarsas, such as in north India, are today a rarity in Kerala.. What are called madarsas in Kerala correspond to the maktabas in the north. Both boys and girls attend a madarsa for two hours daily, early in the morning or late in the evening, thus allowing them to study at regular school as well. Far from being discouraged to study at regular schools in addition to the madarsa, they are generally encouraged to do so in the belief that**

**all forms of legitimate education are 'Islamic'. This has made for a close integration of traditional and 'modern' education in Kerala unparalleled in the rest of India.**

In contrast to madarsas in much of the rest of India, most Kerala madarsas are affiliated to and run by centralized organizations, which have made for a uniformity of standards and more efficient management. In addition to the network of madarsas and Arabic Colleges that they run, each of the three major Muslim groups in Kerala has also established a number of regular schools. They are like any other private school, following the state government syllabus, but also make arrangements for the teaching of Arabic and Islamic Studies for their Muslim students. They are generally open to all communities, and some of them have a large number of non-Muslim students as well, for whom religious education is not compulsory. The Kerala example is, however, not widely known among Muslims elsewhere in India. This is because; unlike in much of north India, Urdu is hardly understood in Kerala, being taught only in a very small number of madarsas and Arabic Colleges in the state. Instead, almost all Malayali Muslim scholars and ulama write in Malayalam, which is not understood by Muslims elsewhere. Because of this linguistic barrier, there has been little communication between the ulema of Kerala and their counterparts in other parts of India. However, in recent years a number of ulema from north India have been closely working with their counterparts in Kerala.

8.3 It was however, pleasant to see an excellent English Medium middle school run by private trust in district Mewat of Haryana where *Dini and Duniyabi Taleem* were combined successfully in the school and the Haryana state Board curriculum was being followed. Several of its outstanding students have found their way into the new Kasturba Vidyals and Hostel being set up for girls in each of a 6 blocks of Mewat. ***Such experiments can be replicated wherever needed.***

## **9. Madrasa Education**

9.1 Very often one finds that Madarsas have indeed provided schooling to Muslim children where the State has failed them. Many children go to Madarsas and there by acquire some level of literacy/education when there is no school in the neighbourhood. This effort needs to be recognized. ***This could be done by establishing 'equivalence' to Madarsa certificates for subsequent admission into government schools and universities. For this purpose, equivalence between the two systems of education will need to be established at different levels.***

9.2 When modernization of Madarsas is planned, policy makers should be careful to distinguish between these two types of institutions. The Maktabs and residential Madarsas are necessarily traditional and meant only for religious education, because their social function is to carry on the Islamic tradition. On the other hand, it is the constitutional obligation (under Article 21A) of the Government to provide education to the masses. Aided Madrsas are often the last recourse of Muslims especially those who lack the economic resources to bear the costs of schooling, or households located in areas where 'mainstream' educational institutions are inaccessible. ***The solution in such cases is not only to modernize Madarsas, but also to provide good quality, subsidized 'mainstream' education and create an adequate infrastructure for education. Therefore, the state must also fulfil its obligation to provide affordable high quality school education to the masses through the formal education system.***

9.3 ***There is a call for Central Madarsa Board. Some states have State Madarsa Boards.*** In the field we came across both sets of Madaras, one which would shun any state help as they see it as

leading to interference and the others who were keen to get affiliated in order to receive the Central Government grant in aid for modernization. We came across several Madarsas some in Madhya Pradesh and some in Haryana whose applications for recognition by the Madrasas have not received any response. ***Galvanizing State Madrasa Boards is required to make them partners in educational development.***

**9.4 On the ground, girls in Madrasas were found to be very timid, reserved and diffident. We are aware, that only about 3% of the relevant age group are studying in Maktabas and**

**Madrasas, there is need to make comparative studies of Muslim children of both sexes studying in these institutions and state/private schools to look at the gender dimension in the NPE framework of Education for Women's equality and empowerment.**

9.5 The objectives of the Wakf in Islam are religious ,pious and charitable. There are more than 4.9 lakh registered Wakfs spread over the country but the current income from these properties is 163 crores which amounts to a meagre rate of return of 2.7% because of unsatisfactory management and inadequate powers of the State and Central Wakf boards. ***There is need to look into Wakf management issues for optimal utilization of their wealth for advancing the education of Muslims especially the girls on whom, the family is hesitant to spend.***

9.6 **Use of Zakat Funds:** The recommendations of Shamim Shah's (1983) for improving the performance of Muslim managed educational institutions are worth noting. ***He recommends increased allocation of funds from, the Government, Wakf Boards and the Muslim community for education, setting up of teachers' training schools, especially for Muslim women, reservation for Muslims in institutions of higher education, increase in the number of Urdu-medium schools, technical training institutes and students' hostels in areas of Muslim concentration, better provision of Urdu textbooks and expansion of scholarship schemes, including from Zakat funds.***

## 10. Role of the Ministry of Minority Affairs

The Ministry of Minority Affairs has identified the 103 districts as minority concentration districts, where the population of religious minorities exceeds 25%. These include districts with different religious minorities including Hindus, Sikhs, and Christians etc. Under the Prime Minister's new 15 Point Programme, the targets, allocations and performance of SSA in these districts would be monitored. ***Of the various religious minorities, Muslims are the most educationally backward***

Most of the schemes and programmes for educationally and economically backward section among the women minorities often fail to achieve the desired objectives, *inter-alia*, because of ineffective monitoring and implementation. ***This aspect should be accorded highest priority.*** Now that a full-fledged Ministry of Minority Affairs has been set up, it should be the Nodal Agency for the welfare and development of minorities, women included, who severely lack in terms of social, economic and educational parameters. The Ministry should monitor the implementation of Prime Minister's 15 – Point Programme. It should advise all concerned Ministries/Departments including State Governments, P.S.U.s, etc. for the modification of the schemes as also their delivery mechanism. For translating outlays into outcomes, it is imperative to carry out impact assessment of

schemes/programmes and delivery of services. Beneficiary needs assessment at the field level may also be necessary. The Ministry may also consider setting up a National Resource Group for Minority Affairs.

### 11. Women's Empowerment

Women's Empowerment is a sine qua non of a nation's development. Only empowered women can become leaders of educational change so that all girls, anywhere, are sent to school and enabled to complete their education. ***There is need for well coordinated and concentrated strategies for girls' education and women's empowerment.***

11.1 Affirmative action is required to be taken to bring about amelioration in the status of women among minorities. ***It is to be impressed that affirmative action is not about providing equal opportunities to all but providing special opportunities to those who need them to enter the level playing field.***

11.2 Early marriage is widely prevalent among the Muslim girls which does obstruct their educational participation beyond primary level. In 2001, the case of females who married below the legal age of marriage, was *highest among Muslims (43.2%)* followed by Hindus(37%), 'Others'(36%); Jains(25%) and lowest among Buddhists(16.4%). The proportion of girl child marriages (less than 10 years of age) was 3 % of the total marriages. Further, among different religious communities, the highest proportion of girl child marriages was found among Hindus (2.6%) and Muslims (2.2%) and the lowest among the Sikhs (1.1%). ***There is need to work in this area to enhance education of girls by keeping them in school till 18 years of age. Several state governments have initiated scholarship/incentive programmes which give girls a bulk amount at the end of 18 years provided they have continued and completed their schooling. This also underlines the need for universalizing secondary education and for accessing the same to all rural girls to include the disadvantaged SC/ST and Muslims.***

11.3 *A striking finding of the MWCD programme Swayam Sidha (IWDEP) was that all women SHG members were without fail sending and supporting their children to complete their schooling.* Most effective strategy to help women economically would be to encourage them to form SHGs and provide them packages of education, adult education, health, hygiene, insurance, vocational training, entrepreneur training, micro-credit, marketing support. In this context, role of NABARD, SIDBI, RMK, PSU Banks and Government Schemes – NMDFC is crucial. Micro-financing – through MNDFC; separate – ITIs, Polytechnics for women; Entrepreneurial Development Programme (EDP), exclusively for minority women. As at present only skill training is given; Interventions of Appropriate Technology in the Artisan Sector and Involvement of NGOs. NGOs/Voluntary agencies play active role in the implementation of schemes that supplement/complement the efforts of the Government. The NGOs mobilize women into SHGs and their capacity building, especially under Swahmisidha, Swa Shakti and RMK. ***Encouragement be given for forming more and more Self-Help Groups which can really empower women effectively. These SHGs should be given packages of education, adult education, health, hygiene, insurance, vocational training, entrepreneur training, micro-credit, marketing support, etc.***

11.4 Lack of education, information on and for women and awareness generation aggravate the deprivation of women, thereby excluding them not merely from political, social and economic processes, but also from decision-making activities. ***Therefore, action for placing more and more women at various levels of decision-making, both in administrative and political spheres, through affirmative discrimination if called for, needs to be initiated.***

11.5 *There is need to strengthen the large number of NGOs working in the area of education and social development especially those working for empowerment of women and young out of school young.*

11.6 *Gender Budgeting: The Prime Minister announced 400% increase in the educational budget in the meeting of full planning commission in September, 2007, to discuss the education recently. Increased allocations must be distributed in the framework of equity and efficiency. We would like that the concepts of women's component plan and gender budgeting are strictly adhere to as we aim for 6% of GDP for education. Every effort should be made towards tying up the two effective concepts i.e. Women's Component Plan (WCP) and Gender Budgeting so that they play a complementary role to each other, and thus ensure both preventive and post-facto action to enable women to receive their rightful share from all the general development sectors.*

## 12. Need for Efficient Management of Major Projects and Programme

India is in dire need of policy innovations to include the lower castes, tribal and Muslim peoples into the development mainstream. Social inclusion has been attempted through a policy of reservation, which has failed to uplift the minorities.

Our study findings based on a holistic analysis of Census of India 2001 First Religion Report, other relevant studies and field based action projects ***sees removal of poverty and regional imbalances*** as prime action fields for educational advancement of women and girls in India, not excluding any group and taking into consideration, the special needs of each group, if any.

Currently, there is under utilization of funds, unmet targets and delays in completion of public sector projects compounded by corruption. The Prime Minister is not satisfied with the pace of progress of

development schemes and has asked his team *to step up their efforts especially with regard to the Social Sector schemes directed at the poor and the disadvantaged* and in is unhappy about the tardy implementation of Sachar Committee recommendations for minorities. (Times of India, October 27, 2007). He also notes the uneven progress in economic development with growth rates ranging from 3% to 10% in various states and further underlined the need to balance equity and efficiency, without neglecting either.

**The study calls for assessments of social development in various states to see why the disparity has narrowed in some states but not in others. Socio-economic backwardness and indicators thereof should be tabulated and considered before framing educational policy or providing subsidy, rather than basing it on religion. This would enhance the overall development effort currently gaining momentum in the country.**

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